

What makes a music recommendation valuable?

The Quest for Authenticity in International Students' Music Consumption

Master's thesis

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Abstract

The general discussion, which tasks can or cannot be automated is currently ongoing concerning many professional fields. In the music industry, the widespread use of technology, especially streaming services, has a great impact on music distribution and consumption. Whether or not a machine or any person could be seen in terms of cultural intermediaries, which is the traditional concept to analyze how music gets recommended to customers, is contested. Since existing research, focusing on the cultural intermediaries' view on how they could be seen as legitimate does not seem to bring any clarity in the field, the concept of authentication was identified, in order to assess the value of music recommendations in the eyes of consumers.

The aim of this research project was to understand the consumer perspective on the value of music recommendations stemming from various sources. To do so, eighteen international students filled out a diary study for one week and afterwards expanded on their accounts in in-depth interviews. Through this empirical data and the review of corresponding literature, the concept of goal-driven authentication regarding control and connection could be identified. Participants interpreted the authenticity, which could be seen as value arising through perceived trustworthiness of a recommendation, and accordingly either accepted or rejected song suggestions. They generally showed signs, that they expected to be able to exert control over the music consumption process when assessing authenticity. Another goal the participants wanted to pursue through music recommendations was to connect to other people or culture. If a music recommendation allowed the participants to fulfill one or the other goal, it was seen as authentic and thus worthy to listen to. It could be seen that the goal-fulfillment of control appeared to be strong when using technology, while the goal of connection seemed to play a bigger role when receiving or asking for music recommendations from people in the participants' social network. A failure in giving a good song suggestion, lead to strong negative feelings if control was mainly sought, while the reaction was indifferent or even positive when the goal was to establish a connection. Those findings could highlight how consumers value music recommendations and accordingly help to understand how music recommendations from a machine and a person differ from a consumer perspective.

1. Introduction

A prominent current topic, which has evoked much discussion in society, is automation. One question in the field is how the ability of machines to learn and take over tasks, which were previously exclusively attributed to humans could change society as a whole and the everyday life of people affected by this technological advance. Levy and Murnane (2004) explained in their book *"The New Division of Labour: How Computers Are Creating the Next Job Market"*, which jobs they saw as capable to be done by machines, and which ones would remain in the competency of humans, because of their required skills. Less than ten years later, Brynjolfsson and McAfee (2014) revised some of the jobs, in their book *"The second machine age: Work, progress, and prosperity in a time of brilliant technologies"*, which Levy and Murnane (2004) were sure of could only be made by humans. Levy and Murnane (2004) said that highly cognitive tasks, like driving a car or answering trivia questions in quiz shows, would remain the domain of people. In response to this Brynjolfsson and McAfee (2014) pointed out, that in the meanwhile, Google has made notable progress with their work on a self-driving car project, presenting thousands of miles of humanless driving, without any accidents caused by the automated system. Then again, IBM's computer called 'Watson', was spotted out to be able to answer questions based on natural language processing. In 2011, Watson was competing against former winners of the TV quiz show *"Jeopardy!"*, and won, gaining the prize money of one million US dollars. (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2014) In response to his observation of automated system taking over more and more tasks, which were before done by humans, Carr (2016) was lead to ask the quite extreme question *"Who needs humans anyway?"*

One field in which the traditional central role of humans has currently been contested, is music distribution. The music industry adapted to technological advance, especially in terms of distribution, changing the structure of the whole industry. (Jones, 2002)

Traditionally, gatekeepers in the field, recommending music to consumers, were regarded in terms of cultural intermediaries. An ongoing debate was found about whether or not technology, such as recommendation algorithms, could be seen as cultural intermediaries, framing music suggestions as legitimate to the consumer. While many scholars in the field insisted on only calling professional human beings cultural intermediaries, (Maguire & Matthews, 2012) it remained unclear, what human skills exactly should differentiate music recommendations made by people from the ones of an algorithm.

In the cultural creative industries in general, gatekeepers positioned between the producers and the consumers of cultural goods have been identified as powerful market actors. (Hirsch, 2000) Jones (2002) pointed out that the central role of mediation in the popular music industry was enhanced by the widespread use of technology for distribution, especially the internet. Sinking reproduction costs of music and the disproportional high costs in the initial music creation made it ever more important, that popular music reaches bigger audiences in order to cover the costs and be profitable. (Hirsch, 2000; Jones, 2002) How people find music and how music is promoted to the music consumers should according to Jones (2002) be a central focus of research and was also identified as important for business practice in the field. (Tepper & Hargittai, 2009)

Traditionally, gatekeepers in the cultural creative industries have been regarded under the concept of cultural intermediaries. (Hirsch, 2000) First defined by Bourdieu (1984), cultural intermediaries were seen as professionals belonging to the social class of *petite bourgeoisie*, framing cultural goods as legitimate and thus connecting consumers and producers. A typical example for a cultural intermediary in the music industry was the programme planner of a radio station. (Bourdieu, 1984) They were said to influence which cultural goods would reach the consumer and ultimately shape their tastes. (Matthews & Maguire, 2014) The competency used for legitimizing propositions of cultural goods for the consumer was seen in what Bourdieu called 'habitus', a '*feel for the game*' (Bourdieu, 1990 as cited in Maguire & Matthews, 2012, p. 557) of the professionals working in the field. However, how exactly this ability to judge what is a cultural product worthy to consume should arise remained unclear. (Maguire & Matthews, 2012)

This vagueness lead to an often criticized inclusiveness of the term cultural intermediary, as more and more actors have been discussed under the concept, making it a weak tool for analysis in the eyes of the critics. (Hesmondhalgh, 2006; Molloy & Larnier, 2010) The question if all people could be now seen as cultural intermediaries, since technology enables them to individually distribute music has been neglected by Maguire and Matthews (2012), underlying the professional orientation needed to be classified as a cultural intermediary. However, the definition of professional expertise was seen as problematic, as Lampel et al. (2000) pointed out that formal training, which is used as an indicator for expertise in other industries was ineffective in cultural creative industries in general. Also, the attempt of Maguire and Matthews (2012) to define what they saw as the main distinguishing factor between ordinary people passing on music and cultural intermediaries, remained an unclear mix of past experience in the field and personality.

Moor (2012) claimed, that objects and especially technology should be brought to the discussion of cultural intermediaries, in line with the assumption of actor-network theory, that objects can also inherit agency and play an active role in market negotiations. Current research has pointed out how recommendation algorithms in the music industry could be seen as cultural intermediaries, making music recommendations to consumers, connecting them to the production side of the market and influencing tastes. (Morris, 2015; Beer, 2009; Webster et al., 2016) However, Morris (2015) still felt the need to distinguish those new gatekeepers from the traditional cultural intermediaries, introducing the term 'Infomediaries'. By doing so he reconfirmed the focus on the distinction between human and non-human gatekeepers he initially criticized. However, on which basis this distinction is made remained unclear.

Rather than merely looking at which professions could or could not be seen as cultural intermediaries Maguire and Matthews (2012) said that the focus should be on what cultural intermediaries are actually doing, framing cultural objects as legitimate. The concept of legitimacy is used to claim general desirability and value of an entity. (Suchman, 1995) In the case of cultural intermediaries, this would mean that they claim to be appropriate and worth to give music recommendations to the consumer. (Khaire, 2014; Suchman, 1995) Also, Morris (2015) stressed that only passing on music could not be seen as a defining activity of a cultural intermediary, since value needed to be added to the recommendation through such a gatekeeper. However, as Khaire (2014) pointed out, the shared understanding of worth, leading to legitimacy was seen as socially constructed and constantly negotiated between human and non-human actors. This means, that cultural intermediaries in the field of music, constantly need to negotiate their worthiness of giving suggestions with among others, music producers, technology, and consumers. Most of the research trying to understand what cultural intermediaries do and what makes them special, analyzed this negotiation of value in the terms of legitimizing strategies the cultural intermediary tries to carry out and thus examined how cultural intermediaries themselves saw how they added value. (Kuipers, 2014) Fairchild (2014) saw this reliance on accounts of the cultural intermediaries themselves as highly problematic.

The concept of authentication was found as a way to analyze how value is negotiated from a consumer perspective. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010) The term authenticity is said to comprise objects and experiences, which are seen to be trustworthy. (Cohen & Cohen, 2012) The value that a consumer sees in a music recommendation results in the willingness to either pay for it or spend time listening to the song suggested. (Hesmondhalgh, 2013; Lugosi, 2016) What is regarded as authentic and having value is not inherent in an object or

experience, but needs to be negotiated between several human and non-human actors. (Lugosi, 2016) So, a music recommendation as such is not authentic. Only if the involved actors concluded in their negotiation, that the recommendation is authentic to them it gains value and is thus accepted, resulting in the consumer listening to it. Since authenticity is seen as being interpreted, it could be that the same object or experience is perceived as authentic in one situation, while it loses its authenticity in another context for the same consumer. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010) For the authentication of brands Beverland and Farrelly (2010) found that consumers were interpreting a brand to be authentic, in regards to their ability to fulfill different goals through consuming the respective brand. One of those goals, was the control the consumer could take over the own consumption process. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010) Another relevant goal in terms of authentication of brands, could be seen as the wish of the consumer to connect with other people, culture, places, past experiences and communities through consumption. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010) Both goals, control and connection, have been identified as relevant in the music consumption and exploration process. (Krause et al., 2014; Tepper & Hargittai, 2009)

Accordingly, it could be implied, that if the task of a cultural intermediary could only be undertaken by a human, consumers should show differences in the way they interpret the valuation of technology and humans in terms of music recommendations.

This discussion about if and how mediation in the cultural creative industries, specifically through music recommendations, could be seen as different according to if a human or technology was influencing the music exploration process, lead to the following research question of this project.

Research Question: How do international students interpret the authenticity of music recommendations?

Sub-questions: What role do the goals of control and connection play in this process? How does the way authenticity was assigned influence the reaction to a perceived failure in recommending good music?

The following section, will give an overview about the theories discussed in the field of music consumption behaviour, cultural intermediaries, and authentication. Then, the methodology underlying this research project will be presented. In the analysis, the findings from the empirical research and existing literature will be discussed. Finally, in the conclusion the results from the analysis will be summarized and suggestions for practical application and further research will be made.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Music Consumption Behaviour

Current consumer behaviour was seen in terms of a perceived change from modern to postmodern consumer behaviour. (Amine & Smith, 2009) One aspect, which is often regarded in connection to postmodern consumer behaviour is fragmentation. This term comprises the observation that consumers consume different products or services in order to fulfill their diverse goals. (Amine & Smith, 2009) According to Amine and Smith (2009), this unpredictable and inconsistent behaviour challenges modern assumption of segmentation into clearly defined groups according to demographic, geographic and sociographic criteria. Ideally, consumers should be seen as a 'segment of one', and each consumer should be regarded individually with all peculiarities. (Amine & Smith, 2009) However, Amine and Smith (2009) also acknowledge that this was in most cases not feasible. Thompson (2000) commented on the current debate on the change of consumer behaviour that it might be rather a turn in perspective of research, in line with the 'cultural turn' in consumer research, (Moisander & Valtonen, 2011) than an actual change in consumption. However, he still regarded the focus on the versatility of consumers as important to research and claimed that in-depth accounts of consumers could inform businesses and lead to practical implications for marketing and product development. (Thompson, 1997)

Tepper and Hargittai (2009) claimed that students listen to a lot of music because 50% of their sample stated that they listened to music for more than ten hours a week. The discovery of new music was identified as a crucial part of music consumption. (IFPI, 2016) When trying to finding new music Tepper and Hargittai (2009) found that it was not only important to find songs that the participants enjoyed themselves, but also ones that others might like. However, Ward et al. (2014) showed in their study, that people might prefer to listen to familiar, mainstream songs, even if they do not like them, rather than exploring truly new music. This could also be seen in line with the claim of Lampel et al. (2000), that for a cultural object, such as music to be enjoyable for the consumer, it should be novel, but within limits. A significant deviation of a proposed cultural object from consumers' pre-established preferences and categories is seen to make the object inaccessible to the consumer. (Lampel et al., 2000) Also, music was seen as a way to connect by Tepper and Hargittai (2009), and popular songs could be suitable to initiate a conversation with other people.

Music consumption and the music discovery process have been recognized as highly fragmented. Weijters and Goedertier (2015) highlighted that many users listen to music in various ways, rather than relying on only one form of music acquisition. Music exploration of students was identified as fragmented, with various sources of music discovery. (Tepper & Hargittai, 2009) Amongst other ways of finding out about new music, Tepper and Hargittai (2009) characterized the main three pathways to unfamiliar music as social networks, for example, friends and acquaintances, traditional mainstream media and technology. They identified social networks as the primary source for new music for their participants. Traditional mainstream media, such as the radio, were following as the second most frequently used way to explore music. However, technology did not seem a great role in music discovery in their study. (Tepper & Hargittai, 2009) Also, Aguiar and Martens (2016) asserted, that digital music consumption should rather be seen as an extension of music listening, rather than a substitution for owning CDs. Tepper and Hargittai (2009) named three possible factors which could affect the adaptation of technology. Those were identified as the usefulness of the new technology, the extent to which it could be used in line with existing habits and the curiosity in a person's personality. (Tepper & Hargittai, 2009)

2.2. Background Listening and Peak Experiences

Sloboda et al. (2008) pointed out the paradoxical development in contemporary music consumption, which despite the increased possibilities for the consumer to actively shape the music listening experience music seems to be more and more passively consumed. They acknowledged that through the offerings of digital music providers, music could be listened to in various situations and specifically picked out, leading to a fundamental change in music consumption behaviour. (Sloboda et al., 2008; Liebowitz, 2004) Instead of assuming the consumer to listen to music actively and solely focus on it, which they also found to happen, the majority of music listening is done accompanying another activity, that could also be carried out without music, placing the music listening as a background. (Sloboda et al., 2008) Accordingly, music listening was grouped into six contexts: travel, physical work (manual labor, like house chores), brain work, exercise, emotional work, such as mood management or presentation of identity, and live performance. While they identified four main expected outcomes of music listening for the consumer, namely distraction, energizing, entertainment and meaning enhancement, they were unable to explain when and why music is listened to as a main activity rather than in the background. (Sloboda et al., 2008) Similarly, Tepper and Hargittai (2009), as well as Zhang et al. (2013) mentioned that they assume differences in music listening and exploration behaviour according to the context, especially in regards to whether or not the music is serving as a mere background

or listened to actively. Brown et al. (2001) found that in their study, participants were choosing music for the background in accordance with their mood. The music listening in the background was possible since it did not require much attention. Only the barriers of listening to music in all parts of and outside their homes hindered the participants to listen to music in the background as often as they wished to. (Brown et al., 2001)

Green (2016) showed that music consumers also seek for peak experiences in their music consumption behaviour. While the original definition by Maslow (1962; as cited in Green, 2016) was more focused on truly pivotal experiences, possibly life-changing, including many superlatives, Green (2016) stated that for 'peak music experiences' the "defining characteristic is to stand out from general musical experience" (Green, 2016, p. 334), which allows to include a wide variety of music consumption experiences.

2.3. Cultural Intermediaries

The concept of cultural intermediaries has been first established by Bourdieu (1984) describing part of *"[t]he new petite bourgeoisie [...] in all the occupations involving presentation and representation (sales, marketing, advertising, public relations [...]) and in all the institutions providing symbolic goods and services."* (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 359) Particularly, he has mentioned *"the producers of cultural programmes on TV and radio or the critics of 'quality' newspapers and magazines"* (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 325) amongst the most typical cultural intermediaries. While Bourdieu's original definition of cultural intermediaries was seen to mark a quite specific (Hesmondhalgh, 2006) 'occupational grouping' (Negus, 2002), it has been criticized that the term cultural intermediary became diluted through the addition of ever more professions to the category, leading to questions about its' explanatory power. (Hesmondhalgh, 2006; Molloy & Larner, 2010) The term cultural intermediary has amongst others been used for graphic designers (Soar, 2002), rating agencies (Childress, 2012), film festival programmers (Morris, 2015), and bartenders (Ocejo, 2012). According to Morris (2015) the widespread use of the internet and emerging possibilities to participate in activities that were previously exclusively assigned to cultural intermediaries by for example amateur bloggers and podcast creators, lead to even more uncertainty regarding who should be called a cultural intermediary and who should be excluded from this definition. This inclusivity lead Maguire and Matthews (2012) to ask *"Are we all cultural intermediaries now?"*, which they as a result of their assessment negate. Also, Morris (2015) wrote that it was crucial that new meaning would be added by a cultural intermediary and thus not anyone who is merely passing on music or other cultural objects can be classified as a cultural intermediary.

Mainly human actors have been seen as cultural intermediaries, while Moor (2012) called for non-human actors, like technology, to get included in the notion. Bourdieu (1984) put emphasis on class and the so-called 'habitus' of a cultural intermediaries, which can be seen as a *"'feel for the game' (Bourdieu, 1990): the ability to read the market of receivers, appraise aesthetic worth or potential"* (Maguire & Matthews, 2012, p. 557). This is said to be built up over time through expertise, derived through professionalism, meaning knowledge acquired through more or less standardized qualifications, and personality, comprising personal taste and preferences. (Maguire & Matthews, 2012) In line with the idea of actor-network theory that humans do not only interact with other humans in meaning making but also with non-human actors, so-called 'socio-technical devices', (Muniesa et al., 2007) it is important according to Moor (2012) to include objects and technology in the discussion of intermediaries. Recently, Morris (2015), Beer (2009) and Webster et al. (2016) have been discussing to what extent recommendation algorithms, suggesting music to consumers, can be regarded as cultural intermediaries.

