

MUSIC-RELATED NOSTALGIC EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG MIGRANTS

Aida Khorsandi, Suvi Saarikallio

Department of Music, University of Jyväskylä, Finland
aikhorsa@student.jyu.fi

Abstract

Music is a powerful means for constructing identity – both formulating and remembering who one is – and migration can be seen as a particular situation creating challenges for this sense of identity. This qualitative study focused on investigating music-related nostalgic experiences of young migrants. The aim of the study was to identify features characteristic to music-related nostalgia particularly in relation to the experience of migration. Ten university students (Iranians currently living in migration) participated in the study. Data was collected through spoken interviews with an additional short questionnaire and a task to listen to self-selected nostalgic music. The interviews focused on the participants' current situation in the foreign country, their nostalgic experiences and the role of music in their nostalgic experiences. The data was analyzed qualitatively through the grounded theory approach. The results showed that the participants' nostalgic memories focused on their home country. The inclusion of music to nostalgic episodes appeared to intensify and stimulate the experience. The participants employed different strategic methods in utilization of music-related nostalgia: for counteracting loneliness, for bringing new perspectives into one's sense of self, finding meaning in life, and sympathy for one's feelings. Accordingly music seemed to play a triple role in nostalgic reverie; as a trigger, as a mean to recall and simulate the memory-related emotional state, and finally as a mood regulator tool. Furthermore, individual participants showed differences in their encounter style (avoidance or acceptance) towards nostalgic experiences. Preference for these encounter styles was influenced by the personal experiences and mood (including depression) of the participants.

Keywords: music-related nostalgia, immigration, mood regulation

1. Introduction

1.1. Music

Nowadays music is present everywhere in individuals' everyday life. People are exposed to the music they do not choose to listen to in many places; in restaurants, cafes, shops, waiting rooms, and elevators. Besides, they also engage with music in more active ways; they listen to their self-selected music while driving, going to work, or doing daily routines at home. Some people may be more selective and

choose different music for different occasions; a specific music when they are on their own and alone, and another piece of music when they have friends around.

In addition, music has become more and more easily accessible these days due to the inventions of music player devices and also musical social networks such as Spotify and Last.Fm. Those recent inventions provide the great opportunity of listening to music wherever and whenever one desires to. Individuals

choose different music in order to achieve different psychological states and moods, or they might wish to control their level of psychological arousal (e.g. different levels of arousal for exercising rather than mental concentration) (DeNora, 1999; North, 2004). Thus music as an accompaniment for life fits in different occasions for individuals with different personality traits and life conditions. In addition, the atmosphere and the place in which music is being played or listened to might also influence the quality and modality of musical experience. Listening to music in a familiar location and friendly atmosphere might be a different experience rather than listening in a new and unfamiliar place. In addition to the role of place and atmosphere, music might also have its influence on the atmosphere of the place. This might be the reason for playing specific types of music in restaurants, cafes, and other public spaces such as private clinics and beauty salons.

Regarding the presence of music everywhere and in individuals' everyday life, music plays an undeniable role in the construction of individuals' autobiographical memory. It also might affect the perception of self and others and thus being present in the identity formation (Jäncke, 2008). Present in memory construction, music becomes a useful medium for recalling one's autobiographical memories. Thus it is likely that by listening to autobiographical music one can recall her autobiographical memories and life events. The individual might experience various emotions as a result of recalling. Nostalgia is one of the most reported emotions that are evoked in response to listening to autobiographical music and recalling autobiographical memories (Jäncke, 2008).

1.2. Nostalgia

In an affective sciences framework, nostalgia is a positive self-relevant and social emotion. It is linked to one's past and autobiographical memories such as life momentous events, close people, childhood and important first-time life experiences. It is considered as a psychological response to the sense of loss, and is defined as a linking phenomenon that connects the mourner (nostalgic person) to the past through her symbols and objects of loss. However, nos-

talgia is considered as a predominantly positive emotion with an ambivalent nature, in which simultaneous expression of happiness and sadness is present (Sedikides, Wildschut, Arndt, & Routledge, 2008a). It is also defined as a secondary emotion that has a dual nature with the experience of both pleasure and regret (Dickinson & Erben, 2006). This dual characteristic demonstrates the vague and allusive quality of nostalgic episodes. Additionally nostalgia is regarded as a cultural feeling that is acquired during lifetime and is linked to basic emotions such as grief and depression (Dickinson & Erben, 2006). Nostalgic feelings arise in response to feelings of loneliness and sadness. When an individual perceives a lack of social support (loneliness) it might result in experiencing nostalgia. Nostalgia is an indirect psychological response that compensates for the perceived lack of social support through recalling autobiographical memories (Zhou, Sedikides, Wildschut & Ding-Guo, 2008).

