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ABSTRACT

In the context of increasing global mobility, it is important to examine our understanding of the concepts of 'place' and 'home'. Viewing both home and place as multi-faceted and dynamic emotional and social constructs can help us understand how people relate to the world around them. An approach which considers the processes that affect and inform the sense of place or construction of *urban home* for immigrants living in the city can shed further light on the experience of mobility/migration at the urban level. Despite the fact that Ireland is a country with a long history of emigration and a strong diasporic identity, the place-making processes of Irish emigrants in Europe have not received as much attention as those in English-speaking countries resulting from previous waves of migration. This thesis uses an operationalised framework based on the work of Fathi & Ní Laoire (2021) to explore the experiences of Irish emigrants in Copenhagen and Madrid. Taking an approach to place and home as concepts which are dynamic and unfixed, it highlights the ways in which this interesting and varied community constructs urban home and form a sense of place in the city, and ultimately, how this helps them to understand their place in today's fast-paced world.

Im Zusammenhang mit der zunehmenden globalen Mobilität ist es wichtig, unser Verständnis der Begriffe "Ort" und "Heimat" zu überprüfen. Die Betrachtung von Heimat und Ort als facettenreiche und dynamische emotionale und soziale Konstrukte kann uns helfen zu verstehen, wie Menschen mit der Welt um sie herum in Beziehung stehen. Ein Ansatz, der die Prozesse berücksichtigt, die das Gefühl für den Ort oder die Konstruktion der städtischen Heimat von in der Stadt lebenden Zuwanderern beeinflussen und beeinflussen, kann die Erfahrung von Mobilität/Migration auf städtischer Ebene näher beleuchten. Obwohl Irland ein Land mit einer langen Emigrationsgeschichte und einer starken diasporischen Identität ist, wurde den Prozessen der Ortsbildung irischer Emigranten in Europa nicht so viel Aufmerksamkeit geschenkt wie denen in englischsprachigen Ländern, die aus früheren Migrationswellen resultieren. Diese Arbeit verwendet einen operationalisierten Rahmen, der auf der Arbeit von Fathi & Ní Laoire (2021) basiert, um die Erfahrungen irischer Emigranten in Kopenhagen und Madrid zu untersuchen. Ausgehend von einem Ansatz, der Ort und Heimat als dynamische und nicht festgelegte Konzepte betrachtet, wird aufgezeigt, wie diese interessante und vielfältige Gemeinschaft ihre urbane Heimat konstruiert und ein Gefühl für ihren Platz in der Stadt entwickelt und wie ihnen dies letztlich hilft, ihren Platz in der heutigen schnelllebigen Welt zu verstehen.

PREFACE

Like many other people on this planet, I've been bouncing around from place to place for years now. Almost ten, to be precise. Throughout these years, I have been unknowingly and repeatedly finding my own sense of place, constructing a feeling of home, and navigating my own (Irish) identity, in a vast array of spaces. This research has given me the chance to reflect upon these life experiences in depth. Researching and writing this thesis over the past year-and-a-bit has been not only academically enriching but personally, too.

First of all, a massive thank you to all of the participants in this research, for sharing their (incredibly varied and interesting) experiences, and for the genuinely lovely conversations. A special shout out to the representatives of the Irish Embassies of Copenhagen and Madrid for their insights, and for putting me in touch with members of the Irish community in each city who I might not have reached otherwise.

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IRISH IMPACTS ON THE URBAN LANDSCAPE



All photos are author's own

From top left anti-clockwise: Copenhagen St. Patrick's Day Parade, Saint Martin's 'Urban Irish' Pub in Valencia, San Bernardo metro station in Madrid during *Semana de Irlanda*, Madrid's first St. Patrick's Day parade

ABSTRACT

In the context of increasing global mobility, it is important to examine our understanding of the concepts of 'place' and 'home'. Viewing both home and place as multi-faceted emotional and social constructs can help us understand how people relate to the world around them. An approach that considers the processes that affect and inform the sense of place or construction of *urban home* for immigrants in the city can shed further light on the experience of mobility/migration at the urban level. Despite the fact that Ireland is a country with a long history of emigration and a strong diasporic identity, the place-making processes of Irish emigrants in Europe have not received as much attention as those in English-speaking countries resulting from previous waves of migration. This thesis uses an operationalised framework based on the work of Fathi & Ní Laoire (2021) to explore the experiences of Irish emigrants in Copenhagen and Madrid. Taking an approach to place and home as concepts that are dynamic and unbounded, it highlights the ways in which members of this interesting and varied community construct urban home and forms a sense of place in the city, and ultimately, how this helps them to understand their place in today's fast-paced world.

Keywords: Place, space, urban home, community, Irish diaspora, Irish networks, migration

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION



1. INTRODUCTION

Today's world revolves around movement; whether of people, capital, or information. This change in pace has huge implications for the way we live and for the way we understand our place in the world. *Place* is a term with many meanings – but for the vast majority, myself included, any mention of place is likely to bring to mind a set or bounded point in the world; whether that is something as small-scale as our favourite spot by the fireplace, our house...or maybe something at a larger scale, like our town, city, or country. All of these understandings of place are valid. However, what if we stop to think about the other meanings of *place*? And then, what about *space*? How are these two things related?

Space and place are terms that come up quite a lot in everyday life in the way we speak to each other. If someone warns you to “know your place!”, they are telling you to be aware of your position in relation to power. We refer to places where we feel comfort as “safe spaces” – so, spaces can also, therefore, offer a sense of security. These examples may seem trivial, but I have included them for one very important purpose which is fundamental to this thesis; they show us that far from a purely academic construction, our understanding of both *place* and *space* can have real-life implications in how we experience the world.

This thesis begins by exploring different understandings of place and space in academic literature; highlighting how both are multi-faceted concepts which are ultimately dynamic processes rather than static objects or geographically fixed points. Then, another key concept is introduced; that of *home* – something which requires further examination in light of the increasing mobility of people across the world. Viewed - like place - as an inherently social construct (*home is where the heart is*, after all), home emerges as much more than simply a physical shelter, or the place we grew up. While this research takes place primarily at the urban level, an understanding of the complexity of the terms *space*, *place* and *home*, and how they are ongoing processes which span multiple scales, is crucial. After laying a strong theoretical foundation, these core concepts are viewed through a migration lens; drawing upon the literature surrounding migrant place-making and the relationship between place, home and identity to add nuance.

The second key pillar of this thesis is that of Irish diasporic identity. Ireland is a country with high levels of emigration, particularly during times of crisis such as the Famine in the 1840s and 1850s and the economic recession of 2008/9 (McMahon, 2015), but continuing into the present day. As the author Joseph O'Connor humorously remarks; “Growing up in Dublin, you just expect emigration to happen to you, like puberty” (O Connor, 1994 cited in McMahon, 2015, p. 182). However, as Ireland develops and its place in the world evolves, emigration patterns reflect this. Since the 1980s, Irish emigrants have been leaving in greater numbers for EU destinations (Hickman & Ryan, 2015) and are typically highly educated and very mobile – migration with a “special flavour” (King & Shuttleworth, 1995). However, the literature surrounding the Irish in Europe has not necessarily caught up with these trends. Aside from some more recent studies (see: Hassan, 2010; O’Keeffe-Vigneron, 2019), most of the research on place-making of the Irish diaspora takes place in English-speaking locations, or at a time in the past when Ireland and Irish emigration was not as it is now.