In order to establish a clearer picture of cultural intermediaries, Maguire and Matthews (2012) proposed putting focus on what cultural intermediaries do, rather than the professions they comprise. Cultural intermediaries were called taste-makers, that frame cultural goods, to have them interpreted as legitimate by consumers and other market actors. (Maguire & Matthews, 2012) According to Webster et al. (2016), this legitimacy could be established by cultural intermediaries in various ways. Following Bourdieu (1984), many researchers have claimed that the main way cultural intermediaries would signal legitimacy was through their 'habitus'. Maguire and Matthews (2012) defined this habitus as an inseparable combination of informally gained professional experience and personality. Based on this assumption it would be impossible that non-human actors could be seen as cultural intermediaries. Webster et al. (2016) stated that *"Cultural intermediaries' authority in the field is based upon their accumulation of cultural capital combined with their position in the marketplace."* (Webster et al., 2016, p. 139) Cultural capital was seen as experiences and education, that were valued by the consumer. (Webster et al., 2016) It was also underlined by Morris (2015) as especially important, that this activity of framing cultural good had to add value in order to be attributable to cultural intermediaries. Accordingly, also technology could be seen as cultural intermediaries, if they could acquire cultural capital, that is offer valuable experiences.

2.4. Legitimacy and Authentication

Legitimacy could be defined as “*generalized perception or assumption that the actions [in this case the recommendation of music] of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions*” (Suchman 1995, p. 574). Khaire (2014) pointed out that legitimacy can be established through shared socially constructed understanding of worth. In the Oxford English Dictionary (n.d.) worth is defined as something or someone being “[o]f sufficient merit[...], deserving, *to be or do something*“. The process of assigning worth to goods and services was described as an iterative negotiation between human and non-human actors, assessing consumers’ needs and matching them to qualities of goods and services in regards to needs fulfillment. (Cochoy, 2008). Lugosi (2016) pointed out that such a notion of worth can, but must not only comprise quantifiable measures, such as money. In the case of music recommendation worth could be assessed in the terms of time or cognitive capacity for consideration, (Hesmondhalgh, 2013) since streaming services are either asking for a monthly subscription fee or are available for free with advertisement, (Morris, 2015) and thus the user is not charged any monetary price for a single music recommendation. Similarly, Hirsch (2000) saw the question “*which of the many platforms offering competitive entertainment, and seeking the consumer's time and money, would succeed in gaining it?*” (Hirsch, 2000, p. 358) as pivotal for assessing market success in the creative industries.

One way of looking at legitimacy is in terms of authenticity, which could be used to explain why consumers reject or accept a retail promotion or music recommendation. (Kates, 2004) Even though the authenticity of goods, services and experiences offered and of the sources establishing and distributing them is seen as a central factor in the cultural industries, (Jones et al., 2005) the term has been defined in regards to many perspectives. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010) According to Lugosi (2016, p. 100) “*authentication involves the inscription of value to objects, places, actions and experiences.*” It has been defined by Cohen and Cohen (2012, p. 1296) as the “*process by which something—a role, product, site, object or event—is confirmed as ‘original’, ‘genuine’, ‘real’ or ‘trustworthy’*”. Jones et al., (2005) pointed out that advertisement agencies could only be seen as authentic, if they could be distinguished from their competitors. The term authentication underlines the socially constructed nature of this process, which indicates that authenticity is constantly re-negotiated by various human and non-human actors. (Lugosi, 2016) In turn, Jones et al. (2005) claimed that cultural intermediaries, such as critics are framing what is authentic or not, implying that authentic and legitimate could be seen as interchangeable terms, at least in regards to cultural intermediaries. According to Holt (1998) the process of authentication could either lead to

the acceptance or avoidance of mass produced objects, music recommendations endlessly produced by a recommendation algorithm in this case.

To establish a connection to other people, culture or a community, is one goal that has been identified as crucial in the authentication process, (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010) and also has been recognized to be a relevant factor in consumers' music discovery. (Tepper & Hargittai, 2009) According to Tepper and Hargittai (2009) recommending music, or any other cultural object, to a friend or relative helped to establish a stronger relationship. This results, because sharing music can be seen as an entry for conversation and mutual meaning making, symbolising shared interests and building trust. (Tepper & Hargittai, 2009) Beverland and Farrelly (2010) found the degree to which their informants could connect to other people, which are often seen as like-minded and could be loved ones or stars, who are admired as idols, places, culture or communities or the whole society through a brand or object to be determining if it would be seen as authentic, and accept their offer. In line with consumer culture theories aim to establish a connection between individual accounts and broader views shared in a community, (Thompson, 1997) Beverland and Farrelly (2010) identify a general wish for unity and participating in a community in regards to connection as a goal for authenticity. A sense of connection could be established for example through an object or person facilitating proximity, reflecting communal norms, which could lead to a sense of duty and also through ubiquity of the object or person, leading to the impression that it is present everywhere in the consumers' everyday life. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010)

Another important factor in music consumption, having control over what to listen to, (Krause et al., 2014) has been also pointed out as a source of goal-driven authentication. (Beverland & Farrelly 2010) In contrast to other scholars that found that control was seen as inauthentic, (Taylor, 1991) the informants in Beverland and Farrelly's (2010) study expressed that they assign authenticity to experiences and objects which allow them to exclusively control themselves and their consumption choices. The preferred way of consumers to take control of their consumption process seemed to be through first-hand experience. (Beverland & Farrelly 2010) While the informants in Beverland and Farrelly's (2010) study otherwise preferred to rely on independent judgement, verifiability of claimed performance benefits and the possibility to accurately compare between options in order to be able to choose the best result, they solely regarded a brand as authentic if they had personally experienced the claimed benefits, in case the value only arose upon use. When trying to obtain verifiable information the participants were rejecting emotions attached by the advertiser. (Beverland & Farrelly 2010)

Even though an empowerment of the individual consumer could be easily assumed if consumers pursue their desire to have control, the regular re-assessment of what should be seen as the best option, could also lead consumers to authenticate large corporations instead. (Beverland & Farrelly 2010) However, Webster et al. (2016) pointed out that regarding algorithms the consumer often is not aware of the underpinnings of the own consumption process and has little control in comparison to the mediating technology. On the other hand, music streaming services grant the consumers access to a growing collection of music, (Anderson, 2006) which enables them to quickly gain first-hand experience through 'sampling', with low or even no additional costs (at least in pecuniary terms). (Tepper & Hargittai, 2009) Anderson (2006) saw this as a way for consumers to experiment and try out new things, which might not have been consumed, if they had to be paid for. (Aguiar & Martens, 2016) Tepper and Hargittai (2009) emphasised the ongoing debate discussing whether or not the use of digital technology would lead to empowered, active consumers rather than *"audiences [that] are quite passive when it comes to cultural consumption; they do not want to work hard for their entertainment."* (Tepper & Hargittai, 2009, p. 232)

Despite the observation that the term 'algorithm' saw a significant increase in its spread, Striphas (2012) pointed out that it still remained a quite specific term. Morris (2015) believed that consumers had a basic understanding of the algorithm, but would not be aware of the extent to which every single activity, like skipping or rating a song, would be tracked and used to refine recommendations of algorithms. To them, music recommendation algorithms were seen as highly personalized, comparable to DJs and radio programmers. (Morris, 2015) In line with this Lugosi (2016) claimed, that algorithms were often perceived to lead to reinforcing loops of similar music recommendations, which concentrate existing values and beliefs. However, Beer (2009) asserted, that rather than drawing only on previous, personal consumer behaviour of each individual, the actions of the whole community and the algorithm technology would decide what will be suggested. Also, Webster et al. (2016) discussed that not only the consumer behaviour of each user shapes the outcome of recommendation algorithms, but also the person programming it and the whole community that is using it. Thus, the technology could be seen as socially constructed by many actors. (Webster et al., 2016) Lugosi (2016), Morris (2015) and Webster et al. (2016) agreed, that recommendation algorithms could not be regarded as objective mediators, even though they are often assessed in this vein by the consumer.

3. Methodology

3.1. Philosophy of Science

For this research project, it was regarded useful for the further understanding of the project to roughly state the underlying philosophy of science explicitly. Many studies which are interpreted by the author to have an underlying positivistic approach, do not mention their assumption that they could unveil objective facts through their study explicitly. (e.g. Tepper & Hargittai, 2009; Aguiar & Martens, 2016; Hollebeek et al., 2016; Ward et al., 2014; Zhang et al., 2013) This could be seen in line with Levy (2005) who points out that scholars who believe that numbers are the only true way to express knowledge, generally seem to take their stance as taken for granted. Miles et al. (2014), however, put emphasis on their believe that the explicit formulation of one's underlying view on the philosophy of science is crucial for the understanding and interpretation of the results. In a similar vein, Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) mention the usefulness of clarity on the philosophy of science in a business research project while asserting that their mention in the final report need not be exhaustive. Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009) discuss various different streams within some of the main philosophical positions (post-) positivism, social constructionism, critical realism, pointing out that those labelings should rather be seen as reference points due to the disagreement and ongoing discussion in each of the streams of thought.

In this light, the philosophy of science this research project could be most closely related to is social constructionism, as the meaning making of music discovery is seen to be a product of social interpretation and renegotiation amongst different agents, (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009; Green, 2016) especially in regards to authentication of the source of a music recommendation. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010) Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009) mention that the idea of social constructionism was also associated to be a helpful approach when addressing postmodern phenomena, which could be seen in the signs of fragmentation in the music consumption of today's consumers. (Tepper & Hargittai, 2009; Amine & Smith, 2009) Especially Latour's (1999) angle on social constructionism, also incorporating objects into the construction of meaning is interesting for this research project, since the interaction between humans and technology is an important factor in today's digital music consumption, as will be discussed later. However, Alvesson and Sköldberg (2009) criticized Latour's anti-theoretical standpoint and questioned the use of mere descriptions. The aim of this research project is not only descriptive and should also lead to some conclusion on most likely connecting structures of the music discovery events under study.

3.2. Approach

The underlying ontological view, that knowledge is subjective, varying from person to person as well as in different situations and over time creates a good fit for using qualitative methods in this research project. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008) Even though Miles et al. (2014) acknowledged that for each research project a method should be carefully designed in regards to the aim of the specific research, they thought it was also helpful to observe what methods other studies in the field applied, in order to get inspiration for the own research design. Traditional marketing scholars relied solely on quantitative research methods when investigating consumer behaviour. Supporters of quantitative methods in consumer research often denied the acknowledgment of qualitative methods as appropriate, while advocates for using qualitative research in the field affirm the importance of quantitative inquiry and close interplay of both methods to inform each other and foster further research. (Levy, 2005) Thompson (1997) advocated for the use of qualitative, grounded methods, in order to extract the construction of meaning of consumer behaviour, which could inform both, marketing and product development or other parts of businesses, that put the 'voice of the consumer' in the center of their activities. (Griffin & Hauser, 1993) Moisander and Valtonen (2011) also observed, what they call the 'cultural turn' in consumer research, leading scholars to put focus on how consumers socially construct lifestyles, values, identities and myths as part of their consumer behaviour, in response to a postmodern understanding of markets.

In the field of music research, it is quite common to draw on qualitative methods, to get a deeper understanding of the interplay between music, individuals, and society. Especially Ethnomusicology, which is concerned with questions about the big picture of the role of music in culture and meaning-making, relied on qualitative methods since its formation beginning in the late 19th century. This research project can be affiliated with Sociology of Music, aiming at explaining the meaning making and processes behind the formation of music markets and consumption behaviour. (Bresler, 2008) The initial focus on philosophical and quantitative methods of Sociology of Music was revisited and could not withstand the change of paradigms from positivistic to social construction paradigm in social sciences, (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009) which lead to the widespread application of qualitative methods. (Bresler, 2008)

3.3. Research Design

For this research project a multi-method approach, combining a diary study with interviews was chosen. Such, diary-founded interviews were seen by Wheeler and Reis (1991) as particularly useful to getting an in-depth understanding of everyday events. Following the considerations of undertaking both, a diary study and interviews for this research project will be discussed. Figure 1, below shows an illustration of the research process of this project.

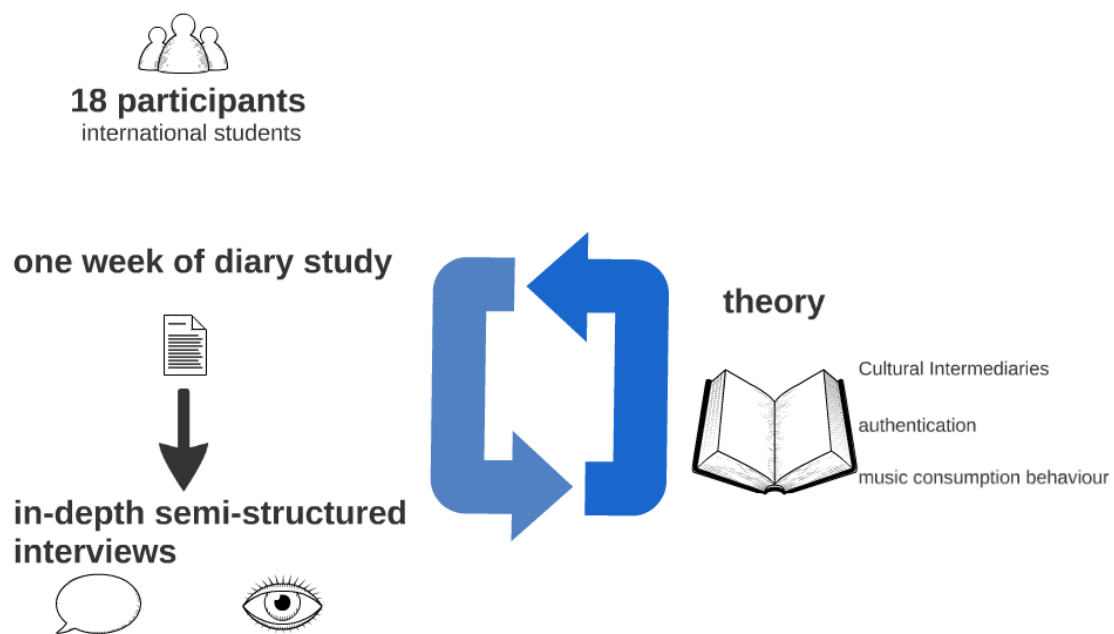


Figure 1: Overview of the Research Design of this research project

3.3.1. Observations

Even though it is ethnographic approaches, such as observations and thick descriptions, are seen to potentially benefit consumer behaviour research, they are not widely used as a method (Levy, 1999) and also were not informing this research project to a greater extent. Since music is often listened to passively as a side activity, while traveling, carrying out physical, brain or emotional work or as an attendant of a live concert, (Sloboda et al., 2008) it is difficult to conduct observations in this fragmented field, which aim at understanding the music consumption behaviour of an individual as a whole. Barley and Kunda (2001) point out that any activity carried out with the help of a computer cannot accurately be observed through traditional observation methods because the events to be observed happen too quickly for an observer to follow. This is also partly the case in contemporary music consumption since a large proportion of music is consumed digitally today. (IFPI, 2016) Also, the process of choosing music and most of the times even the outcome of this choice

process cannot be observed by anyone else than the individual picking out the particular songs, making it at least in part invisible to outsiders and thus difficult to study through traditional observation methods. (Czarniawska, 2007)

3.3.2. Diary Studies

A diary study has been chosen for this research project, because of its ability to evoke contextual insights, with great detail, which can help to reduce the problem of participants leaving out important information or not remembering when trying to comment on their general behaviour at an interview. In combination with follow-up interviews, diary studies can raise the participants' awareness of their own behaviour and help them to reflect on it. (Coxon, 2004) Czarniawska (2007) saw the usefulness of diaries especially in fields, where actions were fragmented in space, occurred in various contexts and at least part of the process is invisible to the external observer, as could be argued to be the case in music consumption choices. Also, music discovery belongs to the group of small everyday life experiences, which usually do not get much attention and are best suited for diary studies according to Wheeler and Reis (1991).

Berta: *"I never realized that I am discovering new songs...I just do it automatically...I was a bit surprised on how many songs I can discover in a week."*

Hari: *"This is something I wrote in my diary? [Angelika is nodding] Okay, can you repeat again, so that I remember the moment? [Angelika is reading the diary entry out loud] I do remember now."*

A form of semi-structured diary was chosen for this research project, in order to be able to compare the information of the diaries, while at the same time leaving freedom to the participants to elaborate in their own words and put focus on points which they regard as particular or interesting. (Coxon, 2004) Participants were asked to fill out a diary structured in six questions, of which four were open-ended, on a daily basis for one week every time the predefined event of them finding a song that was new to them occurred. (Coxon, 2004) This could be seen as a mix of the interval-contingent and the event- contingent diary form. (Bolger et al., 2003)

The main concern of this research was to gain accounts on music discovery as close in time to it as possible. For this purpose, event-based diary designs are seen as most suitable. (Wheeler & Reis, 1991) However, there is a concern, that diary studies place a burden on the participants, and with an event-based diary study, it is impossible to measure compliance of participants since the actual amount of times the triggering event occurred is not known.