1.2.1. Nostalgia and Immigration

Nostalgia can also be evoked in response to loss and life crisis. It is mostly considered as a positive response to loss, that brings the meaning back to one's life (Routledge, Arndt, Hart, & Juhl 2011). It is a psychological resource and coping strategy that counteracts loneliness when lack of social support is perceived (Zhou, Sedikides, Wildschut, & Gao 2008) such as in the time of life transitions and crisis. In addition nostalgia is defined as a culturally acquired feeling that could be a consequence of specific social and historical circumstances such as industrialization of societies (Dickinson & Erben, 2006).

Immigration is one of the life conditions that may result in experiencing nostalgia. Immigration or geographical move is considered as important life transition. It might take place for different purposes such as changing living conditions, building a new life in a new country, finding better job opportunities, studying abroad, and also escaping one's home country for political and social reasons and seeking asylum in another country. Immigration is accompanied with sense of loss and thus psychological imbalance and challenges (Akhtar 1999). The migrant leaves the cultural familiarity be-

hind and enters an unfamiliar culture and atmosphere.

The cultural unfamiliarity can cause a profound sense of loss in an individual's mind (Akh-tar, 1999) and consequently the concept of the ideal home becomes constructed and fantasized (Tummala-narra, 2009). In addition, the social, cultural and economic conditions of the host country can become or seem harsh and relentless and the migrant might encounter, or perceive prejudice and discrimination. Sometimes this new and unfamiliar condition (living condition in the new country) may result in anxiety, feeling excluded, discontinuity in one's self and, psychological imbalance.

The migrant may experience various psychological and physiological states of mind due to her background, personal attributes and other conditions. In addition to nostalgia, homesickness and depression can be among these experienced states. In the homesickness case, psychosomatic symptoms (such as stomachache, loss of appetite, sleep disturbance, and headaches, disrupted concentration and absentmindedness) can be diagnosed (Watt & Badger, 2009). At times, the symptoms may include mental depression as well. In contrast, nostalgia seems to be the most positive response to feelings of loneliness, exclusion and self-discontinuity in times of social hardships. In addition, nostalgia is a phenomenon that is linked to one's past and autobiographical memories such as life momentous events, close people, childhood and life experiences.

1.2.2. Nostalgia and Music

Additionally, musical sounds are time-dependent perceptions. These time dependent stimuli are processed and integrated in the working memory (Jäncke 2008). Musical sounds can be involved in various memory processes (semantic, episodic and associative) relevant to the situation; a piece of music can be associated with a person's life events, (Baumgartner, 1992) and thus will be processed as an episodic memory and be recalled as autobiographical memory, or it can be perceived as a stimulus that conveys meaning and contains semantic information, (Koelsch et. Al., 2004) and is encoded semantically. Music in the context of nostalgic experiences is more likely to associate

with autobiographical memory and the episodic and associative memory processes. Besides, nostalgia is considered as a linking phenomenon to the one's past and autobiographical memory. Thus memory both in the time of its construction and recall is fundamental in a nostalgic experience. Music-related nostalgic experiences are those pieces of music that relate the individual to her past and autobiography. Considering the role of music in memory construction (both semantic and episodic), autobiographical music pieces can be expected to be highly remarkable to the person's mind. As previously explained, nostalgia is one of the most reported emotions in music (Zentner, Grandjean, Scherer, 2008; Jäncke, 2008). Thus, it can be expected that nostalgic music plays an important role in individuals with higher nostalgic proneness personalities.