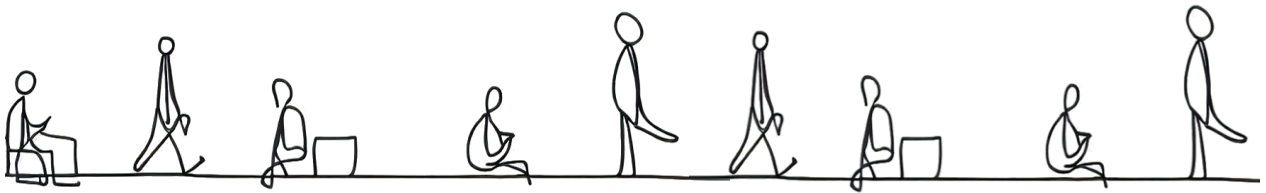
Historically, Irish emigrants in cities such as New York or Boston formed tight-knit and spatially bound communities which provided support for newcomers (Cireza, 2015). Many of these neighbourhoods still maintain an 'Irish' identity – such as 'Little Ireland' in the Bronx in New York. Worldwide, the Irish diaspora still has many visible impacts on the urban landscape, some of which are displayed on page 2 of this thesis. However, numerous non-bounded networks exist in tandem; from Gaelic football clubs, to Irish language clubs, to social media groups. Irish “cultural ‘product’(s)” such as Riverdance have brought attention to the vibrancy of Irish cultural practises (Hassan, 2010, p. 238). Considering the context of today’s ethnically diverse European cities, and taking into account the changing profile of the ‘typical’ Irish emigrant, it seems necessary to ask: how do Irish newcomers navigate their sense of place?

This thesis proposes to explore the place-making practises of Irish emigrants in two very different European cities – Copenhagen and Madrid – in order to shed light on the experience of contemporary Irish emigration in the context of global mobility, with a European and urban focus. Thus, the definitions of place, space, and urban home, as established in the first part of the literature review, will be adopted in order to address the following research question: *Which factors contribute to, and affect, the sense of place and construction of urban home of the Irish community in Copenhagen and Madrid?* with an important follow-up question: *what does this tell us about the broader meaning of place and home in the context of migration?*

In order to answer this research question, a phenomenological approach is taken, which emphasises the need to analyse perceptions as means to understand experience (MacÉinrí & Lambkin, 2002). The ways in which this framework was operationalised to suit the purposes of this thesis are explained in Chapter 3: Methodology. Qualitative data collected from a series of semi-structured interviews and an online survey will be explored by operationalising an original framework proposed by Fathi & Ní Laoire (2021). Findings from the interviews and the survey are presented in Chapter 4 within this thematic framework. In Chapter 5, findings are discussed in greater detail with reference to the main theoretical underpinnings of this thesis, thus presenting the main conclusions of this research. Finally, in Chapter 6, after a concluding comment, reflections and limitations are discussed, and some interesting starting points for future research are suggested.

CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW



2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review will establish the theoretical grounding for this research as well as the terminology which will be used throughout. To do so, the key concepts of place, space and urban home are discussed, to build the theoretical argument that forms the basis of this research. It does so by acknowledging and addressing these concepts and the relationship between them, from different angles, disciplines, and scales. The second section focuses on the meaning of these concepts in the context of global mobility and explores the notions of place, home and identity in migration literature. The final section outlines the changing nature of Irish emigration and focuses on what has been written about Irish emigrants in European cities to date. This chapter then concludes with a brief explanation of the chosen theoretical framework and a proposal for how this thesis aims to address the emerging research gap.

2.1. MODALITIES OF UNDERSTANDING PLACE AND SPACE

Place and *space* are terms used on an almost-daily basis in our regular lives, and yet, we rarely stop to think about what they actually mean. It can be argued that these two concepts are so bound up in our everyday lives that “to live is to pass from space to space” (Perec, 1974, p. 8). Place and space occupy a central role in human geography; the discipline which is arguably the study of place (Cresswell, 2004). In general, these two terms can be considered interrelated yet distinguishable concepts; space is a basic container for human life or a “realm without meaning”, and place is a portion of space in which meaning has been imbued (ibid., p. 10).

Within this definition of place as meaningful space, there exist three main features: location, locale, and sense of place (John Agnew, 1987, cited in Cresswell, 2004). The first two of these aspects tend towards the physical in nature; location doesn’t have to be stationary (think of a ship which moves and yet, is still considered a place to many) but it *exists* physically. Likewise, locale refers to the tangible containers or structures that allow for social relations – the built environment. The final of these three features, sense of place, is a much more layered concept, describing “the subjective and emotional attachment people have to place” (ibid., p. 7). Far from simply a thing in the world; place can also be considered a “way of seeing, knowing, and understanding the world” (ibid., p. 11).

While it can be argued that this understanding of the relationship between place and space is the standard line of thinking in the field of human geography since the 1970s, some confusion is added by the notion of “socially produced space” as coined by Lefebvre (1991) – which moves space away from a purely physical and meaningless void to something which can actively be produced from the relationship between perceived, conceived and lived space (Hubbard, 2005).

In a chapter entitled *The Geneology of Place*, Cresswell (2004) identifies three ways of looking at or researching, place. All three are important considerations in enabling a deeper understanding of the many facets of ‘place’ and may overlap to some extent.

The first is by taking a descriptive, idiographic approach. In this approach, the world is viewed as a set of individual places, drawing upon their uniqueness in order to describe their *essence* or *soul*. This approach is typically that of regional geographers, and while it continues to this day, it was

at peak popularity prior to the 1960s. This approach focused on drawing differences between one area and that around it to locate the aspects of a place which make it distinctive; “starting with the bedrock, soil type and climate and ending with ‘culture’” (ibid, p. 16).

The second is a phenomenological approach to place, which focuses less on the unique features of place, but rather examines the fundamental role of human experience. This line of thinking arose in the 1970s, when space took more of a central role in human geography, replacing the concept of the region. This is the line of thought favoured by Tuan (1976; 1977), and Relph (1976), who rejected the logic of spatial science and focused instead on the emotional aspects of place, and how it is an inherent part of the human experience of being.

The third approach is that which is favoured by social constructionism, focusing on the production of individual and unique places through their position in broader networks and as the result of widespread conditions (such as capitalism or post-colonialism). This is the preferred vision of scholars such as Massey (1991; 2004) and Harvey (1996). In this view, places are socially constructed and rely upon acts of exclusion and the uneven spread of power.

Other scholars consider there to be two main ways of viewing place: “humanistic accounts that emphasise the ‘sense of place’ immanent in different settings”, and “Marxist and materialist accounts that explore the relations of domination and resistance played out across different spaces” (Hubbard, 2005, p. 41). However, rather than conceptualising these viewpoints as completely different, taking both into account enables a deeper understanding of place. Having established an overview of the development of the terms place and space within the discipline of human geography, the following sections will each expand upon some of the key definitions of place which are particularly relevant for this research.

2.2. PLACE AS A FEELING OR EXPERIENCE

By focusing on place for its experiential value, it can be considered a creation of emotional attachment (Hubbard, 2005). In this way, “the humanist will show how place is a shared feeling and a concept as much as a location and a physical environment” (Tuan, 1976). This vision of place as an integral part of the human experience is common among humanist scholars. One cannot exist without the other; “the essence of place lies in the largely unselfconscious intentionality that defines places as profound centres of human existence” (Relph, 1976, p. 42). From this point of view, places are separated by spaces, which are inherently devoid of meaning (Tuan, 1977).