(Bolger et al., 2003) The aim to extract in-depth situational data from the diary, made it less essential to ensure that the participants report on every single event, than in a study that would be interested in quantitative information on, for example, how often a certain event happened in a period. Due to the burden placed on the participants through a diary study, (Bolger et al., 2003) and the possibility for participants to quit taking part in the research project at any time, without the need to give any reason (Chrzanowska, 2002), it still seemed necessary to get some kind of time-based feedback from the participants, in order to maintain an overview, whether or not they were still participating in the diary study. With only an event-based reporting, it could not be seen if a participant is not filling out the diary study, because the event, in this case, music discovery, did not happen, or if this participant quit filling out the diary overall. Another factor was seen in the factor that the participants needed to remember to fill out the diary study throughout the week. The longer the timespan between two reports, the higher Bolger et al. (2003) identified the risk of participants to forget about the diary study. With a purely event-based design, the length of time between two events, and thus the likelihood to forget to report, could not be anticipated. This is why, in addition to the event-based design, the participants were asked to also report at least once a day, which could be seen as a time-contingent report. (Wheeler & Reis, 1991) If no music was being found that day, participants were asked to send the diary form empty. Since this time-contingent design was only used to ensure to keep track of which participants are still taking part and that they keep the diary study in mind, forgetting to fill out the diary every day, did not have an influence on the quality of data. In such cases, the participant was reached out to on the following day, reminding him or her about the study.

Since it was seen as crucial for event-based diary studies, that the event upon which the diary should be filled out was defined explicitly and clearly, (Wheeler & Reis, 1991) a matching definition was sought for this research project. Tepper's and Hargittai's (2009) definition of 'new music' as music that is perceived to be outside of the genre or kind of music respondents normally listen to was seen as ambiguous since it required the respondent to interpret his or her usual music consumption regarding clearly defined categories. In this research project, the definition of 'new music found', which should trigger a response on the diary study was 'a song that is new to the participant'. How much time after the event participants should latest fill out the diary was only defined as 'as soon as possible' to not make the study too intrusive and interrupt the everyday music consumption behaviour. (Wheeler & Reis, 1991) This definition was sent to the participants in an email including the instructions for participating in the research project, which can be found in Appendix 1 - E-mail for participants. This email was functioning as a definite reference point

for the participants, which they could go back to when filling out the diary. Also, participants were encouraged to ask questions, if something was unclear to them.

Because there are many different digital tools available to conduct diary studies, (Bolger et al., 2003) an assessment comparing different tools was done in advance. In total fourteen tools, which were recommended for diary studies in a research forum were evaluated in regards to their price, supported platforms (iOS, Android, Browser), the possibility to automatically send daily reminders and the offered answer formats (text, audio recording, video, screen capture). Tools, which were not allowing for a free trial or had an expected price of more than 150 USD for the research project and one provider that only offered iOS as a supported platform, were excluded from further investigation. The remaining six tools were tested by setting up a test diary, inviting two participants (the researcher of this research project and another independent, nice person, owning an Android device, who offered help with testing the question format from an outside perspective and for this platform), filling out the diary by those two test participants, displaying results and if possible setting up an automatic daily reminder. An overview of the tools assessed and the comments to the tests, which lead to the final choice can be found in Appendix 2 - Diary Study Tool Assessment.

In general, it was identified as a possible problem, that most of the diary tools were special apps, which needed to be downloaded to the phone, taking up storage. Another point was that they could only be filled out on the phone, and had no corresponding web application. At this time, the participants were already asked for their general willingness to participate in the research project and one of the future participants mentioned that he would prefer the option to fill out the diary on his computer, because he found it easier to type on it, which lead to the assumption, that this could be a critical factor for obtaining more detailed accounts. (Czarniawska, 2007) On the other hand, it is by now common to always have one's smartphone at hand, which could enable participants to answer the diary study in short time after the event of new music found, which could, in turn, lead to more details still in mind and a lowered risk to forget to report on one discovery as a whole and in general make the diary experience more convenient for the participant. (Czarniawska, 2007) Accordingly, Google Forms was chosen for this diary study, because it offered a free mobile optimized website, meaning that it could be filled out in a browser on any computer or smartphone, without the need to download an extra application. The online form of the diary study can be found in Appendix 3 - Diary Study Online Form.

However, the participants were given the opportunity to hand in their diary in other formats, giving them the opportunity to express themselves in a way that suits them best, which is mentioned by Czarniawska (2007) to seem often to be overlooked in the field. While most participants preferred the more structured form of filling out the questionnaire with guiding questions and some even mentioned, that they would have wished for even more structure through closed questions, three participants chose their own, less structured form to hand in their diaries. (Czarniawska, 2007) One participant was sending short video recordings in which he talked about new music he found. The videos were primarily focused on what was being said, just recording some part of the surrounding of the participant, which did not provide additional hints for data analysis. So, the possible benefits of video recordings in diary studies said to provide additional contextual knowledge, (Czarniawska, 2007) was not realized in this case. However, the participant reported, that it was very convenient for him just to record, what he was saying, which is also an important point in order to lower the burden associated with diary studies. (Czarniawska, 2007) Two other participants handed in their diaries in digital form, as an e-mail, collecting all entries of a week and as screenshots of one participant's note-taking app on the phone.

3.3.3. Interviews and Focus Groups

Even though the predominant application of qualitative data collection methods in the field of consumer behaviour research are focus groups, (Sayre, 2001; Levy, 1999) interviews are more appropriate for this research project, because personal [one-on-one] interviews are seen to enable a more complete and deeper understanding of the topic under research. (Levy, 1999) The aim of this research project is not to merely quantify the music discovery events under study, but rather gain an understanding how consumers themselves make sense of their music consumption behaviour and account for their choices.

While focus groups are a good way to foster a dialogue and develop ideas with the inspiration and insight from other participants, (Sayre, 2001) they also inherit some shortcomings, which led to their exclusion from the data collection in this research project. First and foremost, that in focus group the individual members compete for the talking time, which compromises the detail of insight that can be gained from each participant and might lead to shy participants being left out of the conversation, is not in line with the research aim of this project, which is to gain in-depth information, regarding each participant as an expert on his or her own music consumption behaviour. (Sayre, 2001) Since digital music consumption often entails an ethical dimension, especially in regards to piracy, (see e.g. Parry et al., 2014; Preston & Rogers, 2011; Sinclair & Green, 2016; Strategic Direction,

2013; Weijters et al., 2014; Weijters & Goedertier, 2015) it can be assumed that there might be some concern of participants to speak openly about their music consumption behaviour in a focus group and the group pressure might evoke an incentive for the participants to alter their report to what they assume is socially accepted. While in individual interviews participants are generally more likely to talk openly about sensitive topics. (Sayre, 2001)

According to Latour (1999), actors are well aware of their actions and should be taken as the source for finding out what, how and why they do what they do. Rather than seeing the participant as a vessel of the real truth, that needs to be uncovered, (Gubrium & Holstein, 1997) the social construction of meaning is acknowledged in this research project, which leads to the interview presenting a conversation between the participant and researcher, in order to construct such meanings about the consumer behaviour in regards to music consumption together, not denying the influence of the researcher on what was being said and how, but understanding the researcher as an active co-creator of the reports of the participants. (Gubrium & Holstein, 1997) This could be seen throughout the interviews, during which some participants explicitly mentioned, that they have never reflected on the action or connection, which came up through the conversation and that they needed to make up their minds about the issue spontaneously, often indicating that they would need to reflect on their accounts further. Also, participants constantly reformulated their viewpoint, either to define or revise what has been previously said, indicating that the meaning making of their music consumption experience is an ongoing process. Accordingly, the presented findings should not be seen as fixed truths, but rather as an interpretation of a part of the socially constructed meaning making process, which is never finished.

As was the case in this research project, it is quite common that the interview plan is not followed precisely, but rather serves as an aid to direct the interview process as a whole, allowing for the participant to also take control over the direction of the interview. (Chrzanowska, 2002) Being aware of this, an interview guide was outlined in order to keep in mind all main questions that should be touched upon, but also listing possible subtopics, arising through researching the market and the information from the diary study about areas that could be addressed while answering the main questions. (Chrzanowska, 2002) The initial version of the interview guide can be found in Appendix 4 - Interview Guide As the diary study was progressing at the same time as the first interviews took place, the interview guide was frequently revised. Additionally, the individual diary entries from the participant were also brought to the interview, to facilitate conversation based on concrete, personal examples. The sub-questions were serving the purpose of reviving the discussion in case the interview got stuck, or the respondent perceived the question asked as too broad and

needed some concrete examples to start the conversation. Also, they were serving as a means to be able to quickly respond and ask follow-up questions if an anticipated subtopic arose. In general, those subquestions were not used throughout the interview, in order to not interrupt the flow of the conversation. Rather was the process of writing down subtopics used to internalize the research objective and prepare the interviewer for spontaneous interaction in the sense of the research during the interview. New insights can be gained only by focusing on broader questions and following up on them as they arise, which represents a skill that needs to be built. (Chrzanowska, 2002)

By scheduling the interviews it was assured that the participants had enough time to talk in detail about the topic under research. Also, structuring the interview setting at least to some extent made it easier to assure that the environment was suitable for an in-depth discussion, without any disturbances and that audio recordings could be done. (Sayre, 2001) In general, it was not necessary to interview the respondents in a naturalistic setting, while they are pursuing the activity under research, in this case music consumption, if the research aims at eliciting individual perceptions and reflections on behaviour. Through this research project the way the participants make sense of their own music consumption behaviour should be dissected, which justified the structuring of the interview setting, in order to establish a good surrounding for talking about and recording personal reflections. (Sayre, 2001)

3.3.4. Sample – International Students

In line with postmodern consumer behaviour theory, rejecting modern attempts to segment customers and instead highlighting fragmentation of consumer behaviour, (Amine & Smith, 2009) traditional purposive sampling criteria, like demographics (age, gender, income) (Kolb, 2014) were not determining the choice of participants for this research project. Rather, the participants were selected in regard to their association to the subgroup of international students, which still could be seen as a purposive Sample. (Kolb, 2014)

International students, meaning students that have been living and studying outside of their home country, were seen as an interesting sample for this research project, since they combine the aspect of being recognized as technology-savvy and interested in music, (Tepper & Hargittai, 2009) as well as a special case of a consumer subculture, due to the fact that they are living in a foreign country. (Lichy & Pon, 2013) First of all, students were identified by Tepper and Hargittai (2009) to be well-suited for studying digital music consumption behaviour, due to their extensive use of both music and technology in their everyday life. Accordingly, much previous work in the field focused on students as a sample

(see e.g. Coyle et al., 2009; Kim & Bekin, 2002; Krause et al. 2014; Liebowitz, 2004), which Sinclair and Green (2016) called disproportionate. Aguiar and Martens (2016) acknowledged that students represent an interesting case in the area of music consumption, but they also pointed out that a greater variety of consumer groups should be studied since findings could not be generalized from this group as a weakness. With the social constructionist view underlying this research project, it is seen as questionable if it is possible or valuable to generalize to project findings of a group onto others at all. Since the aim of this research project is to highlight some processes of meaning making behind music exploration behaviour of a certain subculture thoroughly, generalizability is not a concern.

Internationals living in a foreign country were found to belong to a subculture of consumers by Lichy and Pon (2013), since they seem to combine consumer behaviour processes from their country of origin, with the local consumption habits. The case of international is an extreme example of such a subculture since they are emerged in a network of students coming from a variety of different countries, the culture of the host country, as well as potentially building a subculture based on their nationality in the foreign country. (Dato-on, 2000) At the same time, it should be kept in mind, that there exists no homogenous group of international students and living abroad as a student could be rather seen as an indicator for 'do-it-yourself' biographies in a postmodern time, influenced by seemingly endless choices and increased fragmentation, (Holton, 2016; Van Mol, 2014; Amine & Smith, 2009) leading to a rejection of the rigidity that often is associated with the term 'subculture'. (Green, 2016) Accordingly, international students are assumed to negotiate meaning in regards to their consumption behaviour drawing on perspectives stemming from diverse local backgrounds. This subculture of internationals seems particularly relevant since Lichy and Pon (2013) underlined the increasing mobility of people moving to foreign countries, especially within the EU.

Aleksandra (from Poland): *"I'm more European than Polish."*

All in all, twenty-seven international students from the author's personal network, which fulfilled the above mentioned requirement that they have been studying abroad, were reached out to. Of those, six were stating that they were currently themselves busy with study projects and felt like they could not contribute the time and mental effort of remembering to fill out the diary, which are common burdens of diary studies mentioned by Bolger et al. (2003) and Czarniawska (2007). Another international student did not take part in the diary study without giving any reason, while one participant filled out the diary once and then stopped. In line with Chrzanowska's (2002) suggestions regarding the voluntary

nature of this research project, no further questions about the reasons of those decisions to not take part were asked. The diary entry of the participant, who afterwards stopped to fill out the diary, was excluded from the findings, since the lack of a follow-up interview omitted to gain in-depth insights from this one-time report. One person, who was asked for her participation, rejected, since she did not feel like she knew enough about music, even though she was assured, that average, everyday music consumption should be studied in this research project and not expert opinions. Regarding also the fact, that the participants were not paid for their participation this implies, that the eighteen people finally participating were at least to some extent interested in music and/or consumer behaviour or self-reflection as such, (Miles et al., 2014) especially regarding the burden a diary study poses on the participants. (Bolger et al., 2003) It could thus be said, that within the deliberately selected sample of international students a convenience sample was included in this research project. (Kolb, 2008)

Kates (2004) criticized, that previous consumer culture studies have focused explicitly on brand communities, which require the consumers under research to be interested in the brand under research. (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001) In line with this critique, participants for this research project were not selected in regards to whether or not they are consuming music through specific means, such as recommendation algorithms or more specifically Spotify, Apple Music, SoundCloud, YouTube, etc. By doing so, the meaning making of users and non-users of the different ways to consume music could be captured, which gives a more inclusive picture of why and why not consumers choose to use different methods to obtain music recommendations. Since all participants were more or less belonging to the same social networks, it can be assumed, that in everyday life those different standpoints are also involved in the social renegotiation of value and authenticity of music recommendation methods.

By selecting fellow students as a sample, information obtained was at a level of disclosure, granting access to private information, also concerning emotions and attitudes, which remain latent if descriptions are gathered. (Sayre, 2001) Kolb (2011) strongly advises against consulting people familiar to the researcher of a qualitative study. However, she based this conclusion on the assumption, that only qualitative accounts, which are done with unrelated participants could extract underlying truth. The existence of such truths is rejected by the view of social constructionism. (Gubrium & Holstein, 2001) Furthermore, established trust is reducing the participants' fear of addressing intimate or controversial matters. (Sayre, 2001) This established disclosure is furthermore helping to avoid the risk of refusal of participation, which is a severe problem in interviewing, (Sayre, 2001) and could be also seen as a driver

for the effort put into the diary study, since this way of data collection is repeatedly mentioned to be a burden for the participant as well as the researcher. (Czarniawska, 2007)

3.4. Data Collection

All in all, 18 international students filled out a diary for a week and then were interviewed to expand on the information given in the diary study. The interviews lasted from 38 minutes up until two and a half hours, with an average interview length of one hour and twelve minutes. All interviews were audio recorded and later analyzed based on those recordings. (Miles et al., 2014) An overview of the participants can be seen in the table below.

Name	Gender	Nationality	Months lived abroad to date (May 2017)	Interview type	Interview time
Abbas	male	Denmark	6	face-to-face	01:38:11
Alessandro	male	Italy	27	face-to-face	01:48:30
Alisa	female	Germany	30	face-to-face	01:12:51
Ariel	male	Germany, Argentina	21	face-to-face	00:49:00
Ben	male	Germany	21	Facebook call	00:39:04
Berta	female	Spain	29	Whatsapp call	01:04:40
Chris	male	Germany	13	face-to-face	02:36:08
Hanna	female	Finland	8	Skype video	01:10:51
Hari	male	Spain	30	face-to-face	01:15:00
Iliana	female	Greece	39	face-to-face	02:04:28
Jula	female	Germany	50-60	face-to-face	01:05:07
Kaisa I.	female	Finland	5	Skype video	00:51:02
Kaisa R.	female	Finland	9	Whatsapp call	00:46:40
Miro	male	Finland	10	Whatsapp video	01:10:19
Monica	female	Romania	30	face-to-face	00:42:10
Aleksandra	female	Poland	25	face-to-face	00:50:07
Triin	female	Estonia	59	Whatsapp call	00:38:23
Valeria	female	Italy	18	face-to-face	01:12:47

Table 1: Participant information

The interviews started with an introduction, welcoming the participant, giving a short overview about the purpose of the research and the process of the interview. As the first minutes of the interview were setting the tone for the following conversation and were interpreted by the participant to receive cues about what was expected from him or her, the address was natural, but with a certain degree of formality, (Chrzanowska, 2002) in order to make the participant feel comfortable to reveal personal information, but also underline the appreciation of their expertise and importance of the issue. Concerns about loyalty and confidentiality were openly addressed and discussed in the beginning, since they are often regarded as problematic issues for research projects when a friendship between the participant and researcher exists. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008) The participants were informed about the recording method and use of information and asked for their consent. Practical issues, such as the duration, possibilities for breaks and the location of toilets were also mentioned in order to make the participant feel more comfortable. (Chrzanowska, 2002)

The main part of the interview started with feedback from the participants about the diary study. They were first asked about practical issues, but also questions about the content were asked. Participants were encouraged to expand their accounts of experiences they found particularly interesting or wanted to add. If the participant came up with a topic him- or herself, the interview proceeded from this account with follow-up questions. In other cases, the interview was started with open-ended questions, to allow the participants to decide which topics were most important to them. (Sayre, 2001) Some participants seemed not very comfortable with too broad, open-ended questions. (Czarniawska, 2007) In those cases the diary entries served as a point of entry into the conversation. (Wheeler & Reis 1991)

In general, the interviews could be called 'diary-founded', since during the course of each interview the information from the diary was either discussed in terms of differences or similarities in the accounts or served as a means to restart the conversation. (Wheeler, Reis 1991) Reaching the end of the main interviewing part, also the interview guide was consulted for this purpose. Additionally, the participants were asked if they wanted to add something.