2. Research Design

The current project consisted of ten semi-structured interviews in which the focus was on personal music-related nostalgic experiences of young Iranian students living in migration (Two students living in Finland, and eight of them living in Germany). The nostalgic experiences were investigated in different layers: First, the quality and modality of nostalgic experiences in general, second, the characteristics of music-related nostalgic experiences, and finally, the connections between nostalgic experiences, migration and the role of nostalgic music in individuals' emotional regulation and well-being. However, the main focus of the project was specifically on 'music'-related nostalgic experiences and the role and function of music in triggering, recalling, and regulating nostalgic states of individuals. The interviewees were asked (prior to the interviews) to choose and bring five pieces of their self-selected nostalgic music to the interview session, They were given a more than one-month time period to contemplate and choose from their nostalgic music. During the interview, both the interviewee and the interviewer listened to those selected pieces together and talked about every piece of music and its relevant autobiographical story.

2.1. Interviewees

All the interviewees were in same age range (25-31 years old) except for one (38 years old), and all of them were recent migrants (between 6 months to 2.5 years) except for one (8 years). The questions were about the interviewees' length of stay and overall satisfaction, their history in nostalgia proneness, their nostalgic elements and triggers, their music-related nostalgic experiences and relevant autobiographical memories, and the consequences of becoming nostalgic, and their encounter with music in everyday life. During the session the interviewees were given enough time to contemplate and explain about their autobiography, life conditions and experiences and feelings as much as they desired to, except when they deviated too much from the main discussion theme. The length of interviews varied between twenty minutes to one hour and they were held in some of the interviewees' homes.

2.2. Analysis

As previously mentioned the project had a grounded theory approach. The goal was to explore the individuals' 'lived experience' in migration, not to provide any statistical data. Migration was one of the authors' lived-experience (living and studying in Finland and experiencing nostalgia) as well. The main disagreement in the previous literature was over defining nostalgia: first in terms of where it sits in various emotional models (e.g. Is nostalgia considered an emotion, is it a primary or secondary emotion, etc.), and secondly in terms of its recognition with other psychological states such as viewing it as similar to grief and depression (Dickinson & Erben 2006), or distinguishing it from homesickness (Sedikides, Wildschut, Routledge, Arndt, & Zhou 2008c). In the latter cases of nostalgia, recognition of the similarities or distinctions remains paradoxical. The reason for this paradox is that nostalgia has an ambivalent nature, and more importantly the characteristics of nostalgic experiences overlap with other psychological states such as depression and homesickness. The difference is that nostalgia is a self-regulatory mechanism that mostly functions for the achievement of psychological stability and equilibrium.

The qualitative framework was selected to probe into the depth of this experience. The

authors decided to conduct interviews to simulate and discuss this 'lived experience' with those who had experienced it. Choosing and listening to (their autobiographical) music was a strategy for the actual simulation of nostalgic experiences for the interviewees. By listening to the music during the interview the autobiographical memory could be recalled and flowed to the forefront of one's mind. The individual could be exposed to the original experience, its images, events, and the feelings in her mind. This non-retrospective method allowed for better assumptions about the quality of (nostalgic) experiences.

The interviews were transcribed, and in the next step the transcriptions were codified with regard to four important keywords: Nostalgia: 1) Definition, 2) Content, 3) Elements, 4) Functions. This was the first stage of probing into the content of transcription. After several trials of the codifying process new themes and categories emerged from the transcriptions. The themes were being modified regularly and after the final decisions on main themes and categories, the transcription was codified, and the data was collected again for final data analysis, based on emerged themes.

3. Results

3.1. Nostalgia; How does it feel?

"It is beautiful in a way, it is not painful, it is sweet but not very sweet, a faint pleasure..." (Pendar)

"How I feel depends on the memories which arise ... sometimes it is positive, sometimes it is negative" (Ramak)

"Complicated, something between bittersweet and complicated, it has variations" (Golnaz)

"It is bittersweet. In my opinion, the nature of life is kind of bitter but there are lots of little stories and tales in your life which make it sweet, so it is a combination of sweetness and bitterness." (Farhad)

The interviewees considered nostalgia as a complicated feeling with positive and negative characteristics, and its negativity or positivity depends on the specific experience itself. Interestingly some of interviewees reconsidered their definition of nostalgia almost at the end of the interview (after the music listening and discussions) with describing it as 'an enjoyable suf-

fering', and 'pain in the teeth'. It seemed the music listening task influenced and changed the interviewees' opinion about the nature and quality of nostalgic experiences. After the listening task some of the interviewees claimed that the nostalgic experience is not as negative as they defined it in the beginning of the interviews. This can imply the important role of music in changing the nostalgic experience to a relatively positive experience.