If we view place for its role in how it makes people feel, an analysis of human space must involve the experience of its users; where experiences are “the ways people know and construct a reality” (Tuan, 1977). One’s sense of place (or ‘knowing’ a place) requires the ability to learn and process events to construct feeling and thought. Places can therefore be defined as “centers of value” (ibid., p. 18) which have the ability to create an emotional response in someone. This response can be positive or negative (or something in between); “*topophilia* and *topophobia* (...) refer to the desires and fears that people associate with specific places” (Hubbard, 2005, p. 42).

However, to say place is an emotional concept does not negate the importance of the physical or built environment. Another definition of place as offered by Tuan is “whatever stable object catches our attention”. While this may be in the form of large, unmissable landmarks, the same is also true of places which are not so visually significant; “many places, profoundly significant to particular individuals and groups, have little visual prominence. They are known viscerally” (Tuan, 1977, p. 164). In this way, we can see that one experiences the built environment through their reaction to it; thus, architecture can play a significant role (ibid., p. 107). Sense of place - one of the concepts at the heart of this thesis - can be thus summarised as the way we feel and react to our environment and the emotional response it creates.

2.3. PLACE AS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCT

From a social constructionist perspective, place is seen as something created through various social processes: “place is, like space and time, a social construct (...) the only interesting question that can then be asked is: by what social process(es) is space constructed?” (Harvey, 1996, p. 294). Place is therefore highly influenced by the passing of time and changing circumstances; or, “movements in time, plot and history” within socio-ecological systems (Harvey, 1996, p. 294). Time and power dynamics emerge as vital elements of both place and space and affect the ways in which they are constantly redefined and recreated (Hubbard, 2005, p. 47). Castells describes contemporary society as that of a global ‘space of flows’, transformed by electronic and communication innovations (Castells 1996 cited in Hubbard, 2005, p. 43).

For example, from a political economy approach, the social process in question may include the accumulation of capital and uneven economic development, which create new networks of places (Harvey, 1996, p. 295; Sassen, 2005). To show this notion at play, Harvey gives the example of the symbolic Times Square in New York during the first part of the twentieth century. Despite being developed as an entertainment district for commercial reasons, Times Square during this period was a place of high symbolic value and a place of community for everyone in the city. It offered a sense of place, or strong place identity, to those whose neighbourhoods and communities were being threatened by speculative development because of its social function; however, not social in the sense of face-to-face communication but rather “the act of a common presence in the face of the spectacle (...) and the commodification of everything” (Harvey, 1996, p. 317).

Particularly fundamental to this viewpoint is the notion of *time-space compression*. Initially coined by Harvey, Massey interprets this phenomenon as “movement and communication across space” or the “geographical stretching-out of social relations” (Massey, 2018a, p. 159). It is often argued that we are currently undergoing a new stage of time-space compression; however, different scholars and theorists have different ideas of its cause. Unlike Harvey, Massey argues that capital alone as the main determinant of accelerated time-space compression is inadequate and does not fully encompass the processes that construct place. Therefore, the “*power-geometry* of it all” (p. 151) must be acknowledged; the fact that power relations are bound up in how different people experience mobility or contribute to this accelerated period of time-space compression.

Rather than the Heideggerian notion of place as “being”, and places possessing a fixed identity, Massey presents her idea of a “progressive sense of place” (Massey, 1991, p. 29) or “global sense of place” (ibid., p. 24), arguing that place cannot be considered a fixed notion in today’s fast-paced world. There are four key elements to this progressive sense of place: as a social construct, it is not static or bounded; it does not require boundaries (or to be considered an ‘enclosure’); it has no one single identity; and its uniqueness is not denied.

To expand on the first of these aspects, place is not something which is permanent or fixed, but is in a state of constant change. This is because place is “constructed out of a particular constellation of relations, articulated together at a particular locus” (Massey, 1991, p. 30). Secondly, places do not require boundaries in the sense of a divide between inside and outside; as the way a place fits into a broader network of power relations contributes to its meaning. Thirdly, places are subject to subjective interpretation, and therefore a place cannot have one single identity as people perceive it differently. To give an example of this, Massey describes her own area of Kilburn, London, and the various identities it holds for different inhabitants:

First, while Kilburn may have a character of its own, it is absolutely not a seamless, coherent identity, a single sense of place which everyone shares. It could hardly be less so. People’s routes through the place, their favourite haunts within it, the connections they make (physically, or by phone or post, or in memory and imagination) between here and the rest of the world vary enormously. (p. 155)

Finally, a place’s must not be denied its specificity or uniqueness. However, its uniqueness depends on its particular interactions and social relations and processes which often occur on a much broader scale than what we think. How a place interacts with these larger-scale influences will depend on its own history, among other factors. In summation, places are social products of economic, political and cultural power relations, stretching across various scales (Massey, 1991, 2018b, 2018a).

2.4. PLACE AS A SET OF EVERYDAY PRACTICES

Place can also be considered a set of everyday practices, or the ways of inhabiting space to build meaning (Raffaetà & Duff, 2013, p. 342). Following the ideas presented in the above section (2.3), place can be constructed by actions and movements people carry out as these can alter one’s surroundings. In *The Practice of Everyday Life*, de Certeau (1984) offers a differentiation between “strategies” and “tactics”. Strategies are seen as the “force-relationships” inherent in a space, those which are implied through power relations (p. xix). Tactics, on the other hand, are small acts of rebellion (which may often go unrealised) against pre-existing systems; “victories of the “weak” over the “strong” (ibid., p. xix). Many everyday practices can be considered tactical; bringing to mind Harvey’s example of Times Square and how it became a site for the re-appropriation of space produced within sociocultural systems. Thus, tactics are the small or everyday acts that we do to create a sense of place; and they stem from our individual desires rather than some pre-disposed set of rules set at a broader scale.

A place can also be viewed as a culmination of multiple personal routines in space, repeated on a regular basis to give meaning; which Seamon describes as a *place-ballet* (1980, 159). According to

Seamon, a strong sense of place arises from the ritualistic nature of the place-ballet; a “fusion of many time-space routines and body-ballets” (ibid., p. 159) or the combination of routine bodily movements and the movement of users throughout the city’s spaces. In short, the way we and others routinely move throughout the city and the rituals we create around this movement over time can lend themselves to a strong sense of place. Moving through the city, especially walking, is seen as key in how we understand or ‘read’ place (Barthes, 1996) and how we experience an “unfolding of the stories accumulated in a place” (de Certeau, 1984, p. 110).

Practice can also be seen as “a tactical art that plays with the structures of place that are provided” (Cresswell, 2004, p. 39). These practices can be social or individual, or both at once, and are important in contributing to our sense of place (ibid., p. 175). Studying the role of everyday practices and interactions can help us understand the complex connections between different places and different cultures (Coyne, 2010, p. 74). Thus, everyday behaviour is an important feature of our sense of place.

2.5. PLACE AND THE CONCEPT OF HOME

The concept of home is highly related to ‘place’ in numerous ways. Place, when used in everyday conversation, is often synonymous with the meaning of ‘home’; we invite people to our ‘place’ for a drink, or say we’ve moved to a new ‘place’ when we find a new house or apartment, for example.