Closing the main part of the interview, participants were asked to spontaneously fulfill a task. The participants were asked to search for new music and try to find a song that they liked. While doing so, they should let the author observe what and how they are doing it, as well as speak out loud what they are thinking in the moment. This task was seen as possibility to uncover topics that have not yet been addressed, since music discovery was identified as little everyday events, which are not normally reflected upon in detail. (Wheeler & Reis, 1991)

This task should not serve as a mere observation of usability, which could according to Sayre (2001) be seen as a kind of experiment. It rather served to deepen the insight on the accounts and ask task-related questions. (Sayre, 2001) Observations were directly addressed and questioned, adding the understanding of the participant to the author's interpretation. Often, new topics arose through this task. Also, some participants showed behaviour that was varying from their previous accounts and details about context-dependent differences in the consumer behaviour could be obtained.

In the end the participants were asked if they feel like the interview was successful and they if they could express everything they thought was relevant regarding the topic, in order to assure satisfaction also on the participant's side, (Chrzanowska, 2002) which was seen as particularly relevant, since the participants were not receiving any pecuniary reward for their time contributed. (Miles et al., 2014) Some few participants continued to talk about additional topics related to the research project after the audio recording was stopped, which often could be seen in interviews according to Warren (2012). However, the fact that the participants were familiar to the author seemed to reduce the incentive to talk off the record, in fear of consequences of having the information audio taped. This could be seen, since the participants were willing to repeat what they said and continue their account after the audio recording was started again. For shorter accounts off the record, notes were taken by the author. The fact that the participants were asked if they want to add anything or feel like something is missing once before they were asked to perform the task and once after, before ending the recording, seemed to reduce the felt need to elaborate in the topic when the audio recording was switched off, because only three out of the eighteen participants did so. At the end of the interview, after the recording was stopped, the participant was asked for their feedback on the interview, in order to allow them to reflect on the interview and research process and give their opinion. In this respect it proofed to be helpful, that the recording was turned off before and that the participants were familiar people to the author, since they showed no signs of insecurity to hold back also critical comments, which helps to establish symmetric fieldwork as Czarniawska (2007) suggested.

3.5. Data Analysis

The analysis of the diary study began, parallel to the interviews, providing the possibility to inform the interviews and ask targeted questions, to get a better understanding of the diary entries. Since all diaries were handed in in a digital format, there was no need to transfer the data, which could have led to typing mistakes or alterations in what the participants reported. (Bolger et al., 2003) The diary entries were coded using process codes, which were said to be especially useful to understand actions and events by Miles et al. (2014). Those process codes mainly addressed the different ways and sources that participants seemed to use for their music exploration. Additionally, descriptive codes were used to analyze the diaries, in order to get an understanding of the different topics, that play a role in the music consumption of the participants of this research project. Those codes continuously informed the above mentioned interview guide. At the same time, literature was reviewed in order to get a better understanding in regards to which theory the empirical data could be interpreted. This could be seen in line with an iterative research process, that regards the accounts of the participants as equally important as the interpretation of the researcher and existing theories. (Czarniawska, 2007)

The first four interviews were transcribed from the audio recordings, since the specific focus of the research project had not been identified at that point. They were coded in regards to the way music was discovered with process codes, in order to keep in mind the specific context, which Goulding (1998) identified as crucial in social constructionist research. However, the main focus in the first round of analysis of the interviews was the deeper understanding of themes important for the music discovery, which was done by applying descriptive codes. (Miles et al., 2014) Later interviews were not fully transcribed, but rather coded according to the audio files, attributing descriptive codes to timestamps. In addition, In Vivo codes were used and quotes, which seemed especially important, were transcribed for these interviews. This helped to quickly gain an understanding, what the participant actually said. (Miles et al., 2014) In general, it proved helpful to go back into the audio files in further rounds of coding and listen to what was being said, rather than looking into the transcriptions and quotes noted down, since the audio-recording contained additional cues, such as pitch of voice, hesitation and laughter, which necessarily get abstracted when transcriptions are made. (Miles et al., 2014)

In a second round of coding, all codes from the first round were read through in an attempt find general connecting patterns across the single interviews and between the accounts of different participants. (Goulding, 1998) A sketch of emerging themes and their connection

was made. In line with the literature reviewed, the different codes and their references to the participants in form of timestamps were put into a matrix structure. (Miles et al., 2014) This matrix was revised several times, as the coding was refined and more detailed understanding of the existing theory was established. The Research Question guiding the research was simultaneously revised and refined.

Since, existing theories, the statements of the participants and the interpretation of the author were intertwined in the analysis process, the results of the analysis will be presented following a structure that is driven by the concepts found. In the different topics addressed, first the interpretation of the author is discussed in line with existing theory. Afterwards, some examples of quotes from the participants, either stemming from the interviews or the diary study are presented to support the interpretation.

4. Analysis

4.1. General Music Consumption Behaviour

4.1.1. Extent of Music Consumed

Almost all participants in this study were reporting that they are listening to music extensively. In comparison to Tepper and Hargittai (2009), who stated that more than half of the students in their sample listened to music for more than 10 hours a week, which they perceived as much, and classified their category of most active listeners, as participants, who listened for more than 20 hours per week, some of the participants in this research project estimated that they listen to music to more than ten hours a day, which could imply that those old gradations should be revised. While for some other participants it was hard to say, how many hours they spent listening to music, all of them seemed to see music as an important aspect of their life and sometimes even connected it to their personality.

Berta: *"Maybe I am a music freak, okay. But I normally listen to music more hours than...like maybe 20...nearly 18 hours a day. [...] But I am listening to music like more hours than I sleep, I think. [...] I think it's all day [music played in the office]. Maybe it stops during the lunch hour, but...it's all day. Sometimes it's louder, sometimes it's less loud, but it's there."*

Abbas: *"Well music is like part of my everyday life, kind of. of course I use it when I commute, as I live in Greve, so it's like half an hour into the city, so I use music a lot to listen to and get the time passed. I also listen to it when I'm home, not frequently, but like sometimes."*

Kaisa R.: *"I listen to music always when I'm walking or waiting for something. Whenever I have like free time to listen to music I do it. [...] I 've been like really into music."*

Hanna: *"I can not live without it [music]."*

Alessandro: *"It's like I always got tunes in my head. [...] When people ask me 'What kind of music do you listening to?' or they present themselves as being active music listeners, like 'I listen to a lot of music and I spend my evening on Spotify', it seems strange to me, because I couldn't say how much time I spend listening to music."*

Angelika: *"You couldn't?"*

Alessandro: *"No, I couldn't it's just part of me, part of my daily life. I don't know how to tell you."*

Interestingly, one participant called herself a common music consumer, while according to the times she mentioned to listen to music normally, she would be grouped in the most active listener category of Tepper and Hargittai (2009). While she still asserts to have an interest in music, she said to not search for new music, which could be seen as the distinguishing factor in her eyes between a normal music listener and someone with a particular interest in music.

Jula: *"When I'm at home, studying, then it could be...yeah, then it would be more than 5 hours per day. In the weekends, at least 2 hours per day just music. [...] I'm just a normal user of music. It's not a certain interest. I mean, it is an interest, but as you can see it's not one of my most important things to discover new music all the time."*

4.1.2. Background Listening

The last quote could be considered in line with the fact that all participants mentioned that they mainly listened to music in the background, as a complement to other tasks, which could also be done without it. (Sloboda et al., 2008) The categories, which Sloboda et al. (2008) called 'travel', 'physical work', 'brain work', and 'body work' were widely represented in the accounts. Participants were stating to listen to music, while they were commuting or walking somewhere, studying or working, doing house chores, exercising at the gym, but also when they were eating, showering and meeting with friends. It seemed that the reduction of barriers to listen to music outside of the home and basically in any situation, through technology, lead to an extension of music consumption. (Brown et al., 2001; Sloboda et al., 2008) This could be seen in line with the extensive time the participants listened to music, mentioned above. Similarly to Brown et al. (2001), participants of this research project also mentioned, that they used music to enhance boring tasks. This could be done since listening to music did not call for their full attention. (Brown et al., 2001) One participant made this suitability for music as a background in his eyes especially clear, by comparing music listening to podcasts, which for him require more attention.

Angelika: *"And so, now maybe a bit more generally talking about when, like except for in the dance class, when are you listening to music?"*

Triin: *"When I'm commuting or walking to work or home, always like that. And sometimes at home, you know.. I'm doing chores, cooking or cleaning, so just for the background."*

Berta: *"Normally, in other offices, there is no music, and you work the same. Of course, I prefer it [the music], 'cause as I said, it helps me with my creativity and my job. But I think I would be able to do it without it also."*

Jula: *"It's mostly listening to music while doing other stuff, like cleaning and doing the dishes and stuff like that [...] I like the idea of doing two things at a time, while they have a different amount of awareness that they need. So, just doing the dishes is so boring that I would always listen to a podcast or see a TV program or listen to music while doing that. And the same, yeah, the same with all the other activities. I think it's just so much more fun to listen to something while doing that."*

Ben: *"But it [listening to podcasts] is time-consuming, you know, because they are more longer and they're talking, so you have to listen to them. So, it's different than music, which can be in the background."*

When asked how participants were choosing music to listen to in the background, most of them asserted that they were searching for something in accordance with their mood and emotions. While Sloboda et al. (2008) regarded emotional work, such as choosing music to complement or change their mood, as a distinct category, the statements of the participants of this research project suggested that this mood management could be found as an intention to listen to music in the background for other activities of the other categories. Brown et al. (2001) also stated that influencing one's mood was one of the main reasons for background listening, rather than a separate activity.

Monica: *"Usually it's about my mood. So what I feel like listening to and I use it as a background music for whatever other activity that I'm doing. So probably I am studying or doing some just manual task, and then I have it as a background music, maybe I'm cooking, and I have the music also as a background, or sometimes I just listen to it for the pleasure of listening because I find a new song that is exciting to me. And in that case, maybe I'm not doing anything else of the same time. Maybe it should entertain in a different way than the tasks you're doing. It doesn't mean that it is a boring task. But maybe if I'm sitting alone at home and I'm doing something I feel differently if there's music in the background than if it is complete silence."*

Many participants mentioned that they relied on recommendation algorithms or in general playlists, which were anonymously provided through streaming services when listening to

music in the background. While it seemed to be important to find music according to the current mood, another factor which was often addressed by the participants was time. They seemed not to be willing to spend much time on choosing background music normally. A possible reason for this could be seen, when one participant was stressing that she preferred to listen to single songs by various artists rather than a whole album. (Brown et al., 2001) So, in her eyes, changing the artist after each song was too time-consuming while she was at work, which lead her to use algorithm-generated playlists in this situation.

Berta: *"I normally don't listen to a whole CD, like an album, because I...at work...I really have to like a lot an artist or be in the mood to only listen to that artist, you know? So I really prefer a playlist [offered by streaming services] with different artists, and that's it."*

Angelika: *"Okay. And what is the advantage for you of having different artists in one playlist?"*

Berta: *"The thing is, I don't have the time to be...every time I want a change of artist, I have to look for it. So, I prefer having it on a playlist."*

Hari: *"I don't want to play only one song, I want to play many. But, I'm working, when I'm at the office, so I don't want to spend too much time listening to music. So, then [...] I would select a song, that represents my feeling, kind of, at the moment, like mood and then I would use the Spotify Premium account of my company, and there I would put that song, and I would go to the radio that Spotify creates, so basically the automatic list, that Spotify creates out of one song."*

While it seemed to be crucial for some respondents that there was music playing at preferably all times in the background, they mentioned to not pay much attention to the music being played in particular. One participant compared it to a soundtrack, rather than a topic that was actively paid close attention to and discussed with others. The main assessment factor for many participants seemed to be that the music is not felt to be disturbing. Only extremes of songs that were perceived as outstandingly good or bad appeared to be acknowledged. One participant even explained that he preferred music he disliked being played at his office over complete silence since the music fostered a desired atmosphere of conversation and exchange and made him feel less bored. In those situations when music was a background for other activities, participants also stated that they did not differentiate if the selection was made by a person or algorithm-generated.

Iliana: *"I think even though we are more...music is more into our lives, it's kind of more like a soundtrack and less a topic of conversation."*

Hari: *"Once I'm in the flow, or how you want to call it, like once I'm working, then unless the song is very annoying, I would not pay..like, I don't pay so much attention, while I'm working, to music, unless the music is very good or very bad."*

Hari: *"Usually , I don't like it [the music that is being played in his office]. Like, eighty percent of it."*

Angelika: *"Okay, and what do you do about it?"*

Hari: *"I really don't care, if they play a pop song, I don't know, it's all the time being played, so I'm kind of used to it, since I'm a kid, right. I'm in a car, and then they're playing radio. The songs, I don't like them, but they are just there. So, for me it's just like noise, it's okay. But I like that I'm sharing music with them. [...]"*

Angelika: *"So, even though it's not the music you like, you prefer it over silence?"*

Hari: *"For the office, I do. [...] I, in general, like noise for working. So, I would go to a café if it's too silent. And I was doing that a bit more often before [they started playing music all day at his office] because I was feeling that I was too bored at the office because there was basically nothing being played.[...] You don't feel bad when you speak with a co-worker when there is music being played because there is already some noise. And if it's complete silence and I have to talk with a co-worker of mine, I'm breaking the silence. So, it feels bad basically to talk [...] I think it creates a nice atmosphere, that says 'here you can talk, here we interact.'"*

Aleksandra: *"I use Spotify when I don't care what music I'm listening that much. If I'm listening for a purpose, I want to learn something specific or observe something new or develop my knowledge then I call my uncle. And hear if he can recommend something. But If I just want to cook, if I want to dance in the kitchen then I just go to Spotify. When I'm interested in new music. I would definitely go for playlists."*

Angelika: *"Okay. But, then rather for one that was done by a person or by an algorithm?"*

Aleksandra: *"I don't care."*

4.2. Sources of Music Discovery

The diary study of this research project showed that the respondents found music that was new to them in various ways, which supports the finding of Tepper and Hargittai (2009) and could indicate a fragmentation in the music listening consumption. A graphical representation of all sources of music suggestions mentioned during this research project can be found in Figure 2 at the end of this section. In line with Tepper and Hargittai's (2009) findings, in this research project, it was found that participants explored new music through technology, the media, and social networks, meaning friends, acquaintances, family members and colleagues. Since the term social network is also used to describe social networking websites, like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, the latter category is called "people" or "person" throughout this project. Differing from Tepper and Hargittai (2009), the category technology comprised recommendation algorithms of different music streaming providers, which either recommended songs, for example at the end of a playlist or album, called 'album [or] artist radio' on Spotify or entire playlists. Additionally, playlists which were potentially constructed by strangers to the participants and offered through those streaming providers were regarded in this category. While Tepper and Hargittai (2009) only mentioned traditional mass media, such as TV, movies, and radios, in this research project, participants beyond that, stated that they found music through online documentaries, and blogs. As a special case of music discovery source, artists, and so-called influencers, internet personalities, who often publish blogs or video blogs and are influencing large communities through social media, were mentioned by the participants. While they could be attributed to the category of media, since they are involved in activities of creating music or publishing works, in accordance with the participants' accounts, they were seen as part of the category of people. However, the scope of this research project did not allow for an in-depth discussion of these particular cases, which is why in the category of people, only accounts about the friends, acquaintances, colleagues and family members of the participants were regarded.