3.2. What triggers nostalgia?

"Smells, smell of orange blossoms, and the sounds in general, sound of my friends, and music too. Smell is more intensive" (Pendar)

"Photos from my friends and places from Iran, photos from Tehran" (Ramak)

"It can be music, and smells" (Golnaz)

"Music, one food can have the same effect, one taste, but mostly music" (Kousha)

"I feel nostalgic mainly by music ... I would say mostly by music or maybe by some movies" (Farhad)

Smells, photos (recalling family and friends by watching photos of them), a taste and music can trigger nostalgia.

"Past loves, more with friends and beloved ones, past experiences, sounds of my friends" (Arash)

"I remember I was in a car with my mom, with my family" (Ramak)

"Something that reminds me of childhood" (Pendar)

"People that I don't have around me, like my uncle, my mom, my friends in my homeland, mostly people" (Farnaz)

"The past times with my friends and family, we had some good times, even bad times"

"I miss people, like my grandmother, I missed a period of my time that I was very happy, like my childhood" (Siavash)

Important life periods such as childhood and loss of important life figures (grandparents) are the elements that trigger nostalgia in an indirect way. A feeling (such as loneliness) or a smell or a piece of music triggers and recalls the associated memory. Nostalgic feeling arises as a consequence of recalling process. Nostalgia evokes in response to yearning for the past or

the lost, and fosters the individual's life with meaning and memories of the sweet past.

3.3. Personal nostalgic music

Music-related nostalgic experience is a special experience from various aspects. As participants discussed their music-related experiences, it could be noticed that their description is very accurate and in-detail. In addition listening to nostalgic music can evoke relevant emotions and it can help the individuals in expressing themselves. Regarding the overlaps of musical and memory processes in the brain (Jäncke 2008), the autobiographical music helps the listener in recalling the relevant event and feeling and it's every specific detail. The participants described almost every event carefully by constructing the whole scene and atmosphere.

"My grandpa used to listen to this music, small LDs and he used to listen to it everyday. I was four or five. I remember very clear how the situation was with my grandparents, the yard, the basement, this music brings it out." (Pendar)

"Actually I was listening to this music and my mother called and told me that your grandpa passed away. As I was moving to my grandpa's house, when I arrived there I saw him passed away. I remember his face ..." (Kousha)

Music is direct and inevitable, thus it is capable of evoking emotions while listening. A listener cannot completely control her emotional experience when listening to autobiographical music. Another issue in listening to nostalgic music is the matter of typicality; either individual listen to their nostalgic music intentionally or unintentionally.

"I never collect nostalgic music in my computer, most of the time I don't listen intentionally." (Siavash)

"It doesn't work if I want to produce it. I play it first and the nostalgia comes to me, it depends on how my memory works" (Golnaz)

"I do it intentionally sometimes, to put the memories behind and move on. It is stimulating" (Ramak)

"When I wake up in the morning, I play these kinds of music that I love for myself, and I feel myself as at home and life goes on" (Farhad)

Other important issues for listeners are musical characteristics and the meaning lies in that

specific piece of music. A nostalgic individual listens to her nostalgic music with accuracy and attention. The lyrics and the vocal expression are important factors in musical meaning and value.

"The story of *Inferno*, by Dante (music by Tchaikovsky); I was 9 or 10, it was so painful, hard music. It made me very sad at that time; I started to read Dante ... It was mayhem; it was so painful for a kid. Brings me back to that age, exactly the feeling I had, living and hell and the situation when you are dead, and combining the music and its story"(Pendar)

"This song is an Iranian traditional, basically the music is sad but the lyrics are so hopeful, it talks about that 'we are all hopeful, we hope for better days, there are some kind of problems, we will overcome those problems, we will wake up to see brighter days' (Golnaz)

"It is sad music, in the northern dialect of Iran. It is talking about the moon and asks the moon to please come out" (Farnaz)

"It is a song from Elend, my favorite band. I like this song, really a sad and melancholic one ... the song is about the coldness of society and how lonely we are in this planet ..." (Babak)

For those with a musical background (instrument players or professional listeners) musical value, quality and interpretation of a piece can affect its nostalgic attribute.