First of all, home is part of the human experience. Several scholars make clear the link between place and home in that both concepts are inherently bound up in human experience. Part of the Heideggerian concept of “dwelling”, which lies at the heart of human existence, is to have a home (Heidegger, 1971 cited in Relph, 1976, p. 39). Building on this, Tuan (1977) asserts that place is a “concretion of value (...) an object in which one can dwell” (p. 12). This is because home, like place, is a centre of value loaded with meaning and significance (though not wholly positive); “if we are really rooted in a place and attached to it (...) this place is authentically our home” (Relph, 1976, p. 41). Both Relph (1976) and Tuan (1977) believe that forming attachments to places is a human need, as we are bound to search for stable points of reference in order to comprehend the world. Home is not simply a space in which we dwell, rather it is an “irreplaceable centre of significance” (Relph, 1976, p. 39). Like place, home can occur across multiple scales; ranging from an armchair to a region to the entire world (Tuan, 1977, p. 149). But what defines the concept of home across this range of micro- and macro-scales is that it is our “center of the world” or “a center of meaning” (ibid., p. 173).

Like place, home can be considered a social construction (Cresswell, 2004; Higgins, 2021). In a speech entitled *The Idea of Home*, the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins, describes home as “an immaterial reality, not a defined place of retreat but a series of relationships and intimacies with places and between people” (Higgins, 2021, p. 107). This approach builds on the description of the childhood home posed by Bachelard as one’s ‘first universe’, the first field of true intimacy that we encounter in our lives (Bachelard, 1964). However, it is important to acknowledge the various scales of home which exist. Rather than focusing on home as related to domesticity (and acknowledging the numerous feminist and Marxist perspectives on the oppressive role of the domestic), we can also step back and consider home as a broader

phenomenon - of which domesticity is but a small part. By taking the view that home is “a set of relationships and shared commitments” (Higgins, 2021, p. 109) rather than a certain bounded entity, home emerges, once again, as a multi-scalar concept. Thus, home can be found in public spaces and is no longer reserved solely for discussions of the domestic (Fathi and Ni Laoire, 2021).

We have established that home is somewhere we are familiar with; whether home for us is a positive or negative centre of meaning. It can be argued that familiarity is an essential part of home; however, home comprises far more than *just* ‘the familiar’ (Heller, 1984; Duyvendak & Ley-Cervantes, 2021). Our memories are important for how we experience home and for the process of attachment associated with home, as familiarity stems solely from our previous experiences. In this way, our memories are one of the main tools that we use to create a sense of place – and to feel at home - in a transient world; “memories tie us to that place (...) it’s personal” (de Certeau, 1984, p. 108).

2.6. THE URBAN RELATIONSHIP TO HOME AND PLACE

The literature reveals a multitude of reasons to study the concepts of place and home at the urban scale. The first important distinction to make is between *urban domesticities* (urban home-making on a domestic scale) and *domestic urbanism* (the city as home) (Blunt & Sheringham, 2019, p. 825, emphasis added). As discussed in the previous section, this research views home as a multi-scalar concept which is beyond the scope of domesticity; thus, it takes the latter approach.

One of the main reasons why cities are fascinating sites for the study of place and home is that they are composed of dynamic and complex webs of “fragmented strata” and “moving layers” (de Certeau, 1984, p. 108). De Certeau gives the example of New York City, which he considers in a state of constant change; “its present invents itself, from hour to hour, in the act of throwing away its previous accomplishments and challenging the future” (ibid, p. 91). The city is not one coherent community and certainly does not have one specific identity. Rather, it can be viewed as “a labyrinth, criss-crossed by an infinitive number of networks and associations, few of which are fixed in space or time” (Harvey, 1990 in MacÉinri, 1994, p. 5). Therefore, the city is an ever-changing body which presents numerous opportunities for study on an ongoing basis. Its movements offer the chance to gain a greater understanding of the production of place and home.

Another reason to focus on cities for this research is that they can be the sites of specific tensions or “place-based struggles” (Massey, 2018a, p. 153). Cities have their own problems, some of which may be unique and some of which are common to their network. For example, ‘global cities’ can be viewed as nodal points in international flows of power, information, and capital, but they may manifest this role differently (Harvey, 1996; Sassen, 2005). Thus, acknowledging the global-level impacts which affect certain cities or networks of cities is important in understanding them. Studying the experiences of the city’s users is one way to understand how global processes manifest in daily (urban) life.

Cities are also centres of meaning and significance (Tuan, 1977). The urban landscape is rich in symbols from which we can gain a greater understanding of the city’s essence. Taking a

semiological approach, Barthes (1996) describes the city as loaded as with ‘signifiers’ - symbols from which we can gain our own (very personal) understanding or ‘reading’ of its character. He gives the example of the Eiffel Tower, “the universal symbol of Paris” (ibid., p. 165). By visiting the tower, a visitor can “perceive, comprehend and savour a certain essence of Paris” (ibid., p. 167). In order to fully comprehend the city (or ‘town’), we need to ask ourselves questions about its essence - “What is the heart of a town? The soul of a town?” (Perec, 1974, p. 61) – for which our answers will be highly subjective depending on our reading of its signifiers. As a landscape rich in symbols and thus different ‘readings’, the city is a fascinating setting in which to study human experience - whilst acknowledging the subjectivity of these experiences.

Cities can also be considered “political and spatial fields for integration” (Eckardt, 2018, as cited in Fathi & Ní Laoire, 2021, p. 3). In this way, they can also entail exclusion and difficulty for some. Historically, the city represented the triumph of man over nature, the imposition of order, and the furthest advancement of civilisation (Tuan, 1977). However, this does not mean that the city is viewed positively by all of its inhabitants:

The city is also home – meaning that home is one of the primary concepts by virtue of which we conceive of the city. This doesn’t translate into any sort of inevitably sentimental or necessarily positive feeling about the city. In fact, home, as an existential reality, can be just as negative as positive” (Sullivan, 2019, p. 106).

2.7. HOME, PLACE AND DIASPORIC IDENTITY

This section discusses the concepts of place and home in relation to diasporic (or migrant) identity. As previously established, we are in a period of advanced *time-space compression* (see: section 2.3). As people move from place to place with more frequency, the way we form a sense of place or belonging is ultimately altered. The ‘new mobilities paradigm’ challenges the idea of places as set points on the Earth’s surface which are impervious to change (Sheller & Urry, 2006). It considers that the movement of people, money, and information is an undeniable feature of modern life, which Bauman (2000) describes as ‘liquid modernity’ (Bauman, 2000 in Sheller & Urry, 2006, p. 210). However, attention is still given to the embedded structures and uneven distribution of power which influence the course of these flows and mobilities.

In today’s rapidly globalising world, our heightened levels of transience force us to constantly rediscover a sense of place, or an idea of home (Higgins, 2021, p. 107). Studying the ways in which migrants relate to their new and former settings is thus key. As MacÉinri (1994) describes, the migrant is at the forefront of the processes linking the present and the future and navigating the constantly changing social values embedded in today’s world. The diaspora – a term used to describe “transnational networks of immigrants, refugees, guest workers and so on” (Fortier, 2005, p. 173) – places more emphasis on relations between migrants and their ‘home’ country. However, as the world becomes more and more mobile, we should challenge the ideas of fixed categories and instead embrace a sense of fluidity when it comes to the topic of migration, as no longer are places, homes, identities, and cultures place-bound. Moreover, we can consider culture as something intrinsic and portable, which contributes to personal identity but is but one influence (MacÉinri, 1994).