In addition to the three categories found by Tepper and Hargittai (2009), participants of this research project also discovered music through events and advertisement. However, those two sources of new music were not mentioned very often and not described in depth according to the authentication of participants, which is why they are not discussed further. For the same reason, and due to the limited scope of the research project, the special cases of artists and influencers will not be examined, and the use of media will only be considered to the extent that the data provided by the participants could be seen as detailed enough and significant for the aim of this research project. As the exploration of music presented itself as

very fragmented, (Amine & Smith, 2009) further sources of music recommendations could be conceived of. (Tepper & Hargittai, 2009)

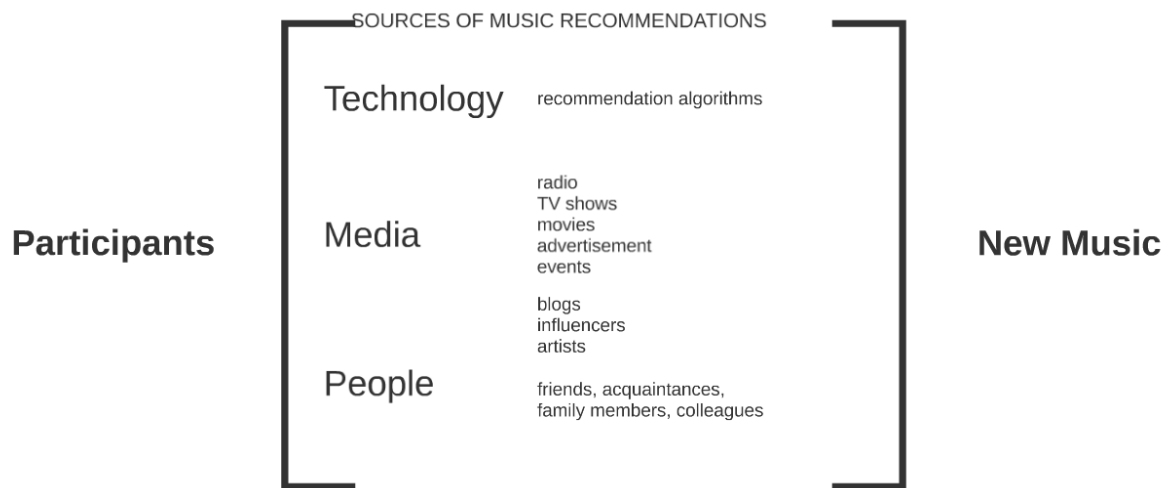


Figure 2: Sources of music recommendations mentioned by the participants

4.2.1. Media

Contrary to the findings of Tepper and Hargittai (2009), who concluded that for participants in their study, traditional mass media persisted to be the second most popular source of new music, participants of this research project did not often report a new song found through media during the diary study and also did not describe them as a main source of music exploration throughout the interviews. Only a few times, the radio, and in single cases also TV shows or movies were referred to as sources the participants relied on for music recommendations. In addition to those traditional mass media, which Tepper and Hargittai (2009) referred to, a few participants also found new music through new, digital media, such as online documentaries or blogs.

The role of the radio was often mentioned by participants during the interviews when they reported on how they were finding new music in the past. Interestingly, most of the participants were stating that currently they only listened to the radio when driving in a car, either as a driver or passenger. Also, a connection between listening to the radio and their home country was pointed out by those international students that were currently living abroad. While some were mentioning their parents, who still listened to the radio extensively as a possible influence factor, others were stating that they only ride the car in their home country, which might indicate a stronger relation between the activity of riding in a car and

listening to the radio, than the local factor of being in one's home country. Thus, it is questionable if the radio could be seen as a way to connect to the local culture and community practice of their countries of origin and accordingly is considered as an authentic source for music recommendations. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010) When asked about why they were listening to the radio in the car, the participants either discussed technical reasons, such as the need for a cable to connect the phone to the car's sound system or habit, which could be interpreted in line with one of Tepper and Hargittai's (2009) three assumed determining factors of adaptation of technology, namely to what extent the technology is seen in line with existing habits.

Even though two participants said that they still listened to the radio on a regular basis, it seemed to be regarded more as a source of information rather than of new music discovery. One participant mentioned that she exclusively listened to spoken radio programs in which news were elaborated, or particular topics were discussed in depth. It seemed like in both examples the main goal was rather to learn something about either current topics or language through the radio than to retrieve new music recommendations. This argument could be used to question Tepper and Hargittai's (2009) suggestion that traditional mass media, such as the radio was primarily used to find new music. Another participant was stressing the importance of foreign language learning through listening to a radio station in that foreign language, Swedish.

The account of the participant stating that the most important reason to choose the radio for her was that they were speaking Swedish, which was a foreign language she was learning, could lead to the question if radio programmers should be still regarded as cultural intermediaries. In regards to music, she was stating that the music played was similar to other radio stations and not a distinct factor in choosing this radio specifically.

Kaisa I.: "It's in Swedish, the radio and..but they are mostly playing the same songs.. but only speaking in Finnish so, eh Swedish.. so it's [laughing] yeah."

Angelika: *"Okay, and why do you listen to that?"*

Kaisa I.: *"First, I want to hear some Swedish sometimes, to practice my Swedish and then they are play[ing] the same kind of songs as the other stations."*

This could be seen as an indicator, that the framing by a particular cultural intermediary, here a radio programmer, had no substantial impact on distinguishing between radio stations, which could be interpreted, in line with Jones et al., (2005), as a sign that radio programmers were not seen as authentic in this context. Thus, it could be called into

question if the work of radio programmers as traditional cultural intermediaries and their distinct habitus, is actually legitimizing the acceptance of their music recommendations in delimitation to other radio programmers in the eyes of the consumer. This would mean that the classification of radio programmers as cultural intermediaries by Bourdieu (1984) should be called into question regarding contemporary relevance.

Altogether, it seemed striking, that apart from some specific examples, mainstream media and the associated traditional cultural intermediaries, such as radio programmers, were not mentioned as a contemporary source for finding new music. Since media, traditional and digital, was not mentioned to a high extent participants did not elaborate on their account why they chose to listen to music recommendations coming from the media in a way that pointed to some connecting patterns of authentication. This is why media as a source of music exploration will not be discussed in terms authentication further on in this research project. The focus of the following analysis will be on the authentication of music recommendations of technology and people from one's social network as sources of discovery. Figure 3: Focus of this research project illustrates the choice of music sources that will considered for further analysis.

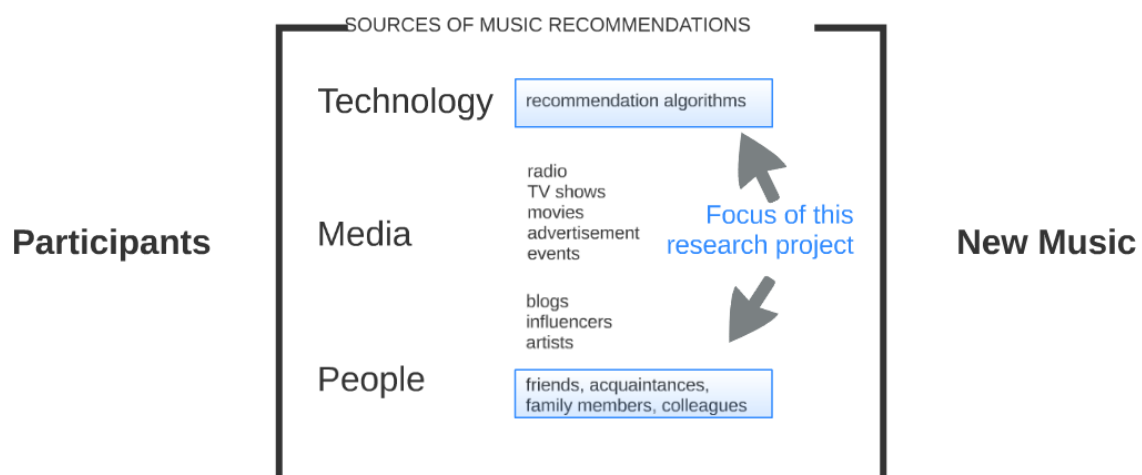


Figure 3: Focus of this research project

4.2.2. Analysis of Authentication

When talking about why they seek out and accept or reject music recommendations from either technology or people, many participants showed signs, that this consideration was part of an authentication process. If the music suggestion seemed trustworthy in the situation, participants were willing to listen to it, which indicates that they value the recommendation in terms of their time and attention. (Hesmondhalgh, 2013) Whether or not a music recommendation was seen as authentic, seemed to be at least partly negotiated in line with the goal to connect or to assert control. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010) When the participant could use a music recommendation to connect to others, culture, or community, the music recommendation was regarded as authentic. Also, if the participant perceived he or she had control over the consumption process, the suggestion was accepted as authentic and listened to. On the other hands, some examples show, how participants were looking to obtain those two goals of control and connection through music recommendations, but did not feel like they were successful. In those cases, the recommendation was seen as inauthentic, and since the participant did not assign value to it, the suggestion was not listened to. (Hesmondhalgh, 2013) Since this represents a pattern, which was found in previous theories about brand authentication by Beverland and Farrelly (2010), and control and connection were also independently identified as important in music consumption, (Krause et al., 2014; Tepper & Hargittai, 2009) technology and people were chosen for further analysis in terms of authentication. (see Figure 4: Overview of Analysis of the authentication process)

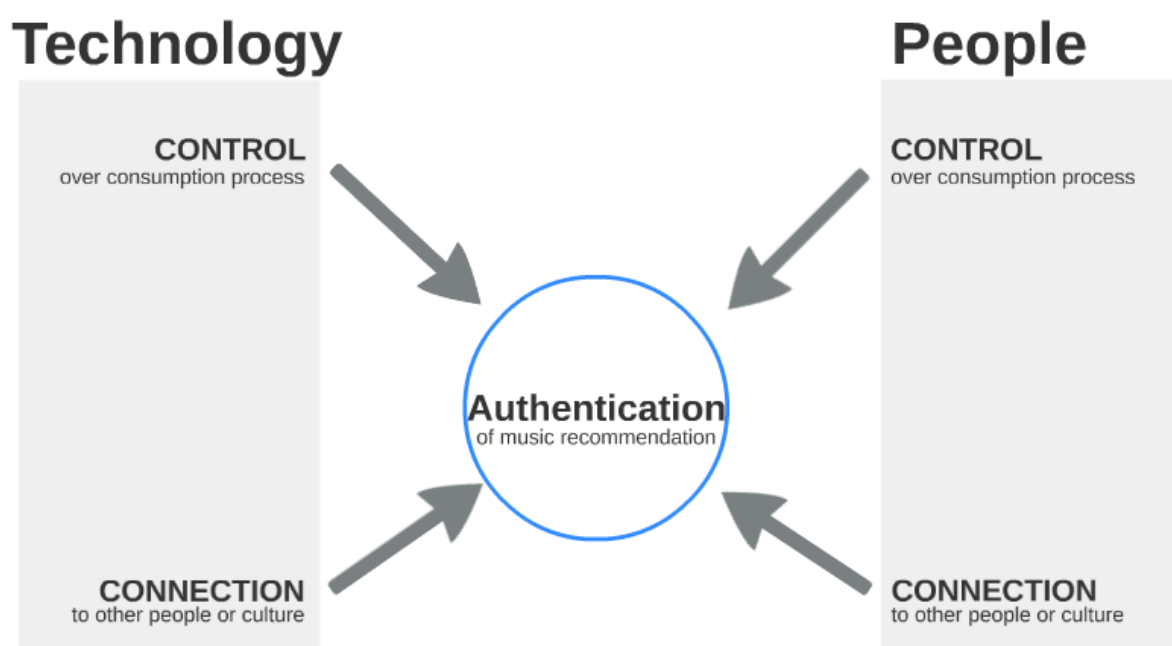


Figure 4: Overview of Analysis of the authentication process

4.2.2.1. Technology

In the following part, examples will be discussed, which show how participants of this research project try to fulfill the goals of controlling the consumption process or connect to others when deciding if they accept or reject a music recommendation by technology. The technology that was mentioned in the context of music discovery were recommendation algorithms, either suggesting single songs at a time, which Spotify called 'radio' or through algorithm-generated playlists, which can be found through streaming services. First of all, the general understanding of the algorithm by the participants will be described. Then, examples, which showed the importance of control, when choosing to accept or reject music recommendations from technology are discussed. Those are the impression to be able to come to an informed judgment, skipping and sampling, algorithms interrupting the expected silence at the end of an algorithm, and the joy of finding something by oneself. Finally, the goal to connect to others and culture could be seen, when participants rejected music suggestions from technology, due to the lack of possibilities to connect.

4.2.2.1.1. Understanding the Algorithm

As mentioned by Morris (2015) participants of this research project as users of the recommendation algorithms seemed to have some basic understanding what an algorithm does. However, while Morris (2015) pointed out that there was a difference between what he called 'end-point providers', such as Spotify or Deezer, which take care of the legal aspect of music distribution and infomediaries, like Echo Nest, that are cumulating and analyzing data and enabling the framing of music recommendations based on this information, participants did not make this distinction in their accounts. Also, Striphas (2012) noted, that the term 'algorithm' remains quite specialized, despite its' significant increase in use since the 1960's. This is why the mention of Spotify, YouTube, Apple Music, SoundCloud and the like should in the following be understood as addressing the recommendation algorithms behind those music services rather than their 'end-point provider' function.

4.2.2.1.2. Control

According to the accounts, control could be gained by looking at the title, context, and preview picture provided by streaming services, in order to independently judge the music recommendation. Another way to control was seen when participants relied on their first-hand experience through skipping and sampling music suggestions. The wish for control could also be seen, when the participants felt they lost control, in the case when a recommendation algorithm was suggesting them songs at the end of an album when they preferred silence. Then, in the descriptions of the joy of finding music by oneself it could be

seen, how high the perceived control over technology by some participants was. Those examples are analyzed in line with Krause et al. (2014), who found control crucial in music consumption and Beverland and Farrelly (2010), who pointed out the importance of control for goal-driven authentication.

Informed Judgement through title, context, picture and number of followers

One point in the authentication of technology as a source of music recommendations could be identified in the perceived control participants had over their music consumption process, through the offer of information, which seemed relevant to the participants, so that they felt technology enabled them to come to an informed judgment. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Krause et al., 2014) Even though, Beverland and Farrelly (2010) found in their study that participants were looking for verifiable performance benefits and solely relied on first-hand experience, if the value of a product or service only arose upon use, participants of this research project showed signs of an attempt to build an informed judgement from the information provided around a music recommendation. In order to do so, the participants of this research project mainly relied on the title of a recommended playlist, the context of familiar songs and artists that were also in the playlist and the preview picture. Most participants mentioned to look for a combination of those cues, and it was not possible to unwind the interdependencies and which relative importance each piece of information had for the participants. Contrary to the findings of Beverland and Farrelly (2010), emotions conveyed in those cues were appreciated by the participants. A connection could be made to the statements described before, that participants were saying to mainly choose their music in accordance with their mood or feelings.

Angelika: *"So, why do you think you use these suggestions [on YouTube]?"*

Alisa: *"That's a good question. [laughing] I think because it's offered and you can see it like visually on the side of YouTube, and it's kind of you see it, yeah you see it that it is there on the side. So, you know that there's the offer and then maybe you're curious to check out more and find out what YouTube suggests. But actually, it's not really like what YouTube suggests. I don't think about 'ah, YouTube suggests me that and that.' It's more like, you see the music, and you think 'ah, maybe that's something I like.' So, more like that. Yeah, so because it's an offer and maybe also because of the images sometimes. That I think 'ah, that's a nice image' and then I click on the song. [...] I don't have to search more, yeah. It's already there and you can already, only by looking at the artist, the song, and the image, you can already kind of have an idea of what the song, how the song will be, more or less. Not really, but..yeah, to make up your mind."*

Alessandro: *"Because that's how it works. We are looking for emotions in songs, and we need to use our rationality to look for them. Isn't that crazy?"*

Miro: *"I think in Spotify also, because emotions are a big thing for the music, to choose it and then you have there the playlists, where you can choose your songs or playlists according to your mood."*

One indicator participants mentioned to use, when they were trying to choose between different playlists suggested by the Spotify algorithm, was the title and pictures in the preview. One participant mentioned the connection between those and her mood. She expected the title and the picture to tell her a story and convey the mood that she could match with her current mood and expectations. Accordingly, title and preview image were used to gain control over the choice of music recommended through an algorithm, by allowing the participant to form an independent judgement, (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010) even though the cues hold emotions, because the participants' choice of music seemed to be driven by mood, feelings, and energy. (Brown et al., 2001)

Ben: *"Yeah, there are like, in this popular ones 'moods' [playlists on Spotify], I don't know, there are a lot [of playlists]. I don't know; I like the title, the pictures, I don't know."*

Berta: *"I normally look a lot on the title of the playlist. Like, for me it has to tell me a story, let's say. [...] And then, depending on how I feel [...] It normally goes with the mood, like which picture there is, then maybe I go in and see what songs are there."*

Participants stated that in order to come to an informed judgment, and thus take control over their music discovery, they looked at the songs and artists around the recommendations for new music by the algorithm, for cues of similarity. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010) Since the technology allowed them to go into a playlist and see which other songs are associated with the music that is being recommended, it was judged as authentic. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010) For one participant the context of other songs, in which additional new songs were recommended was central to her decision-making process in regards to choosing an algorithm-generated playlist. Yet, another participant mentioned to only look at the surrounding songs and artists in a technology-based playlist as a criterion for exclusion, preventing that there would be disturbing song recommendations interrupting her every-day life. Context can accordingly be seen as a way to gain control over the music consumption in different ways. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010)

Berta: *"I don't really look for a playlist with songs that I don't know, just to discover it. It's like I go into a playlist [in Spotify] and maybe I know eight of the song and I'm like 'ok, maybe the rest is similar ' so I will like it, do you know and then I discover it. [...] And when I like the title, I go in and check some of the songs, maybe I know some of them, you know. And if I love these songs, then I listen to rest. [...] I only look at the songs."*

Kaisa I.: *"But if I see on the list [in Spotify] that artists which are there are like annoying for me or something like that, then I wouldn't listen it."*