"Listening to it without knowing Beethoven, very fast and very hard, too sad I realized that he was deaf, the feeling is not that sadness, its very static, nostalgic for me only because of Toscanini, his interpretation of this music"(Pendar)

To summarize, music is a strong and successful tool in recalling autobiographical memories comparing to other triggers (such as smells, photos, taste, etc.). It is also utilized for mood regulation. Thus music can be considered as a convenient means in the nostalgic experiences.

Additionally in migration, other factors impact the quality, frequency, and functionality of nostalgic experiences. Of those factors the length of stay and the new environment's atmosphere can be mentioned.

"There is a difference between listening to this music here and back there, that I know now that I will never experience this again, I experienced it once and it's gone" (Pendar)

"But here that I am too far from my country, all of these songs are stronger for me, because I think I am really far. Maybe I will never live like before anymore, because I have left something behind, and therefore, those songs are stronger for me." (Farnaz)

"When I am here, and here the whole society is different compared to my country ... those music pieces that I was always listening to back in Iran, when I listen to them here I kind of feel myself at home" (Farhad)

3.4. How do individuals benefit from nostalgic experiences?

An important topic in a nostalgic reverie is nostalgic proneness as an individual factor (Barrett, Grimm, Robins, Wildschut, Sedikides, & Janata, 2010). Individuals differ in encountering a condition that might result in becoming nostalgic. Various individuals with different personality traits (e.g. low avoidance vs. high avoidance) and backgrounds (e.g. stable vs. clinically depressed) benefit differently from becoming nostalgic, and nostalgic experiences have various rewards (or in some specific cases harms) for them.

The individual differences in confronting and utilizing nostalgia (Zhou, Sedikides, Wildschut, & Ding-Guo, 2008) are based on individuals' attachment style, resistance and avoidance. The noticeable psychological attribute -emerged from interviews- was the encounter style that refers to individuals' avoidance or acceptance of nostalgic moods. The encounter style seems to be a very important factor that determines the functions of nostalgia.

Acceptance in encounter:

"I am entering that time, as a kid, for a short interval I stay there and I come back to the present and that's me feeling nostalgia ... It feels good, it should come for itself, helps me to understand many thing" (Pendar)

"No I don't avoid the memories, I don't like to escape from reality." (Kousha)

Avoidance in encounter:

"Mostly I don't like this feeling and I feel negative about it. I am a kind of person who doesn't like to go to this [nostalgic] mood" (Farnaz)

"Nostalgia always has this definition for me; to be influenced by past times ... to be a slave of the environment ... the moment is like a threshold for me, I lose the power to control myself" (Babak)

Avoiding a potential nostalgic condition is evident when an individual has a clinical depression background. The clinically depressed individuals seem to avoid nostalgia assertively, and they resist against becoming nostalgic. Because it obviously has more harms than benefits for them. Volkan (1999) has termed this state as poisoned nostalgia.

"It is not good for me. It doesn't help me. I had a long depression for 7 years; I miss the time before that depression ... I don't feel good now, when I am listening to this music, I cannot stop thinking about that period before depression ... Always try to listen to happy songs; because I don't want to return to my previous state ... I avoid my memories, and I am a very nostalgic person, being nostalgic is harmful for me ... I don't want to make myself sick again, so I don't listen to some old music" (Siavash)

"This nostalgic feeling, I try to avoid it when I am here, maybe because I went through a very hard depression when I came here..." (Shabnam)

The subjective experience of nostalgia is another interesting aspect for some individuals.

"It makes me feel this kind of love, I don't know why, maybe because of the voice of the female singer. Maybe the events of love or passion or something like that. I was in this kind of love, but not exactly related to a specific event in past ... It makes me nostalgic because it hasn't happened" (Farhad)

Within this specific imagined experience the individual constructs every detail in her desired situation: 'what kind of event is the situation', 'what music is being played, 'what is her role in the scene', etc. It might be perceptions of philosophical meanings.