In the context of migration studies, home is often studied at the national level or the ‘homeland’ (Fortier, 2005). However, in consideration of increased global mobility, several critiques emerge in relation to the binary aspect implied by the term ‘diaspora’ as a relationship between “‘host-society versus homeland, here versus there, home versus away’” (Fortier, 2005, p. 183). New modalities of understanding sense of place and identity reject this binary, instead suggesting that home can be multiple places at once by following a *rhizomorphic* pattern of dispersal (Gilroy, 2000, p. 128–129; Kaplan 1996, p. 143; Fortier 2000 as cited in Fortier, 2005, p. 183). This envisions home as a complex and multi-layered concept which, like place, is not bounded physically. Thus, diasporic identity does not stretch between only two points on the map.

2.8. PLACE-MAKING

Having discussed diasporic or migrant identity as it relates to the national and global scale, this section will focus on these processes at the urban scale. Place-making in the context of migration studies typically refers to the way certain ‘foreign’ groups appropriate a space, usually an area of the city: “individuals ‘make place’ by first congregating in a neighbourhood (where forms and meanings associated with imaginings of ‘home’ and ‘community’ start to be reproduced), and then participating in (or developing) organisations that facilitate the reproducibility of their presence” (Castillo, 2014, p. 244).

Thus, place-making tends towards the physical in nature, as it typically implies a certain level of bodily occupation on a group level, depending on the available resources (Chica, 2021, p. 1). In this regard, place-making often leads to increased visibility of the arrival or ‘foreign’ population. Home is produced through symbols, such as signs in shops, or through visibly alternative use of public space (Castles and Davidson, 2000 as cited in Gill, 2010, p. 1160). While place-making may lend itself to a sense of security for immigrants in the city, some scholars argue that these processes can have negative effects, creating vulnerability through visibility and increasing in-group dependency (Gill, 2010; Cirenza, 2015). Gill (2010) outlines four main strategies of place-making based on his study of Polish migrants in the UK (Figure 1).

Figure 1.

Gill's *Ideal and Pathological Place-making strategies* diagram

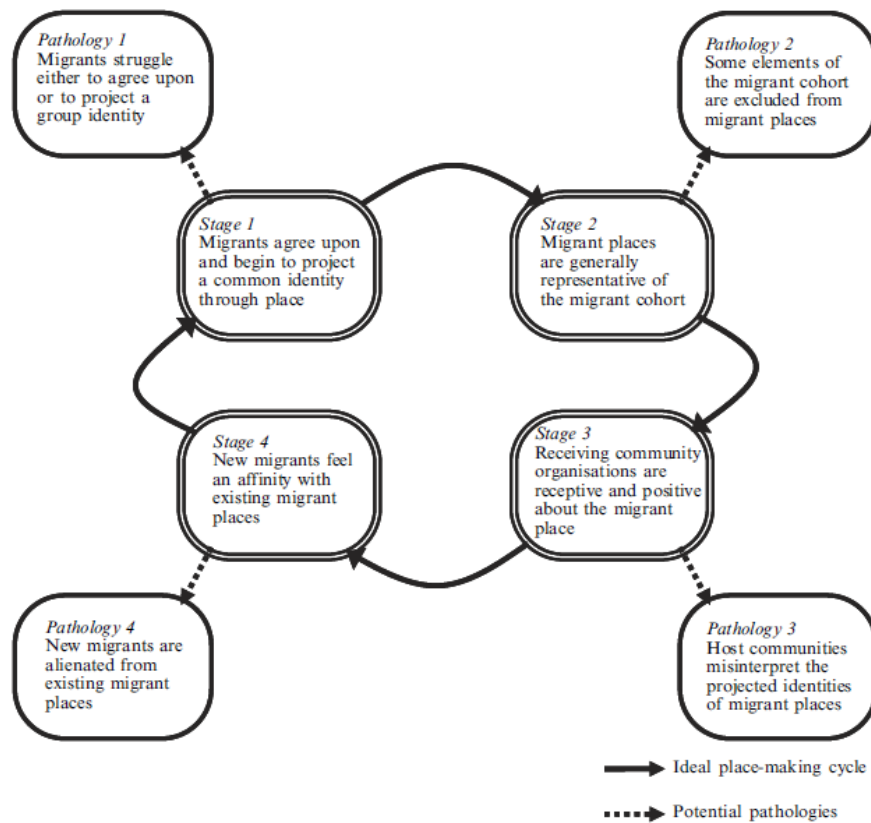


Figure 1. Ideal and pathological place-making strategies.

Note. Gill (2010) proposes a four-stage place-making strategy, based on his study of Polish migrants in the UK. This details both ‘ideal’ or best-case scenarios, as well as ‘pathologies’ or things which can ‘go wrong’ at each stage (Gill, 2020, Figure 1, p. 1160).

However, rather than this restrictive binary of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ (‘ideals’ and ‘pathologies’), place-making processes can be infinitely more complex (Pemberton & Phillimore, 2018). First of all, these processes are the result of interactions and processes between numerous communities and networks (*ibid.*). They are thus highly dependent on context and the individual character and history of a particular place. Secondly, this approach does not adequately acknowledge the concept of *superdiversity*, “a demographic condition in which populations are more diverse than ever before” (Vertovec, 2007 as cited in Duyvendak & Ley-Cervantes, 2021, p. 734). Urban populations are increasingly mobile, and thus neighbourhoods are becoming more socially and culturally mixed. Frequent population renewal can challenge the social strength of the neighbourhood (Pemberton & Phillimore, 2018, p. 746).

In the context of rapid globalisation, “generic spaces” in our cities are becoming more and more common. These are spaces that provide a predictable setting and are not context-dependent; an example being a global café or restaurant chains (Duyvendak & Ley-Cervantes, 2021, p. 18). In a study of Mexican immigrants in Madrid, Duyvendak & Ley-Cervantes (2021) found that these types of spaces can provide a relaxing and familiar setting for the highly mobile, contributing to their ability to feel at home.

Up until this point, place-making has been described as a relatively bounded process, which takes place at the neighbourhood level. However, place-making can be as much about social networks as physical communities. For example, it may involve the infiltration of certain migrant groups into particular job networks; such as the Boston police force which has historically been largely comprised of Irish immigrants and their descendants (Chica, 2021).

Place-making processes may be considered akin to community formation processes, which are not spatially bound. This prompts a clarification of what constitutes 'community' for the purpose of this research. Community can be conceived of as a group sharing the same values which contribute to a shared identity (Holtug Nils, 2016, p. 73). It can be created through social relations and common understandings. Therefore, a community need not be grounded in a single physical location or neighbourhood:

On the one hand, communities can exist without being in the same place - from networks of friends with like interests, to major religious, ethnic or political communities. On the other hand, the instances of places housing single 'communities' in the sense of coherent social groups are probably - and, I would argue, have for long been - quite rare. Moreover, even where they do exist this in no way implies a single sense of place (Massey, 1991).

2.9. IRISH EMIGRATION: HISTORIC CONTEXT

This section describes what has been written about Irish emigration and the place-making patterns of the Irish diaspora to date. It does so by exploring literature on Irish emigration and the Irish diaspora in chronological order, thus unearthing fruitful opportunities for this type of research. While not an all-encompassing account of Irish migration and diasporic identity, the following sections describe key elements relevant to the place-making processes of Irish communities. In doing so, they establish why the Irish diaspora in Europe is a suitable focus for this thesis.