Then, participants used the number of followers of a playlist recommended through technology as an information influencing their choice. This could be seen both as a way to take control of the music consumption process, as well as to connect to other users of the music streaming service and thus to the music listening community. As Tepper and Hargittai (2009) pointed out, people seemed to listen not only to what they personally liked but for them, it was also important to know songs, which others could potentially also enjoy. This could be connected to the fact, that music is also used to connect with others, to start a conversation and to reinforce relationships. (Tepper & Hargittai, 2009) Popular songs, that are familiar to many people could facilitate this connection and thus lead to an authentication of those mainstream playlists, even they are often not perceived as an ideal fit to personal taste (Ward et al., 2014; Beverland & Farrelly, 2010) In this case also the instrumentality of looking at the follower number could be seen, since the participants used it as a way to allow for a comparison leading to the best result in relation to the effort and time they are willing to put into the search. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010) The streaming provider was in this case perceived as an authentic source of music recommendations, because it provided the information that participants thought of as leading them to an accurate comparison, giving them control. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Krause et al., 2014)

Miro: *"I think I always look for the followers [of a playlist]. How many followers does it have? And always then look also at the name. [...] I think they [the most popular playlists on Spotify] are not the best, but in some occasions, they are good enough."*

Ben: *"Yes, the one in the beginning, you look how many people are following it. If there are like a lot of people it's more...it's probably better. Even though it's not maybe on average true. No, on average it's maybe true, but not in every single case."*

Angelika: *"Okay, and what would you say are a lot of people that are following? How do you decide what is enough for you to make a choice?"*

Ben: *"I don't know, I guess 100.000+ is a lot. But it also depends on, you know, if it's made by Spotify US or Germany, or...because if it's like from a small country, there are not so many people listening to it. So, maybe this is not a good criteria, I have to admit."*

Alisa: *"Mostly by the first ones that they suggest [Spotify playlists] sort of. But this doesn't mean that it's always a good thing to take that, because then it's very...yeah, sometimes it's very mainstream or not exactly what you want to hear, but usually I take the [...] it's mostly the first ones that pop up, that I look at. I don't know if it's laziness...or if it's just that it's easier and then maybe...It depends, sometimes I also spend more time on it, but if you very quick want to hear a playlist, then it's maybe the easiest to try the first ones that they show, that pop-up."*

Skiping and Sampling

It seemed that for many participants skipping and sampling was an important way to gain control of their music exploration through first-hand experience, leading them to see streaming technology as an authentic source for music recommendations. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Krause et al., 2014) Participants reported and also demonstrated throughout the task in the interview, that they skip through a song, to gain an impression whether they might like the song. One participant said that this is a method she particularly used when she was actively searching for new music in order to not invest too much time into listening to a song she might not enjoy. (Hesmondhalgh, 2013; Tepper & Hargittai, 2009)

Triin: *"I usually click through it, I get the vibe at least, and if I don't like it, I leave it, and I go for something else."*

Valeria: *"I listen to it a little bit, and usually I just go on some minutes, for example, one minute and a half to see if the song...if I like the songs also in the middle part, in the central part and then I decide."*

Kaisa R.: *"When I listen to new songs, sometimes if I actively search, I normally I might not listen to them from start to finish, I might like, you know, go forward a little bit and take bits there."*

Angelika: *"And why do you do that?"*

Kaisa R.: *"Just to know faster if I like it or not."*

By doing so, the participants were using the possibility of streaming services to sample music to experiment, since the commitment was perceived to be very low, without additional monetary consequences, and also the little time that needed to be invested to listen to only parts of a song. (Anderson, 2006; Tepper & Hargittai, 2009) Contrary to the assumption of Aguiar and Martens (2016) participants in this research project were not mentioning or even rejecting the need to own songs and were also not inclined to buy songs they had sampled. Skipping through a song could be seen in line with the findings of Beverland and Farrelly (2010), that in the case of goods, services or experience for which the value arose through their use only personal experience could lead to authentication. It also could be seen as an argument against Tepper and Hargittai's (2009) assumption that media audiences prefer to be rather passive.

Aleksandra: *"It's easy to listen to find and listen and if you don't like it just skip and look for something else, so it's not a big deal if I find something I don't like."*

Alisa: *"Then I would click on it and see 'Ahh, is this something I like?' and maybe not even listen to the whole song, but just the beginning and then like...move on in the song and then just see 'Ahh, is this something I like?' and then either listen to it 'til the end or look for something else. There can always be songs that then you listen to, and you're like 'Ahh, no, I don't like that so much' [...] 'I just click on another song [...] I don't feel like I am forced to listen to that song. So, it's very free.'"*

Ben: *"Yeah, I prefer streaming or like Spotify, instead of owning all the music, you know. It's just much more convenient, you can listen to all the kind of music, without buying it directly. So, before you always had to own it and now you can just listen to it and pay your monthly fee."*

Another way of quickly gaining personal insight, with low perceived effort was listening to a playlist done by a recommendation algorithm or an unknown person, distributed via music streaming platforms, often in the background and then skipping songs if they were not liked or not fitting the mood. In this situation, the participants still felt in control, but at the same time mentioned that they did not want to invest time and did not even pay much attention to the music, unless it was perceived as very good or disturbing. For both cases the participants felt like they could easily respond, taking control of the consumption experience. The music recommendation technology platform was thus seen as an authentic source of music proposals in this situation because it allowed the consumer to pursue the goal of

asserting control over their music consumption through skipping. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Krause et al., 2014)

Kaisa R.: *"When I am like passively searching when I am already listening to music and...then I am normally just listening with the random..like randomized thing [the shuffle function]."*

Hari: *"And once I'm in the flow or how you want to call it, like once I'm working, then unless the song is very annoying I would not pay...like I don't pay so much attention while I'm working to music, unless the music is very good or very bad. If it's either both...I would either save it or go to next one, right."*

Abbas: *"Either if I like it, then I listen to it and then if I like it a lot I put it in my own playlist, if I don't like it then I just swipe on... swipe on"*

Silence in the end of an album

Two participants talked about their dissatisfaction with Spotify recommending them new songs after listening to a whole album, even though they reported to have found new songs they liked through this feature. After an album of an artist or a playlist, whether self- or pre-made, was finished playing the music previously just stopped, resulting in silence, while currently additional single songs were automatically played by an algorithm. Both participants were not sure if they would come to like the feature and just preferred silence at the end of an entire album played out of habit. In order to negotiate if such a recommendation could be justified in this context, one participant discussed with a friend about the new feature and both came to the conclusion that they did not appreciate it.

In light of this, the participant started to reflect on the perceived control over the music choice as low, while at the same time admitting that this perception might not be true. She said to feel like being trapped in an ever ongoing loop of music recommended, from which she cannot escape easily. (Lugosi, 2016) In this situation, the negative effect of feeling not to have control even seemed to overrule the acknowledgment that she liked the songs that were being recommended, and rendered the algorithm as inauthentic for making recommendations in this situation. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Krause et al., 2014) On the other hand, the participant remarked that she could actually easily change the song and through this regain control over her music listening experience. However, the silence is still perceived as favorable, to offer a point of reentry into choosing a new music listening

experience. For this reentry the participant claimed to have already thought through an array of possible successors beforehand, resembling some plan of music experience, which needed silence in order to be controlled.

Hanna: *"Because usually it's just like you just put a list on and then it just goes and goes and goes, on and on, and then it wouldn't let you much outside...another good music there coming up and I don't know."*

Angelika: *"So you would prefer silence at the end of the list, even though you found new songs that you liked actually, also through that feature?"*

Hanna: *"Yeah, maybe the silence, because then I can be like 'okay'...'cause usually I'm like 'Okay, I'm gonna listen to this list until the end, then I want to listen to that band and then that, so it's like...I kind of like the silence, because then you're like 'Okay, now I can listen to something else.' But of course you can always always change the song, if you want to, you don't have to listen to the list until the end [laughing]. And, it's just weird. Something, like, I can not explain, why I want it to be the silence."*

Also, the second participant expressed her wish to control which music was being played when choosing to listen to a particular album. The goal in this situation was not to find new music, but seemed to rather be in line with her statement, that she listened to albums and the whole repertoire of one artist in order to understand it in context. This could be seen as an indicator that she was trying to establish some kind of connection to the artist through the music. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010) In order to do so, she reported listening to the works of this one artist repeatedly. The first time she listened to a song she claimed to not pay attention to the lyrics, which was, however, a crucial part of her understanding of the music. A music recommendation by the algorithm seemed to be intruding in this attempt to focus on one artist and seen as a loss of control over the music listening experience, which made the algorithm lose its authenticity in this context. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010) She reported to actively choose to listen to playlists generated by Spotify, when she wanted to discover new music, taking control of the discovery process and consciously authenticating the algorithm. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010)

Angelika: *"So, you prefer the silence at the end [of an album played]?"*

Jula: *"Yes, because then I actively choose an album which I want to listen to and it's that album that I want to listen to, and I don't want to find new, like I don't want to discover new music. When I wanna do that, then I'm listening to a playlist, like a generated playlist by Spotify. [...] Listening to something very excessively or listening to one artist excessively, that's enough. Then I don't need so much new input. Because I'm maybe trying to*

understand the whole work of an artist. [...] Because today I was just at home and listening to Spotify and then I get really irritated when I'm listening to an album, which I saved on Spotify and then suddenly it just, I don't know, it always ends with this one band, what is it called? With the song, "Radioactive" and I'm just freaking out because I don't want to hear this song anymore."

In general, it seemed like having control over the music consumption when listening to an album of a specific artist was very important for the participants. When the recommendation algorithm automatically suggested them songs at the end of an album, they became irritated and developed negative feelings towards this perceived loss of control. In this context, the technology was not seen as an authentic source of music recommendations, because it did not allow the participants to take control. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010)

Joy of finding something by oneself

Some participants talked about the joy they gain from discovering new music by themselves and that they perceived it as more authentic than finding music through other people. In all three cases the feeling to exert control over the music discovery process renders the music exploration experience authentic, (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010) two of the participants even perceived the control over the algorithm as being so high that they could declare songs discovered to be found by themselves, even though they acknowledged that an algorithm was helping them. While one participant attributed it to good luck if she discovers new music by randomly browsing the internet, another reflected, that the perceived independent search on the web was also mediated by algorithms in some form or the other. However, for her the music recommendation by the YouTube algorithm was authentic, because it was only seen as a display of information for several options to listen to, enabling her to make an independent judgement, which she based on the artist, the song title, and the preview image, thus giving her the impression of an informed choice allowing her to take control of her own music discovery. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010)

Monica: *"I think it's just good luck that I find something just browsing on the internet [...] Yeah I still feel better when I find the song myself, and it's just a small band that no...not many people know about. And I feel it's more authentic and I like it more. I like it better. "*

Alisa: *"But sometimes you also don't want to follow the algorithm and you just...like you wanna like find it yourself [...] .it's always something like music is very personal, and I would not always trust the algorithm. [...] Maybe you can't say it exactly like that because*

sometimes it can also be that the algorithm suggests sth and then you're like 'ah, that's nice, and I wanna continue from that.' But I, for myself, I would say, I like to search for music and then if I find something myself that I like, or I just find inspiring or something it gives me more enjoyment, if I find it myself than if I find it by the algorithm, but it doesn't mean that I'm completely, I don't take advantage of the algorithm at all. So, I'm also open for the suggestions [...] you're always in touch with an algorithm, it's maybe only that I think I found it myself [laughing] and in the end, it's another algorithm that showed it to me. Yeah, it's maybe only that I believe I did it myself, but actually, it's not really like what YouTube suggests. I don't think about 'ah, YouTube suggests me that and that.' It's more like, you see the music and think 'ah, maybe that's something I like'. So, more like that."

Additionally, one participant stated the need to find something by himself, instead of relying on recommendations of friends, because he connected music to feelings that were very individual. Although he stated the importance of discovering it himself, since he trusted himself the most, he accepted the help of a recommendation algorithm. One reason, why he regarded the recommendation algorithm as authentic to help him discover new music in this situation he mentioned the possibility to gain first-hand experience and thus control, (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010) through sampling and skipping options as a way to experiment, which the streaming service enables. (Anderson, 2006) Then again, he said that the algorithm had all relevant information about him, in order to make authentic suggestions, which could be seen as an attempt to control the recommendation process by loading the technology with information. This assertion also showed how the collective nature of recommendation algorithms, drawing on data from a lot of sources from a large community, was not noticed and instead the technology was seen as highly personalized. (Morris, 2015; Webster et al., 2016)

Alessandro: *"I like to discover my own music alone...If I decide it's a period for exploration [...] I don't decide, it comes spontaneously, as intuition. [...] Because what I feel is not what everybody else is feeling [...] But usually, as a matter of fact, I tend to trust myself more than I trust others. I mean it's good to have insights and comments and information from others, but I want to find the right way for me before...what I want."*

Angelika: *"How do you do that?"*

Alessandro: *"I experiment, it's heuristic, learning by doing, that is good, that is not good, positive, negative; if something is positive, I go ahead, and then I try to fine-tune the direction I take. But sometimes I just say 'no okay, this is too much for this period I want totally something else.' I remember a song that is totally different, then I listen to that song and try to find similar songs in that area."*

Angelika: *"How do you do that, find similar songs?"*

Alessandro: *"I let the algorithms help me. Let's say that the algorithm is kind of a friend, but kind of a friend..."*

Angelika: *"...that you trust more than your real friends?"*

Alessandro: *"Yes, because I can teach this friend. Well, just to care. Okay, first of all, this friend just cares about me. And it's totally about me, so it knows all my tastes. and I'm completely open about my tastes with this algorithm, my friend."*

Angelika: *"Why so?"*

Alessandro: *"Because it's a machine, it's what helps me. And I don't have to give anything back. There is no political issue here."*

Although it could be argued in accordance with Morris (2015) that the algorithm is socially constructed, in fact combining assumptions of the creators of the algorithm with the behaviour of all people using the service, as well as with the past music listening activity of the individual, participants of this research project did not seem to see the recommendation algorithm to connect them with other users but rather as a personalized tool. This tool is perceived as tailored specifically to them, based on individual, past information on their own music consumption. (Morris, 2015; Webster et al., 2016) However, one participant reflected on the role of the programmer of the algorithm and questioned his own perception on the objectivity of the algorithm. (Lugosi, 2016)

Alessandro: *"And also, people have their mental frames and mental models from which they interpret reality. So, algorithms may have the mental frame of their creators. But, I don't know, it's a machine actually, they're not objective either, but that is a perception."*

4.2.2.1.3. Connection

Participants of this research project showed their goal to connect to others and especially also culture when they tried to obtain music recommendations from recommendation algorithms. However, the accounts show, that participants often did not feel, like the technology could connect them to others and thus rejected those music recommendations, seeing it as inauthentic in this context. Then again, the participants expressed the wish to connect to others, also by using technology for music exploration. Even though this goal could not be currently fulfilled, and those music recommendations from recommendation algorithms were rejected as inauthentic, participants seemed confident, that technology could eventually become an authentic source in this regard.

Music recommendations from home country

A special case, showing that the participants could not connect to others through technology, was when they saw a music recommendation as inauthentic if they wanted to listen to music from their home country. The music scene of the countries of origin was regarded more differentiated by the participants, than just in terms of nationality and popularity. They seemed to perceive that technology could not grasp the complexity of culture and thus music recommendations from the recommendation algorithm were often seen as inauthentic when it came to music from the participant's home country. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010) While the recommendation algorithm was said to be better suited to recommend English and popular songs, the recommended music from the participants' respective home country was assessed in terms of various additional factors, for example, the content of the song and political associations of the artist. This could be due to the fact that the mere scale of the English-speaking music market provided significantly more data, drawing from a larger user base for the recommendation algorithms, in comparison to quite specific markets in for example Romania, Italy or Finland. (Beer, 2009; Lugosi, 2016) However, the statement of one participant from Finland, that the recommendation algorithm also worked for recommendations following an English song by a Russian band, could indicate that the music recommendation of music from the home country was assessed in terms of their authenticity according to different factors and in more detail, in order to reinforce a connection to the culture. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010) On the other hand, the same participant seemed positive that technology could be improved in this regard and eventually be seen as an authentic source for music recommendations from her home country.

Monica (from Romania): *"It doesn't work too well for me. For example today I was using it, and it started from a nice Romanian song that I like from an artist that I like as well. And then some other songs from him continued playing. But after that, it just degenerated into really bad Romanian songs that I really didn't like. So I just stopped the music."*

Alessandro (from Italy): *"And sometimes I can see that they just take the nationality of the artist or the fact...for example, I listen to an Italian, how to say in English? Songwriter? yeah, songwriter, I play the radio, and it just relates to other Italian songwriters, which are considered more or less famous, but maybe they're more politically engaged or they talk about different stuff, or they're kind of boring. So, sometimes it's trustable, sometimes it's not a good idea. I think it's more trustable when it refers to global music, so to big hits or commercial music, English based."*

Hanna (from Finland): *"If I'm listening to Finnish music or a Finnish band, but they are singing in English, then after that, Spotify, maybe they will put again there some Finnish music, that they're singing in Finnish and it's not like the same style of music. The only common thing is that that's a Finnish band. [...] When I was listening to some Russian band 'Everything is made in China' and after that they started some like the album radio, where it was similar songs, I don't know if there were some Russian bands, but the music style was really, like similar and it was fine, but when it's like too different...like I'm listening to some, maybe, some Finnish pop music, like indie pop music and then there is suddenly JVG [popular Finnish rap duo], it's not nice. And then I'm like really 'What's happening? What's happening? Why this song is playing on my Spotify? But I think there is something...they just need to improve it and then it's probably going to be fine.'"*

4.2.2.2. People

In the following part, examples will be discussed, in which participants showed that they wished to fulfill their goals to either connect to others or have control over the consumption process, in order to see a music recommendation from people in their social network as authentic. While other people, such as artists and influencers, were also sometimes mentioned, due to the scope of this project, the following analysis will focus on the social network of the participants only. This means the role of control and connection will be analyzed, for those situations when participants accepted or rejected music suggestions from their friends, acquaintances, colleagues or family members. In terms of control, the ways participants tried to gain control over the recommendation process, were seen in estimating the time someone spent on music listening and arranging playlists, as well as in the reliance on past experience with that person. Participants showed their wish to connect to others or culture through music recommendations by people, when seeking music from their home country and when they talked about the emotions which could be shared through music suggestions.