Another feature is the relevancy of the experience to a social context that is called 'shared nostalgia'.

"I liked this music, and I tried to find the singer and the composer and I was unsuccessful. Now, recently I found this track and I suggested it to my friends and they liked this track, and at that time I had a little jazz band and we tried to play this track together..." (Farhad)

"I used to play this song maybe a thousand times after that political event, in my car, at home, like a loop..." (Golnaz)

"There is nobody here that has this feeling [nostalgia]. If somebody has such a feeling that can be shared ... I have friends, and we have some common nostalgic experiences together when we talk about it" (Pendar)

Nostalgic experiences have different functions for individuals regarding their personal and socio-cultural differences. For example nostalgia is a relevant topic in the discussion of 'self and identity'. Nostalgic experiences are the result of the recall of one's autobiographical memories and life experiences. By remembering and reviewing the history, one can obtain and rebuild her individual self. In a social context, sharing memories with others, feelings of inclusion in a society, feelings of belonging, and possessing a collective identity are the factors that counteract loneliness, nurture one's identity, and foster meaning in one's life. Nostalgia as a linking phenomenon is the experience that connects the individual to her background and history, brings continuity, value and meaningfulness for the self, and nurtures the identity.

"Something belonging to my past, doesn't help me, not at all, it is restricted to me too. Nostalgia is the only thing that connects me to some parts of my life, the past..." (Pendar)

"When I feel nostalgic and I remember something good from the past, I feel good that I had such good times there ... somehow I feel happy that I experienced that condition as well" (Golnaz)

Nostalgia also plays an important role in the mood regulation process. Considering the bittersweet nature of nostalgia, it might convey

the bitterness of the lost and gone past, and thus some individuals may resist or avoid experiencing it, but at the same time it consists of the sweetness of remembering and recalling one's life experiences. As participants phrase it, nostalgia is a 'kind of joyful suffering', 'a masochistic feeling', 'a sad feeling that one should push it to come out in order to put memories behind and move on'. The latter expression is the exact function of nostalgia as a tool in regulating negative moods in order to obtaining a more stable emotional state. The process can be repetitive for some individuals as to achieve the desired stability.

"I try to regenerate the feeling of the past and feel the same" (Arash)

Additionally meaningfulness is fundamental in the time of individuals' life crisis (Routledge, Arndt, Hart, & Juhl, 2011). In a nostalgic experience the meaning is obtained by recalling memories and important life experiences of 'being together', 'understand something about life', and 'feelings of love'. By recognizing 'valuable moments of life', and 'review of what one has done in life' the meaning is imbued in one's life.

"I like to feel nostalgic, it makes me very deep, there is a meaning for me in that time, valuable moments in life ... somehow made me experience love. I felt the whole concept of love without it being real" (Arash)

Another utilization of nostalgia can be sympathizing-empathizing.

"The feeling is like my father is sad, because the song is sad, so it reminds me of the sadness of my father ... I suppose that it was a nostalgic song for him." (Farnaz)

"Listening to it without knowing Beethoven, too sad I realized that he was deaf, the feeling is not that sadness, it's very static ... nostalgic for me only because of Toscanini's interpretation of this music" (Pendar)

"I am listening to this music, I feel myself- same as in movies- as the performer of the music, for example the pianist" (Farhad)

In those cases the individuals may benefit from reverse sympathizing in the sense that they sympathize with a closed one (my father) or an important life figure (Beethoven), and/or empathize with those people's conditions (putting themselves in others' shoes). Individuals compensate for their need of being sympathized and empathized with by sympathizing or empathizing with others.

4. Final Thoughts

4.1. Music's role in a nostalgic process

A general important observation is the outstanding role of music in nostalgic experience. Music can be involved in the construction of a specific memory, it can trigger nostalgia by recalling autobiographical memory, and it accompanies the individual through the process of 'mourning the loss' and finally regulates the feelings and brings emotional stability for the individual. Thus, music can be considered a very important means in nostalgic experiences, from its initial stages of memory construction until the final stages of regulation and relief.