Ireland has long been a country with high levels of out-migration. In the 1840s, a famine caused a massive decline in the population through death and emigration. As a result, four and a half million people left Ireland between the years 1840 and 1880 (McMahon, 2015). Emigration to the United States was so common that Irish emigrants counted towards 45.6 per cent of total immigration to the country in the 1840s (ibid.). As a result, much has been written about the wave of Irish emigrants in the US who left during this period; those stuck in “a dialectical tug-of-war between migration and identity” (ibid., p. 1). The Irish emigration during the nineteenth century was one of the most significant migrations in modern European history both for the total number of emigrants and for the proportion of the population leaving (Hickman, 2020, p. 271). Emigration remained an issue of particular importance in the national political, economic and social scenes of Ireland in the first part of the twentieth century. Even as late as the 1980s, emigration exceeded the birth rate, contributing to population loss (Guinnane, 1997). However, it has been argued that Irish emigration does not fall into one category in terms of motivation and that it did not all arise out of necessity or oppression (MacÉinrí & Lambkin, 2002).

Among the Irish population in US cities, significant ethnic clustering took place. Quantitative studies show us that Irish emigrant numbers were most significant in cities in the East Coast as these were convenient entry points and presented extensive job opportunities as well as a support system in the form of a grounded community (Cireza, 2015, p. 174). At the end of the nineteenth century, the Irish certainly emerged as not only a homogeneous group in many ways, but also as somewhat resistant to assimilation through an intense reliance on other members of the Irish community; “Perhaps there is no other people on the face of the earth whose identity is more clearly marked and defined. There are forces of attraction, ever at work, which draw the members of our race instinctively together, and knit them into an integral body (Patrick Ford, 1871 as cited in McMahon, 2015, p. 1)”.

In the late nineteenth century, nostalgia played a key role in constructing a “sentimentalized identity” for migrants arriving in New York, in the sense that Ireland was envisioned as a romantic construction of homeland rather than simply a previous location (Byrne, 2012, p. 53). Those Irish emigrants who left due to extreme poverty were often seen as wild people who required taming before they could assimilate, and this perceived ‘historical incivility’ caused newly immigrated Irish to recall previous memories in order to reimagine their present condition and to make themselves ‘like everyone else’ (Andrew Greeley, 1972 in Byrne, 2012). Memory and nostalgia are recurrent themes in relation to the Irish diaspora. However, instead of the rather melancholy outlook of the Irish diaspora in New York as “a people tragically condemned by a sentimental attachment to a vanquished past” (Byrne, 2012, p. 53), some have highlighted instead the ability of the Irish during this period to operationalise their identity and culture in order to assimilate: “the Irish developed a diasporic identity that I call global nationalism. Constantly adapting to the practical exigencies of given times and places— by vacillating between ethnic solidarity and civic pluralism—global nationalism portrayed the Irish as an international community capable of simultaneous loyalty to their old and new worlds” (McMahon, 2015, p. 2).

For the 1980s wave of Irish emigrants in New York, Gaelic Park (an Irish football stadium and cultural centre which opened in the 1920s) provided a support system (Brady, 2012). Gaelic Park can be described as a “performance space”, where New York Irish can use memories of their culture to resist assimilation to ‘American’ culture and develop a particular brand of “Irishness”:

By entering the park’s walls one enters a designated “Irish” space. However, the unavoidable sight of the subway tracks that border two sides of the park reminds the spectator that the site is not in Ireland, but in “Irish New York.” Enclosed by elevated train tracks, a woody hill, and a concrete wall, Gaelic Park forms a semiprivate venue; the enclosure allows for the creation of a new space in which a simulation of “Ireland” - a Gaelic field—can be invoked (Brady, 2012, p. 19).

2.10 IRISH EMIGRATION AT THE END OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Up until the 1980s, Irish emigrants were primarily employed in unskilled or manual labour in their destination countries and often came from rural parts of Ireland (Jackson 1963; O’Connor 1972 as cited in King & Shuttleworth, 1995). New patterns of Irish emigration began to emerge in the 1980s with the growth of Irish emigration to EU destinations. As opposed to previously established English-speaking destinations - such as the United States, Australia, and the United

Kingdom – some of these European countries were new territory for the Irish diaspora (Hickman & Ryan, 2015; MacÉinrí, 1989).

MacÉinrí (1989, 1991) undertook a pioneering study of Irish emigrants in Europe in 1988, in Paris. The findings of the survey described the Irish community in Paris as “typical of the new generation of emigrants: young, dynamic, well-educated, mobile and rapidly integrated into the host society” (ibid., p. 58). His research was prompted by physical and visible changes in the urban landscape such as a sleuth of Irish pubs and two Irish restaurants. However, social and cultural networks were also emerging, such as the *Association Irlandaise*. This preliminary study described the Irish in Paris as a “community in transition”; growing rapidly in numbers and assimilating well whilst following several previously established behaviours in terms of creating a strong sense of community and founding informal information networks. Unlike previous Irish emigrant communities in the US, he concluded that the Irish community in Paris consisted primarily of the “urban, well-off, well-educated middle class” (MacÉinrí, 1991, p. 33).

A 1992 study of the Irish community in Rome added to the budding collection of data on the Irish in Europe, including qualitative interviews with 65 members of the community in Rome. Again, it confirmed that Irish emigrants in Rome were generally highly educated and assimilated well (King & Arbuckle, 1992), and were “a group largely made up of well-educated people from relatively privileged urban backgrounds in Ireland” (ibid., p. 193). However, as King & Arbuckle (1992) state, the Irish emigrant population in Rome was too small and dispersed - and its members too heterogeneous in their values and motivations - to be considered a strong Irish community. However, newcomers benefitted from a certain amount of social networking which enabled them to get set up when they arrived.

The emerging vision of the Irish in Europe from these two studies is that of a well-educated and relatively well-connected community, who assimilate well. This is important to note as it marks a departure from the typical spatially bound and dependent communities of previous times in destinations elsewhere. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that multiple forms of Irish emigration exist depending on context: “We speak of “Irish (e)migration”, but the term should really be used in the plural. Many Irish emigrants leave because they have little other choice (...) others, whether one chooses the term “yuppie emigrants” or a more neutral one, are voluntary emigrants” (MacÉinrí, 1994, p. 90). In previous times, an “American wake” would be held for someone leaving Ireland for the US; however, we can nowadays travel back and forth with ease (ibid., p. 2). This increase in mobility on a global scale is primarily felt among highly educated Irish graduates and is a response to Ireland’s changing macroeconomic position (King & Shuttleworth, 1995).

It was at the end of the twentieth century when the Irish diaspora was properly acknowledged in political dialogue. Then-President Mary Robinson said the following in her inauguration speech in 1990: “Beyond our state there is a vast community of Irish emigrants extending not only across our neighbouring island – which has provided a home away from home for several Irish generations – but also throughout the continents of North America, Australia and of course Europe itself” (Robinson, 1990 cited in Walter et al, 2002, p. 26). As MacÉinrí & Lambkin (2002) point out, the term diaspora encompasses a multi-generational approach, including not only those of Irish birth but also their descendants.