4.2.2.2.1. Control

Even though gaining control over the music consumption process seemed not to be the main goal of the participants, when they asked other people for recommendations, they showed some signs, that control was still a desired goal. One way of anticipating if a music suggestion from another person could be valuable and thus should be listened to, was estimating the time this person spent listening to music or creating the specific playlist

containing recommendations. Another way to control, which people could offer trustworthy, authentic music suggestions, was to rely on past experience with that person.

Estimating time spent as a way to control

One point that seemed important for some participants, when they are assessing if a music recommendation should be accepted or sought from a person in their social network, such as friends, colleagues or dance teachers, was the time they thought this person normally spends on listening to music. This was also one of the factors one participant mentioned when she reflected on what kind of person could create a better playlist than an algorithm. For one participant it was especially important that the person did not only listen to music a lot of time but also to many different kinds of music, proving a flexible mindset. Another participant pointed out that people who listened to a lot of music had a wider array of songs to choose from and usually only picked one song to recommend. All these examples could be seen as a way to try to gain control over the music recommendation process and thus authenticate song suggestions from people in their social network, through estimating the time they spent on listening to music or creating the specific playlist. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Krause et al., 2014)

Miro: *"The people, I follow on Spotify, are those who also listen to a lot of music. So, I know that they have spent a lot of time listening to it, but at the same time when they are making playlists, they filter some of the songs. So, when I go, also the time is important. When I go, and I follow them, I go and listen to their playlists; I know they have spent some time doing those playlists. [...] But also, I know these friends listen to a variety of songs, so it's not only one type of songs. Like, I know I could find some new songs from their playlists."*

Kaisa R.: *"Because a person could still pick the songs a little bit better than an automated system that only picks the genre and doesn't really know everything about the music."*

Angelika: *"What could a person do better about that?"*

Kaisa R.: *"Well, I think like choose the songs more specifically, you know not just like 'okay, everything that has a tag 'deep house' or something . Maybe they could have like a specific style of deep house or whatever."*

Angelika: *"And which kind of people could be good at doing this?"*

Kaisa R.: *"Well, music enthusiast, DJ's, people who listen to a lot of music."*

Hari: *"I find that people when they hand-pick the songs, and they're going to recommend it to you, I don't know, they just come up with songs that are very good. [laughing]"*

Angelika: *"And how do they do it?"*

Hari: *"I think because people generally listen to a lot of music. I don't know if it's everyone, but some people listen to a lot of music. and then they will have to choose between 1000 of songs they like."*

Similarly, one participant mentioned, that if she was choosing the music for a party, where music played a major role, she preferred to spend time on the selection of songs, because she believed, that the time she spent would be valued by the guests of the party, and honoured through a positive effect on the image others had of her. In this case, the participant tried to position herself as a trustworthy source for music through spending time on creating a playlist for a party. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010)

Berta: *"People, will say...if they have a good time because they know the songs and they like them, then...I don't know; they will have a positive image from me, which is because....that would mean that they also like valued, that I have spent time to doing the playlist."*

Past experience as a way to gain control

When getting music recommendations from their social network of friends, acquaintances, colleagues and family members, one way to control, which suggestion to listen to and thus to render authentic, (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Krause et al., 2014) was based on past experience with that person, especially in regards to music, but also in general familiarity with the other person. Participants were often stating that they had some kind of feeling, who could recommend them new music that they might like, mainly on the presumption that they listened to similar music. Several participants reported to get good music recommendations from others by chance and based on this experience, trust or at least the hope that this person could recommend more good music was being built. One participant described this as a status, that needed to be gained first, and afterward, he was accepting all recommendations from these persons since he had assessed them and marked them as an authentic source for music exploration. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010)

Alisa: *"Since I've now discovered some musicians that I like that he [her flatmate] suggested, I would also say that I have some sort of trust in, if he likes something, it could be something that I like, too."*

Monica: *"So, for example, if I know that I would never like the kind of music that my colleagues like...for example, there is this one particular guy who listens to rap or just Danish rap and I know I wouldn't like that, so I never take his suggestion seriously."*

Hari: *"In the beginning, like sometimes I just ask everyone, but usually, I kind of know, who can have a taste more similar to mine in music. [...] I once asked a guy [colleague in his previous office] 'Can you recommend me a song?', and I discovered so much music out of it, that from that moment on I started to ask people. [...] First of all, I knew that that guy was very much into music from that moment, so I just kept asking that person 'ey, can you recommend me another song?' or maybe 'Now, I'm feeling in this mood, do you have something for me?' [...] I mean, you just have to gain the status of 'good music taste for me', right. So, as I said like sometimes it's just co-workers because they recommend me a good song, then suddenly they have a good status for me and then I would appreciate any song that they would recommend me."*

Kaisa R.: *"Not everyone, I just followed some [of her friends on SoundCloud]"*

Angelika: *"And how did you pick?"*

Kaisa R.: *"Well, I think I picked by what kind of music they like. So, if they like the same kind of music, I would follow them. [...] I have one friend who's like a 'house music goddess' so, I would ask her. [...] Because she's a DJ and I've known for years that she has been very enthusiastic about this kind of music, so I trust her."*

Abbas: *"I know that a lot of my music my friend, Anne-Mette, [...] She has like an incredible music taste. [...] We lived together in Aalborg. We studied together. I know her from high school. [...] And we also went to Indonesia [to study abroad] together. So, we're really...we're best friends. But I have like a lot of the music that I listen to, then and also now, is from our collective research and basically most...majority wise hers, because she knows a lot of music."*

4.2.2.2.2. Connection

Most important, when considering whether or not a music recommendation was authentic and should be accepted seemed to be the possibility to make a connection through the music, either to the recommender or culture and community as a whole. The latter could be seen, when talking about music recommendations from one's home country. The wish to connect to the person suggesting a song, could be seen through the accounts about how music can serve as a means of communication and sharing feelings.

Music recommendations from home country

In regards to music from his home country, Finland, one participant saw a human from either Finland or Scandinavia as a more authentic source than technology, since for him a

connection to the local culture was an important factor. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010) However, by reflecting on the fact, that Spotify is based in Sweden, belonging to the Scandinavian culture he wished to connect to, it could be regarded as possible, that the culture of the programmer of Spotify's recommendation algorithm could enable authentic recommendations for music from the participant's home country through technology. (Morris, 2015; Webster et al., 2016) However, it should be noted, that this connection to culture, rendering authenticity, still relied on a person. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010)

Miro (from Finland): *"I think for me. I don't know, I like also a playlist that is done by human, but then again in some occasions, I don't know, I might also listen to a song, playlist that's done by the algorithm, it's not that big of a...important actually for me...maybe actually in that sense it's important when I go listen to playlists which are maybe more towards Finnish people, so then I maybe.. it's cultural then. I know this person probably is from, well if it's a Finnish playlist , maybe from Tölöö [a district of Helsinki], maybe not, maybe from Scandinavia, maybe from Sweden where Spotify is from... culture affects those choices."*

Sharing emotions through music as a way to connect

Often participants gave as a reason, why they listened to songs recommended by people in their social network, and accordingly saw them as an authentic source of music discovery in that context, that they were trying to connect with the recommender. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Tepper & Hargittai, 2009) They mentioned that they believed that the other person wanted to express and share their feelings through the music and said that they mainly listened to it to understand those messages and overcome a distance. In this way, relationships could be seen as being reestablished through music as one way to communicate and create shared experiences. (Green, 2016; Tepper & Hargittai, 2009) Whether or not the song recommended would be liked by the participants seemed secondary to them in this situation of considering the authenticity of the other person for suggesting songs and consequently listening to the music.

Angelika: *"And why would you listen to all the songs your close friends are posting?"*

Alessandro: *"to feel.. to overcome a distance and to share some common feelings I would say. To get to know what this other person is expressing. What is this person communicating with this song?"*

Ilina: *"For example, if it's my best friend, who doesn't have good taste in music, I wouldn't care, I would still press on what they're listening to, just to feel connected. It's fun."*

Hari: *"I find that people when they hand-pick the songs, and they're going to recommend it to you, I don't know, they just come up with songs that are very good [laughing] [...] I don't know if it's everyone, but some people listen to a lot of music. and then they will have to choose between 1000 of songs they like and I don't know if they do it based on what they think I like or just something that is really deep into them. I think there are some songs that are very deep in the feeling, so the mood they prompt and those songs are, I don't know, they're more likely to be recommended by the people who I usually ask."*

Jula: *"But it was also...it was specific that one song, that she wanted to share. Because then I'm also trying to figure out what she likes about this song, or why she wanted to share it. So, I wanted to listen to it again, because the first time I'm mostly just listening to the music and I don't really pay attention to the wording, but I really appreciate that, too. So, that's..I think that's why I'm listening to it again a second time, to concentrate more on what is actually being said through the song."*

Angelika: *"And why do you think your friend wanted to share the music?"*

Jula: *"I'm not sure. I think she had some memories with it. It wasn't a new song or anything like..it wasn't a brand new song."*

Sometimes, participants said, that they also shared music with others. Reasons behind this were mostly, also to share emotions and sometimes also to start a conversation about the music, and thus reinforce relationships. (Tepper & Hargittai, 2009) Connecting to the others through sharing emotions appeared to be the main goal of sharing songs for the participants and making them authentic to recommend songs to others. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010) Interestingly, it was important for them to underline, that they were especially interested in music, and one participant even called himself an early adopter. While, contrary to Tepper and Hargittai's (2009) assumption, no participant mentioned that someone being a first-mover was crucial for seeing them as an authentic source of music recommendations, this could be an indicator that this aspect plays a role in assessing oneself as an authentic source for suggesting music and could have an influence on the willingness to share music.

Miro: *"I share music also, I think for me it's just because, I mean, they have affected my emotions either...hopefully in a positive way. So, and I think also because I listen to so much music I think I have a pretty good feeling what is a good song, what is not that good song, so in that sense I'm, how do you say, a first comer or something like that. and then, they have affected my feelings and maybe even...even I want to share that good feelings to my friends as well. And also, because I think I listen to it so much and it's like interesting to talk about kind of music styles and new songs with your friends, so that's why I share it also."*

Angelika: *"Do you like to share your music?"*

Kaisa R.: *"Yeah, I do. [...] It's a social thing, and I 've been like really into music. It's a nice topic to talk about."*

One participant, however, commented that the attachment of feelings and memories to a song by people was a reason why he preferred the recommendation algorithm. He mentioned that for humans the connection of a specific song to particular emotions, experiences or people, did play a role in recommending music, the machine might have general underlying subjective patterns but wouldn't attach this kind of experience or emotion to a single song. In this situation, the goal seemed to be to exert control over the music exploration process and preferably receive an objective recommendation, free from personal emotions or memories. This could be seen as an attempt to gain agency through independent decision making, free from emotional influences by others. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010) The technology was considered to be a more authentic source for this purpose by the participant. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010)

Angelika: *"You feel they [recommendation algorithms] are more objective? Or they can give you better recommendations?"*

Alessandro: *"Yeah, because I link different songs to specific events or to specific people or to experiences, to good, emotional experiences in my life, and other people do the same, while a machine don't."*

This section showed, that the participants were trying to pursue both goals, control and connection, by accepting music recommendations from technology and people from their social network. While the main goal mentioned in regards to people was connection, participants did also find ways to assert control over the consumption when accepting suggestions from others. However, the accounts could be interpreted in a way, that control played a greater role regarding recommendation algorithms. The participants reported more available ways to gain control through technology, than when they relied on advice from other people. On the other hand, connection to others seemed to be sought through technology, but this goal could not be fulfilled for the participants. An overview of the topics discussed on this regard can be found in Figure 5.

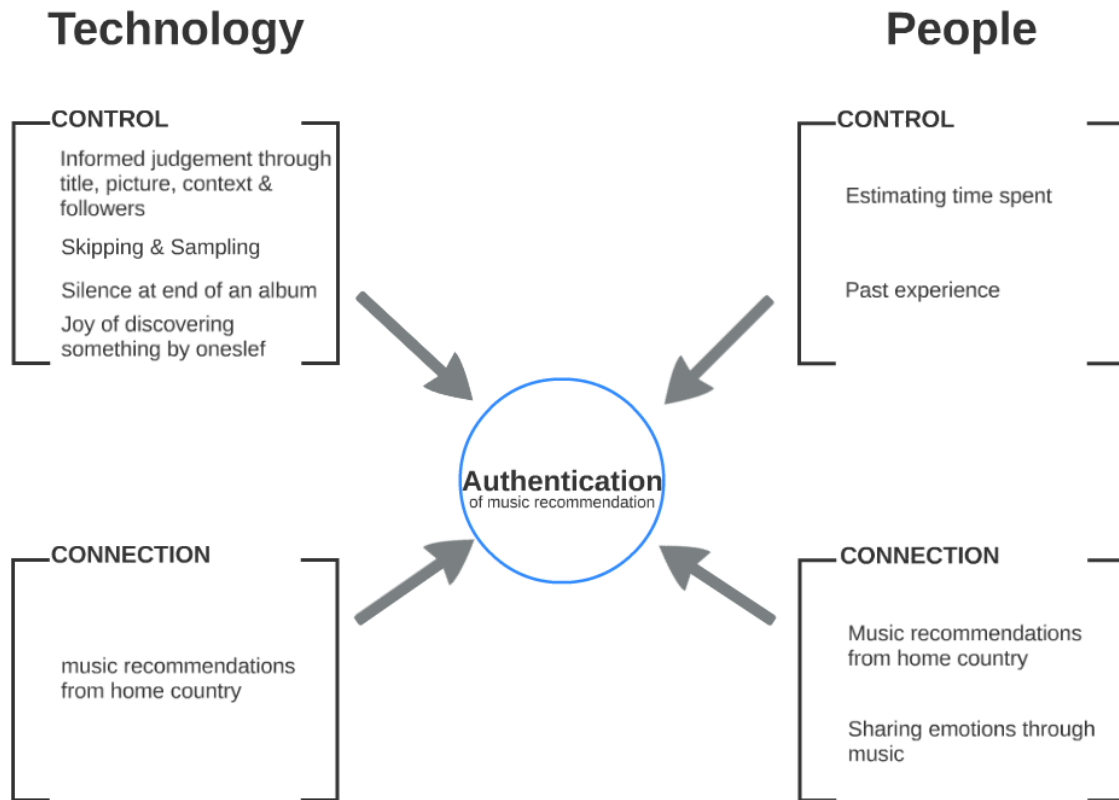


Figure 5: Overview of topics discussed in the authentication of music recommendations from technology and people

4.3. Reactions to Perceived Failure in Music Recommendation

The goal of taking control over the music discovery process became especially apparent through situations the participants reported in which they felt they had no control over the technology recommending them songs. In those contexts, the recommendation algorithm was not seen as an authentic source of music recommendations anymore, due to the lack of control the participants could exert. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Krause et al., 2014) One participant mentioned that since she was unable to skip as many songs as she would like, without having the experience interrupted by ads, as a 'free-with-advertisement' Spotify user, she did reject at least part of the services. Along with this, she mentioned having strong negative feelings in this situation, because she could not use the service as she liked and shape her music consumption.

Aleksandra: "But, eh then after if I don't like a song I am very moody about songs, and I don't like it, I just wanna skip it. But then when I skip it five times, then eh there is an ad, so basically, for me it was ad and then ad and then an a..another ad. [...] But then Spotify without having Premium account I cannot of skip and skip and skip. What makes me angry. So, I'm not having my own playlists, just because I think Spotify wouldn't let me use it as I like."