In this project migrants described that they utilize their autobiographical music to recall their memories of homeland and past life, and to review their life passages and reconstruct their identity and collective self based on their past and present conditions. Additionally, music itself has an important position in identity and cultural construction. Parts of the self-selected music pieces were homeland-related. Famous old songs, old national anthems, liberty and folklore songs were included in participants' self-selected music. Overall, the results show that the role of music in nostalgic experiences takes place in a regulation cycle, which is depicted in the next page.

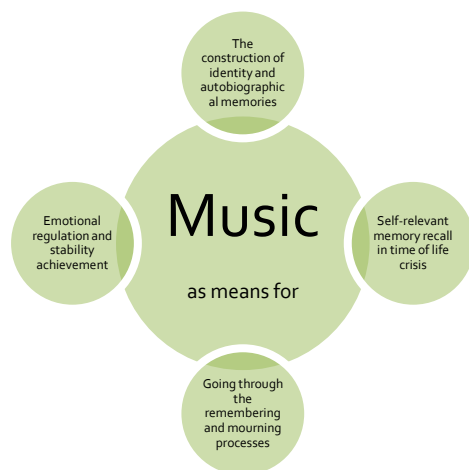


Figure 1. The role of music in nostalgic experiences in a regulation cycle.

4.2. Cultural and socio-economic considerations

The concept of homeland and its importance are among cultural and historical attributes of many cultures, and nostalgia, depression, grief and homesickness are consequences of becoming detached from the nature and roots. This paradigm of exile for Iranians resides in poetry and literature (Naficy, H., 1991). It has to be emphasized that poetry is an influential actor in Iranian culture that shapes and suffuses its attributes and is present in Iranians' worldviews and thoughts. The most popular and famous example for the concept of exile and nostalgia is a poem by Molana (Rumi), the 'Song of Reed'. In this piece the reed tells its life story, in which it got detached from its origins, and now the reed has become the symbol for expressing exile and detachment:

Song of Reed*

1. Now listen to this reed-flute's deep lament
About the heartache being apart has meant
2. Since from the reed-bed they uprooted me
My song's expressed each human's agony,
3. A breast which separation's split in two
Is what I seek, to share this pain with you:
4. When kept from their true origin, all yearn
for union on the day they can return.

5. Among the crowd, alone I mourn my fate,
with good and bad I've learned to integrate,
6. That we were friends each one was satisfied
but none sought out my secrets from inside...

*Translated by Jawid Mojaddedi. From "Rumi: The Masnavi, Book One," New York: Oxford University Press, 2004

In addition, the sample population of this project was limited to students from the same ethnicity; the interviewees were all Iranians in their late twenties (except one). They all have lived in Tehran, Iran's capital. This age group (again except one interviewee) is born after the 1979 revolution, and has experienced the socio-economic consequences of an eight-year war (Iran-Iraq) during their childhood (The war took place mostly in the south-western Iranian border, although Tehran was bombarded many times as well.).

Specific socio-economic circumstances, and possible psychological consequences might influence the intensity and quality of nostalgic experiences for a specific generation.

Another effective factor might be the social, political, economic and cultural attributes of the host country. Moreover, the weather climate can be highly effective as well. Living in a new cultural framework, coping with different social and political issues, a different climate and different social regulations for migrants are all among the issues that an international student is confronted with. The range of similarities or dissimilarities of the mentioned cases (in comparison with their home country) can impact the psychological conditions of international students. Considering all such influential factors in emotional states of immigrants, our research results can be applied for other nationalities and generations as well.