2.11. CONTEMPORARY MIGRATION: THE IRISH IN EUROPE

The Celtic Tiger years (from the mid-1990s to the 2008 economic recession) caused major changes to Irish emigration patterns and to Irish society itself. The Celtic Tiger refers to a period of significant economic growth and the evolution of Ireland into a receiving nation for immigration (Fahey et al. 2007 as cited in Moriarty et al., 2015). This brought new attention to the study of migration flows, both outward and inward. As several authors point out, as Irish society became more multicultural, recognising the experiences of its own history of emigration, the experiences of the Irish diaspora, and the relationship between Ireland and the diaspora became more relevant (Walter et al., 2002, p. 25). Others are critical of the increased attention given to the Irish diaspora since the financial crash of 2008, highlighting the perceived economic motivation of this (Hickman, 2020).

As previously stated, the Celtic Tiger period of rapid economic growth was then followed by an economic recession in 2008, which prompted a new wave of emigration (Moriarty et al., 2015). The majority of those emigrating were Irish nationals under 45 years old, and as with previous emigration flows, were highly educated (*ibid.*). In comparison to other European countries that were also negatively affected to the same extent, such as Greece and Portugal, a far larger percentage of the population who left Ireland were graduates. However, according to Moriarty et al. (2015), this pattern of graduate emigration has existed for decades and comes down to three reasons; “access to mobility capital, experience of institutionally mediated movement and a family history of movement” (p. 87).

The increase of mobility on a global scale has had huge effects on the experience of Irish emigration, and on Irish diasporic identity. It is now easier than ever to travel back and forth to Ireland. Many Irish emigrants, especially those in Europe, are highly mobile, and likely to live in one location only temporarily before moving elsewhere (Hassan, 2010, p. 235). Moreover, new methods of communication have provided a connection between people world-over and made different forms of media far more accessible. Thus, Irish diasporic identity has become more fluid, and less reliant on memory or on bounded physical location. Some scholars argue that the Internet has become the primary location for “the perpetuation of an international Irish imagined community” during this period of internationalisation (McMahon, 2015, p. 182). This increased virtual connectivity presents many fruitful research opportunities, making it easier than ever to connect to members of the Irish diaspora. This change in connectivity, prompted by a rise in global mobility, has had important effects on the concept of ‘contemporary Irishness’; “like the Internet itself, decentred but characterised by nodes of greater or lesser significance, thematic as well as spatial, and providing a level of connectedness not previously possible” (MacÉinrí & Lambkin, 2002).

Irish social and cultural organisations are becoming more common in Europe. Many of these types of organisations or points of interest are visible – Irish pubs, embassies, etc. – however, others have only recently begun to blossom in the European context. The Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) is the governing body for Irish national sports: Gaelic football, hurling and camogie. Hassan (2010) researched the role of sport in the lives of Irish emigrants in Europe.

His study shows that these Irish sports networks fulfil a social function, allowing the formation of social circles, and a sense of community, among emigrant Irish and the local population (Hassan, 2010, p. 246). His findings also confirmed the “awakening of a latent European identity amongst the migrating Irish” (ibid., p. 230). Furthermore, traditional Irish music, which has been gaining attention in recent years, is considered by several scholars to be an important part of Irish diasporic identity. The traditional Irish music session, or *seisiún*, is typically held in Irish pubs and is an important social gathering (Van Tuyl & Purdy, 2017). In this sense, the formation of social bonds and relationships can be considered a key element of the creation and maintenance of a ‘traditional’ Irish culture (ibid., p. 22).

A follow-up to MacÉinrí’s (1989; 1991) studies of the Irish community in Paris completed in 2019 aimed to evaluate to what extent this ‘community in transition’ had followed his predictions. The findings confirmed that the majority of Irish emigrants were highly educated, usually from urban areas of Ireland, and generally assimilated well. On a national level, the “Irish in France” association was created to foster a sense of community. This is comparable to other popular destinations for Irish emigrants such as London or New York, which have longstanding Irish community organisations for the diaspora (O’Keeffe-Vigneron, 2019). Cultural and social organisations which allow Irish emigrants to connect with their Irish identity while abroad are thus highly important for the diaspora and play an important role in this research

2.12. URBAN HOME: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As we have established, place, space, and home are complex and multi-faceted concepts. As they appear somewhat intangible, abstract, and highly personal, this can make the interpretation of data quite a difficult task. Therefore, the framework proposed by Fathi & Ní Laoire (2021) for analysing ‘urban home’ - “a fluid, constantly shifting place-feeling that is grounded in the immediate and the material yet is loaded with future possibilities and past imaginaries” (p. 16) - is attractive, as it proposes a structured way of classifying data which respects the multiplicity of understandings of place and home within the context of migrant identity. The framework was adapted slightly for the purposes of this research (which will be expanded upon in the Chapter 3: Methodology). However, an overview will be presented now, to establish why it is an appropriate tool for this research.

In this framework, there exist four different categories for the analysis of urban home: instrumental places; memory, home and pre-migration places; spaces of civility and care; future home. A full description of these categories, including the ways in which they were operationalised for this research, is presented in Chapter 3. Constructing urban home is described as “the ongoing and dynamic process of understanding, feeling and doing home (...) through inhabiting the city” (Fathi & Ní Laoire, 2021, p. 2).

This takes in the many aspects of place, space, and home explored throughout this literature review. First of all, the notion of “place-feeling” acknowledges that place can be considered the field of emotional attachment to a space, or a space given meaning (as per section 2.2). Secondly, urban home may be grounded and visible in the urban environment, but it is a social construct, which is “constantly shifting” (as per sections 2.3 & 2.4). Thirdly, the framework incorporates

the important role of nostalgia and memory which permeates literature on migrant place-making (as per section 2.7).

CONCLUDING COMMENT & RESEARCH GAP

To summarise, we have seen that place, space and home are multi-faceted concepts. Constructing urban home, or a sense of place, is an equally elaborate process; and a holistic approach to these processes in terms of Irish emigrants in European cities has largely been neglected (or highly nuanced) to date. Thus, exploring the experiences of the Irish communities in two different European cities through this lens could shed further light on the topic of Irish emigration and Irish diasporic identity, as well as the modern experience of migration in general at the urban level.

To clarify three key terms that will be used going forward in this research, a guide is included below. However, these are not rigid categories:

- Diaspora: “transnational networks of immigrants, refugees, guest workers and so on” (Fortier, 2005, p. 173). However, the term diaspora also places emphasis on the role of the ‘homeland’; in fact, several scholars consider nations themselves as ‘diaspora spaces’ (Brah 1996, in Fortier, 2005, p. 185). Thus, the diaspora is not limited only to those who have left the country.
- Community: “networks of friends with like interests, to major religious, ethnic or political communities” (Massey, 1991). Communities are, therefore, in short, networks of people with something in common; in this case, a shared Irish identity.
- Emigrant: those who undertake to emigrate voluntarily, and in a positive manner (MacÉinri, 1994, p. 1).

The term expat, while used by some interviewees during interviews and mentioned therefore in Chapter 4, was not widely used in the literature consulted for this thesis.

CHAPTER 3:

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN



3. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

This section outlines, and argues for, the relevance of the methods chosen to answer the research question(s) *Which factors contribute to, and affect, the sense of place and construction of urban home of the Irish community in Copenhagen and Madrid? and what does this tell us about the broader meaning of place and home?*

To begin with, the research standpoint will be discussed and justifications for its choice will be given. Then, the research design will be outlined, including participant selection rationale, data collection methods, and data analysis methods. Finally, a preliminary note on the findings presented in Chapter 4 - the results of this research methodology - will be given.