Many participants mentioned that they were expecting the recommendation algorithm to get better if they were skipping songs. This could show the influence they perceive to have on the algorithm. Contrary to Morris' (2015) claim, that users might underestimate the amount of information which is gathered by recommendation algorithms, participants of this research project seemed well aware, that their behaviour was monitored and expected the algorithm to learn about their preferences by the information conveyed in skipping or rating a song. (Morris, 2015; Lugosi, 2016) The promise of recommendation algorithms that every step of the music consumption process was tracked and turned into an ever more personalized suggestion of songs, (Morris, 2015; Lugosi, 2016) lead participants to raise their expectations and become less accepting of perceived failure of the algorithm to recommend them songs they liked. While most participants, stated that they first skipped some songs, in order to give the algorithm a chance to learn and get better in its suggestions, or start the autoplay from a different song, repeated music recommendations, which were not liked, lead the participants to stop relying on the algorithm for music recommendations in this situation, interrupt the music consumption as a whole or sometimes even strong negative feelings. This could be interpreted as situations in which the recommendation algorithm technology lost its

authenticity in the view of the participants because it did not allow them to fulfill their goal of controlling the music discovery. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010; Krause et al., 2014)

Monica: *"Well, I don't give up so easily, so first I, I tried to just find another song and then in hope that the auto play will be better and if it doesn't work this other time then I just stop."*

Alisa: *"I think actually before I skip the playlist or change the entire playlist, I would skip the song and then see 'ah, maybe the next song is something I like' or yeah, or the next after that. [...] I would say I expect the next song to be better, but it's not always the case. Sometimes it can also happen that I skip, like five songs, and then if the sixth song is still not what I want, then I would skip the entire playlist. Yeah, I would say this is definitely something that happens, that sometimes it doesn't feel like it gets better."*

Hari: *"Because I don't want to waste time. Usually, I use Spotify at work, and then I just want to do one click and magic should happen. [...] And sometimes actually if the auto-function is very bad then it would actually make me kind of angry. I expect to have music that is aligned to my mood, and it's not. So that's very bad for my working day, so to say."*

Angelika: *"Okay, and what do you do about it?"*

Hari: *"Either I stop music, I take the headphones off and...yeah, or I spend some time finding something that aligns with my mood."*

Alessandro: *"Let's say that the algorithm is kind of a friend [...] Okay, first of all, this friend just cares about me. And it's totally about me, so it knows all my tastes. and I'm completely open about my tastes with this algorithm, my friend [...] I also think that I got little time. I'm doing lots of stuff during my days. I just don't have time to teach an algorithm properly... even if that maybe would give me better songs. But I mean, it's also a product, if I'm paying for that, Spotify could do better. It's not my job to teach a machine, but maybe it's necessary."*

Contrary to the reactions participants showed when a recommendation algorithm was suggesting them music, that they did not like or did not perceive to fit in with the context, the participants seemed to take such misplaced recommendations by people with indifference, amusement, or even thought of it as interesting. Even though the songs themselves are not appreciated in the context, those situations seemed to resemble peak music experiences, fundamentally differing from the standard music consumption behaviour and were thus seen as special. (Green, 2016) Some recommended songs, which were not liked stuck out in such a manner, causing irritation, that they became a shared memory with this person, serving as

a funny anecdote. Those reactions could be interpreted as a sign, that the goal of exerting control over the recommendation process was secondary to the goal of connecting to the other person in those situations, preserving the regard that the other person was an authentic source for music recommendations. (Beverland & Farrelly, 2010)

Hari: *"Sometimes I get like deeply disappointed when they say, like 'I don't know, just play Justin Bieber' right, and it happens, but then I say 'Yeah, okay' and then I just play my music. [laughing] [...] they would just play it [pop songs] in front of me, and I wouldn't mind. I would never ask for a trendy or pop song because it's already been played a lot of times. So, usually when I ask I'm trying to find hidden gems and that's of course hard to find"*

Alisa: *"Sometimes he [her flatmate] is also torturing [laughing] me with stupid songs."*

Berta: *"But other days he [her colleague choosing the music being played at the office] is like 'Okay, today' and he says it, 'Today, I'm feeling like listening to rap music', so he only puts rap music...maybe he plays a song three times in a row, like the same one [laughing]"*

Miro: *"You know, I think also that an algorithm, whether or not... if they make a playlist also it could affect, like it would fit really well to my taste. But maybe when a person has done it I know like, there might be bad songs as well. and I might be like 'no worries, this is your song and taste' and it's really hard to argue... the tastes of the songs and maybe it's even like...for me it's sometimes surprising that some people chose this song to this album and then I'm like 'ah okay, so you think it this way'. I wouldn't choose this song maybe to this album and then it's like 'We are human, we're different human beings, and different people select different songs, ' and it's interesting for me."*

Abbas: *"I remember, one of my friends, she's Finnish, I met her on my study abroad to Indonesia. [...] It was her birthday, so I was like 'Oh my god, I want to do something nice' so, I googled 'Happy Birthday song in Finnish' and I wanted to put it on her Facebook wall. Just like 'let me just do this for her.' And I didn't understand a word of it because Finnish and Danish are not alike at all [...] We were still on our study abroad in Indonesia, so we lived in this hotel, and she came [...] up to my room. [...] She said 'What is this post on my wall?' and I was like 'Happy Birthday.' And then she started laughing out loud. And I was like, I started laughing as well, and I was like 'Why are you laughing? This is weird.' [...] And then she was like 'Do you know what you sent me?', I was like 'Yeah, Happy Birthday song,' she said 'no,' it was the national [...] anthem of Finland. And then I was like 'What, really?' [...] and then we laughed about it, and it was like our thing. And then we came back to our*

respective countries, then afterwards I also sent it to her again as a joke [...] and then she laughed, and she was like 'Thank you so much!' You know, it became a thing. I think I'll do it for her again now because it's like...let's see. [...] And also because she was so happy about it because she knew that my..the thing I wanted to give her was a happy birthday, so she liked the value in it, that I was giving her. Even though it wasn't what came out, she knew that I only meant good. So, that was kind of fun. And I also laughed about it, because it was like so stupid but so funny, you know."

All in all, this could indicate, that as long as connection was the main goal sought in music exploration, a suggestion of a song that was not perceived to fit was not rendering the source of music recommendations inauthentic for future inspiration. Since technology was not seen as a way to connect to others by the participants, they reacted with strong negative feelings to a misplaced suggestion. Also, the account of the participant rejecting music from friends and other people, because they attached their own feelings to songs, showed that the lack of perceived control lead to rejection of people as a source of music recommendation in this context. However, whenever connection was the major goal pursued, which was only the case with people recommending music in this research project, the recommendation of a song that was not liked, did not necessarily lead to declaring the source as inauthentic. At least, the reactions to a perceived failure in music recommendation were not that strong, if the music facilitated a possibility to connect to others.

5. Conclusion

Despite the social constructionist nature of this research project does not allow for generalizations, neither for other groups as the sample under study nor for the general behaviour of the very people participating in it, some processes at the core of meaning making of consumer behaviour amongst international students could be identified.

All in all, the goal-fulfillment of control and connection seemed to play a major role for international students in the authentication process for both, technology and people as a source of music recommendations, even though to a different extent. While a failure in getting good music recommendations evoked strong negative feelings if control was the main goal, the wish to connect to others appeared to make the participants more accepting of deviations.

Control seemed to be of particular importance when consulting technology for music recommendations. This control could be exerted in the eyes of the participants through skipping and sampling, in order to gain first-hand experiences or through forming a perceived independent judgment based on the title, context, the number of followers and preview picture of suggested music. The importance of the perceived control for rendering a source authentic could be seen in the examples when a lack of feeling in control lead to rejection of the music recommendations from technology by the participants. The ability to connect to others, a place, culture or society as a whole, through technology was seen as limited. On the contrary, participants expressed their dissatisfaction in their failed attempts to connect to the culture and community of their home country through technology, which for them marked the algorithm to be inauthentic as a source of music recommendation in this context.

The accounts, in regards to people giving music recommendations and their authentication, showed signs of a great importance of the goal to connect with others. In regards to recommendations of music for his home country, the attempt to connect to culture, the society and also individuals of the country, was especially apparent. Another important factor which many participants mentioned was to share emotions through music. So, a song recommendation was not only seen as some piece of art the other person valued, but also to convey a message about the feelings, present situation and state of mind of the other. In line with this, participants said to listen to song recommendations of their close friends, in any case, irrespective of the assumption whether or not they are going to like the music

proposed. The participants mentioned what could be seen as ways to gain at least some degree of control over the recommendation process when seeking or receiving recommendations from other people. One approach was to assess the time this person giving the recommendation spent on listening to music generally, or how long they were perceived to have devoted to creating a playlist. Another point which was often reflected on in connection to how the participants made sense of their acceptance or rejection of authenticity of music recommendations by different people, was through past experiences.

While the perception of losing control over the music exploration through technology lead to strong negative reactions, if an unwanted song was suggested to the participants, the acceptance, that the recommendations of other people could never be fully anticipated or managed rather seemed to lead to indifference or amusement in response to music that was not perceived as appropriate in the context. Some participants even stated that a deviation from what they expected to be recommended by a person in the given situation rose their interest. In line with the findings above this could be seen as an indicator that the acceptance for deviations was higher when connection was the main goal pursued. On the other hand, strong negative feelings seemed to result, in those cases when the participants mainly wanted to exert control over the consumption process and got a music recommendation that differed from their expectations and was interpreted as a failure.

In answer to the Research Question, it could be said, that international students interpret the authenticity of music recommendations in regards to the possibility to fulfill their goals of gaining control over the consumption process and connecting to others. Those two goals affect the reaction to a perceived failure in music recommendations in different ways.

6. Implications

6.1. Further Research

This research has shown, that goal driven authentication in terms of control and connection could be used to understand how consumers accept or reject different music recommendations. Other possible goals relevant in this process should be researched in order to get a fuller picture of the authentication process. While this research, due to its limited scope, focused on recommendation algorithms as technology and persons from the participants' social network as sources of music discovery, the other sources of music exploration found in this or other research could be similarly analyzed. Especially, artists and influencers promised interesting insights about the distinction between recommendations of people and technology. Further research could also attempt to analyze media, and the associated traditional cultural intermediaries, as a way of music exploration in a similar way, in order to find structures of goal-driven authentication, which could then also be compared to the findings of this research project. This would enable researchers to elaborate, from a consumer perspective, what exactly the distinguishing and uniting factors between cultural intermediaries, infomediaries and the social network of a person might be in terms of new music recommendation, if there are any. Similarly, that no distinct opinion leaders could be spotted out in this research project does not mean that the concept of opinion leadership could not be relevant in distinguishing different music exploration goals and music exploration behaviour. Research that sheds light on different and similar goals in the authentication of opinion leaders or omnivores compared to less involved music consumers could bring additional insights into the discussion of both, the concept of cultural intermediaries as well as on opinion leadership and omnivorousness.

The interviews in this research project were a one-time event with each respondent. Interviewing the same respondents several times over time could have given additional insights, (Warren, 2012) especially into how music consumer behaviour changes over time for a specific person as well as possible changes in self-perception.

Because the constructionist approach of this research project presumes that social reality is discussed between individuals, in this case between the researcher and the respondent, this research project only uncovers the perception of the respondents arising from negotiation with the specific researcher, representing one version of social reality of music consumption

behaviour of the particular respondents. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008) Thus, it would be interesting to examine how the constructed reality of music consumption changes by interviewing the same respondents with another interviewer or in a focus group, in order to allow the respondents to interact and make sense of their music consumption with alternative input. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008)

Since this research project was based on a sample of international students, it would be interesting to conduct a similar study with students that have been staying in their home country all their life, in order to find cues if there are differences and similarities in how home-based and international students negotiate the authenticity of sources for music recommendations. Furthermore, the participants of this study were originally from Europe, or held a double-nationality, having a passport of a European country. Conducting a study in this vein with students stemming from other parts of the world, living in a foreign country, could illustrate if there are common structures in the way international students authenticate in terms of their music consumption behaviour.

6.2. Practical Advice

Through looking at the process of music exploration from a consumer perspective, insights which are relevant for practitioners working for streaming services, as traditional Cultural intermediaries, or in the field of music in general, and possibly other cultural creative industries, which face a similar influence of technological advance on distribution. Understanding how consumers interpret the worth of a music recommendation in terms of their ability to take control over their own consumption and the will to connect to others could point out which value propositions the respective professionals should focus on for developing and promoting their service.

Since in regards to technology, gaining control was the main goal of the participants, streaming service providers could focus on ways how to give more control to the consumer. On the other hand, the fact that participants in this study did not show any sign that they could connect to others, places, culture or communities through music recommendations by recommendation algorithms, does not mean that this is not a relevant factor in this case. As was shown above, some participants tried to connect to culture through technology, and even though they perceived those attempts to fail, for now, one participant was positive that technology also could fulfill this goal in terms of music recommendations in the future. Thus, it could be relevant for technology companies and especially streaming services to consider ways, how they cater this wish to connect through their music recommendation offers. This

was particularly seen to be relevant in light of the strong negative reaction of participants to a displaced music recommendation if control was the only goal pursued by using technology. According to the findings, that the possibility to connect to others through music recommendation resulted in higher acceptance of song suggestions which were not according to the taste, and still making the recommendation seen as authentic, music streaming providers should consider offering ways to connect with others as a means to reduce those negative responses. This could result in overall higher consumer satisfaction concerning those services.

On the other hand, traditional cultural intermediaries and other people that are involved in the framing of cultural goods, should try to make use of the finding that people seem to be more often seen as an authentic source of music recommendations according to the connection they allow the consumer to establish with others, culture or the recommender him- or herself. Cultural intermediaries, such as radio programmers, should reflect on the ways they could allow the consumer to connect through their specific music recommendations, making them seem more authentic and valuable. Especially, if cultural intermediaries could establish the wish of the consumer to make a connection with themselves personally through their suggested music, they could also possibly benefit from the higher acceptance of music recommended that does not fit the taste of the consumer. Then, in regards to the finding that the wish to control the music exploration process played at least a secondary role, those human gatekeepers should think of possibilities for the consumers to exert control over the recommendation process.

By considering how they could enable the consumer to fulfill their goals to control the process and connect, professionals involved in the framing of music recommendations, could appear as more authentic and thus valuable in the eyes of the consumers.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - E-mail for participants

Dear [participant's name],

Thank you so much for helping me out with my Master's thesis research!

I would like to ask you if you would be willing to participate in a diary study for my Master's thesis. The aim of my Master's thesis is to get an insight into consumer behaviour in the field of music. So, I would be interested in finding out how you find new music.

I would like to ask you to either fill out an online form or write down notes each time you discover a song that is new to you for a week. The online form can be filled in either on a computer or smartphone. On smartphones you can store it on your home screen, to make filling out even easier and faster. Please try to answer the questions as detailed as possible, all aspects of your music discovery are relevant.

If you haven't discovered any new songs in any of the days, please still make a note about that or visit the online form, and submit it just stating your e-mail address.

To follow-up on your notes and discuss other relevant points you would like to add, I would like to conduct an interview with you after the week of diary study is over. The interview would last around 45 - 60 minutes. You don't need to prepare anything for this interview. If you wish confidentiality of the information you will provide me; we can talk about different ways to ensure this (confidentiality forms, changing name for the report, deleting recordings after the study is completed). Participation in this study is voluntary, meaning that you can stop taking part at any time, without giving any reason.

Thanks a lot for your participation!

Cheers,
Angelika

Appendix 2 - Diary Study Tool Assessment

Tool	Price	Platforms	Daily reminder	Answer formats	Test
<u>Day One</u>	free	only iOS	-	-	-
<u>Dscout</u>	starting from 295\$	web, Android and iOS	-	-	-

<u>7daysinmylife</u>	upon request	web	-	-	-
Google Forms	free	web, mobile optimized	no	text	successful
<u>experiencefell ow</u>	14-day free trial, afterwards ranging from 9-160\$	Android, iOS	not automatically, push notifications can be sent manually	video and text	only one question can be put, not sure if data analysis is so easy since there is no CSV export option
<u>Nativeye</u>	5 day free trial, afterwards 150-750\$/month	-	-	-	-
<u>Ethos</u>	free for students	Android, iOS, and Blackberry		video, audio, and text	not sure how to publish the study, the account has to be verified which takes several days
<u>The Thinking Shed</u>	upon request	Android, iOS	-	-	-
<u>Contextmapp</u>	free up to 5 participants, then 399-999€/3 months	Android, iOS	-	-	-
<u>Miituu</u>	upon request, annual service plan	Android, iOS	-	video	-
<u>Journey HQ</u>	upon request	Android, iOS	-	video, audio, and text	-
Dovetail	free Beta	web	yes, at the same time to all participants	text	sending each question in a separate mail
Lookback	14-day free trial, afterwards 29-59\$/month	Android, iOS, Mac	-	screen capture	no questions can be set up; it's a screen capturing tool
Paco App	free	Android, iOS	-	text	diary study could not be shared with participants

Appendix 3 - Diary Study Online Form

Diary Study Music Behavior

Thank you very much for helping me with my Master's thesis research!

The aim of this research is to get an insight into consumer behavior of music. How do you consume music? How do you find new music? How do you organize your music selection?

All information submitted will be treated confidentially. Names or connections between the data and quotes will not appear in the final report in a way that single people can be identified. Participation is voluntary, so you can decide to discontinue participation at any time without stating any reasons.

*Required

Email address *

Your email address

In which situation did you discover the new song/artist?

Your answer

How did you find out about the new song?

Your answer

Did you find additional new songs through this song?

☐ Yes

☐ No

How did you find additional songs from the discovered song?

Your answer

Did you save the new song in order to listen to it later?

☐ Yes


☐ No

Where did you save the new song in order to listen to it later?

Your answer

☐ Send me a copy of my responses.

☐ Ich bin kein Roboter.


reCAPTCHA
Datenschutzerklärung - Nutzungsbedingungen

SUBMIT

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

Appendix 4 - Interview Guide

How do you consume music?

- In which situations do you consume music? Is it the main activity or do you listen on the side?
- How frequently do you listen to music (actively/passively)?
- Why do you listen to music? What do you expect from music listening to do for you?
- Which devices do you use to listen to music? Why?
- Is there a difference in how you consume music when you are alone VS in a group? (genres/devices/speed of selection)
- Do you listen more to familiar music or new music? Why?

How do you find new music?

- Do you actively search for new music? Where? Do you get exposed to new music passively? How and by whom/which device)? Why?
- What do you expect from a source of new music? Are there any sources that fulfill those needs particularly well/badly? How so? How did you get to know those sources?

Task: Could you please try to find a new song now, which you like? Please comment on your thoughts and actions while searching for a new song.