References

- Akhtar, S. (1999). The Immigrant, the Exile, and the Experience of Nostalgia. *Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies*, 1(2), 123–130.
- Auerbach, C.F., and Silverstein, L. B. (2003). *Qualitative Data: An Introduction to Coding and Analysis*.
- Barrett, F. S., Grimm, K. J., Robins, R. W., Wildschut, T., Sedikides, C., & Janata, P. (2010). Music-evoked nostalgia: affect, memory, and personality. *Emotion* (Washington, D.C.), 10(3), 390–403.
- Baumgartner, Hans. "Remembrance of things past: Music, autobiographical memory, and emotion." *Advances in Consumer Research* 19.1 (1992): 613-620.
- Chirkov, V., Vansteenkiste, M., Tao, R., & Lynch, M. (2007). The role of self-determined motivation and goals for study abroad in the adaptation of international students. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 31(2), 199–222.
- Davis, F. (1979). *Yearning for yesterday: A sociology of nostalgia* (p. 87). New York: Free Press.
- DeNora, T. (1999). Music as a technology of the self. *Poetics*, 27(1), 31–56.
- Dickinson, H., & Erben, M. (2006). Nostalgia and autobiography: The past in the present. *Auto/Biography*, 14(3), 223–244.
- Frost, N. (2011). *Qualitative research methods in psychology: from core to combined approaches*. Open University Press.
- Gibson, M. a. (2001). Immigrant Adaptation and Patterns of Acculturation. *Human Development*, 44(1), 19–23.
- Holak, Susan L. & Havlena, W. J. (1992). Nostalgia: An Exploratory Study of Themes and Emotions in the Nostalgic Experience. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 19, 380–387.
- Jäncke, L. (2008). Music, memory and emotion. *Journal of biology*, 7(6), 21.
- Koelsch, S., Kasper, E., Sammler, D., Schulze, K., Gunter, T., & Friederici, A. D. (2004). Music, language and meaning: brain signatures of semantic processing. *Nature neuroscience*, 7(3), 302–307.
- Naficy, H. (1991). The Poetics and Practice of Iranian Nostalgia in Exile. *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, 1(3), 285–302.
- North, A., Hargreaves, D., & Hargreaves, J. (2004). Uses of music in everyday life. *Music perception*, 22(1), 41–77.
- Rosenberg, M. (1990). Reflexivity and emotions. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 53(1), 3–12.
- Routledge, C., Arndt, J., Hart, C. M., & Juhl, J. (2011). The past makes the present meaningful: Nostalgia as an existential resource. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 638–652.
- Saarikallio, S. (2010). Music as emotional self-regulation throughout adulthood. *Psychology of Music*, 39(3), 307–327.
- Sedikides, C., Wildschut, T., Arndt, J., & Routledge, C. (2008a). Nostalgia: Past, Present, and Future. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 17(5), 304–307.
- Sedikides, C., Wildschut, T., & Baden, D. (2004). Conceptual Issues and Existential Functions. *Handbook of experimental existential psychology*, 205.
- Sedikides, C., Wildschut, T., Gaertner, L., Routledge, C., & Arndt, J. (2008b). Nostalgia as enabler of self-continuity. *Self-continuity: Individual and Collective Perspectives* (pp. 227–239). New York, NY: Psychology Press.
- Sedikides, C., Wildschut, T., Routledge, C., Arndt, J., & Zhou, X. (2008c). Buffering acculturative stress and facilitating cultural adaptation: Nostalgia as a psychological resource. In C.-Y. Chiu, Y. Y. Hong, S. Shavitt, & R. S. Wyer, Jr. (Eds.), *Understanding Culture: Theory, Research and Application* (pp. 361–378). New York, NY: Psychology Press.
- Tummala-Narra, P. (2009). The immigrant's real and imagined return home. *Psychoanalysis, Culture & Society*, 14(3), 237–252.
- Volkan, V. D. (1999). Nostalgia as a linking phenomenon. *Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies*, 1(2), 169–179.
- Watt, S. E., & Badger, A. J. (2009). Effects of social belonging on homesickness: an application of the belongingness hypothesis. *Personality & social psychology bulletin*, 35(4), 516–30.
- Wildschut, C., Sedikides, C., & Cordaro, F. (2010). Self-regulatory interplay between negative and pos-

itive emotions: The case of loneliness and nostalgia. In I. Nyklicek, A. J. J. M. Vingerhoets, & M. Zeelenberg (Eds.), *Emotion regulation and well-being* (pp. 67-83). New York, NY: Springer.

Zentner, M., Grandjean, D., & Scherer, K. R. (2008). Emotions evoked by the sound of music:

characterization, classification, and measurement. *Emotion*, 8(4), 494.

Zhou, X., Sedikides, C., Wildschut, T., & Ding-Guo, G. (2008). Counteracting loneliness: on the restorative function of nostalgia. *Psychological Science*, 19(10), 1023-1029.