3.1. RESEARCH STANDPOINT

The focus of this research lies in the lived experience of Irish emigrants in two different cities. Therefore, this thesis takes an exploratory approach which is grounded in phenomenology. Phenomenology can be defined as the study of lived experiences and essences, in the attempt to come to an in-depth understanding of their meanings (Van Manen, 1984). Thus, the focus of phenomenology is the analysis of various perceptions, thus, it involves primarily qualitative data (MacÉinrí & Lambkin, 2002). Section 2.2 of the literature review discussed how phenomenology has been the philosophical base of much of the fundamental literature on the concepts of place and space in humanistic geography (see: Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1976, 1977). Tuan (1976) described phenomenology as the study of “people's relations with nature, their geographical behavior as well as their feelings and ideas in regard to space and place” in order to come to a greater understanding of the human experience (p. 266).

This thesis' literature review (Chapter 2) has revealed a gap in the research when it comes to the phenomenological approach to data collection in Irish (e)migration studies:

While quantitative research will always be at the heart of migration studies, new comparative research using qualitative methods can add greatly to our understanding of our various identities and can contribute significantly to the building of new, more open and more inclusive communities. The experience of the diaspora can finally be applied to the ‘homeland’ in a virtuous circle of reflective, experientially based feedback. At the same time, the multi-stranded identities of the diaspora itself can be recognised and validated, enabling the arid polarities of the past to be transcended (MacÉinrí & Lambkin, 2002).

Thus, while “objective” empirical data is important when it comes to studying migration, understanding concepts as complicated and “subjective” as diasporic identity should not depend on quantitative methods but involve qualitative data and phenomenological approaches too (ibid.). Through a process of “borrowing” the experiences of others and their feelings in relation to these, we can understand a deeper understanding of a certain phenomenon within the realm of human existence (Van Manen, 1984, p. 55).

Phenomenological research tends not to come to any drastic or life-altering conclusion but focuses instead on the subtleties of individual experience. As Van Manen (1984) states; “when you listen to a presentation of a phenomenological nature, you will listen in vain for the punchline, the latest information, or the big news” (p. 39). Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is not to give an all-encompassing summary of the experience of Irish emigration to Copenhagen and Madrid, as to do so would be an impossible task. However, in shedding light on the lived experiences of a few people, an exploration into the broader topic of Irish emigration can begin.

It is important to acknowledge the role of subjectivity in phenomenological research, noting that it is ‘not concrete’ in the sense that it focuses on particulars only (Burch, 1989, p. 209). How phenomena are understood depends on the “hermeneutic situation” of the researcher; the Heideggerian concept of the world of interpretive context (ibid.). Therefore, how qualitative data is interpreted depends on the researcher’s position – their hermeneutic situation – as this will be their guide (ibid., p. 208). Doreen Massey, whose progressive concept of place (as discussed in 2.3) has been foundational to this thesis, acknowledges the role of perception in shaping sense of place; “one important dimension of the phenomenological position is that the meaningful relation to place is intimately bound up with the embodied nature of perception (...) place must be distinguishable from simple locatedness” (Massey, 2004, p. 8).

One of the benefits of a phenomenological approach is that this type of research manages to “bypass completely, the positivist split between ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’” (Franck, 1987, p.65). This is due to the fact that from this standpoint, a phenomenon is part of the broader experience of being human. Phenomenological research may be less readily accessible than positivist research, which places more emphasis on the rational rather than the abstract or feelings-based subjects of a phenomenological nature. However, it can often reveal or clarify previously overlooked phenomena (ibid., p. 62). By advocating for small-scale and in-depth investigations, rather than large-scale and shallow research, this approach has special value at the urban level. It can help us to understand the subjective nature, and conflicting meanings, of the built environment as a social construction (ibid., p. 66). Therefore, a phenomenological approach can allow us to explore the relationship between the experiences of inhabitants in the city whilst acknowledging our hermeneutic situation and the features of the city which influence these experiences.

In conclusion, this approach allows me to acknowledge my own position within this research as a highly mobile member of the Irish diaspora, with my own preconceptions based on past experiences. This has not been a hindrance, however; having a good knowledge of Irish cultural references and social norms has been helpful in forming meaningful and trusting relationships with interviewees. This in turn has led to more open and honest conversations, which are an essential part of the research process.

Phenomenological research admits a certain amount of the autobiographical, in that it requires that the researcher “stands in the fullness of life, in the midst of the world of living relations and shared situations” (Van Manen, 1984, p. 40). In other words, to ‘live’ the question at hand whilst being aware of your own biases. Therefore, being physically present in the cities chosen while conducting research has been important as it has allowed me to utilise my own sense of place in

order to gain a greater understanding of the qualitative data collected. However, I have also been aware throughout this process of not replacing the interviewee's experiences with my own and thus utilising some level of distance which is necessary to gain a broad overview of the phenomenon at hand (Burch, 1989).

3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

CITY SELECTION RATIONALE

First of all, undertaking this research in Copenhagen and Madrid allowed me to be immersed in the phenomenon I was studying – an important element of the phenomenological approach discussed in the above section. While both are capital cities, they differ in population, density, weather, and governance (to name but a few examples), and showcase the differences between the Mediterranean and Scandinavian lifestyles. Furthermore, choosing two different cities as study sites allowed for a greater range of experiences to be collected. It's important to note however that the focus of this research is not necessarily on comparing the differences in data collected from these two cities, but in pooling data from both to gain a broader picture of the experiences of Irish emigrants.

Another important element of this choice lies in the differing “essence” of each city. In selecting two diverse study locations within Europe, this research could have a more urban focus. Thus, it would allow for the consideration of a variety of external factors (political, cultural, economic, physical, etc.) on the individual's experience. This acknowledges how sense of place can be affected by phenomena outside of the individual's inner world. It also allows for an understanding that places are affected by, and contribute to, processes across wider networks of which they are nodes: “the character of a particular place [understood to be] a product of its position in relation to wider forces (the more general social and economic restructuring, for instance), but also that that character in turn stamped its own imprint on those wider processes” (Massey, 1991c as cited in Massey, 2018b, p. 12).

An important point to add is that as both cities are within the borders of the EU, it is difficult to access complete numbers of Irish residents in each city considering the nature of free travel for EU residents. However, this was not considered an issue for the purposes of this research, which focused on the presence and strength of the Irish community, the bonds between its members, and how these connections are created, rather than simply its size.

PARTICIPANT SELECTION RATIONALE

A range of participants was chosen, including those who play an organisational role in certain established Irish social or cultural networks in both cities. This choice was made with the mindset that some individuals can be representative of the views or ‘value-substance’ of a wider community. According to Heller (1984); “it is the individualities - particularly those most developed individualities who have most successfully absorbed the value-substances, to whom

we shall refer as 'representative individuals' - who individually incorporate the evolutionary generic maxima of a given society" (Heller, 1984, p. 16).

Including those from key Irish cultural organisations in this research was important. First of all, as discussed in section 2.11, these organisations are becoming more common throughout Europe and enable people to connect with Irish cultural practices while abroad. By seeing how they have engaged with the Irish community (as well as locals) over time, we can learn a lot about the role of these organisations in maintaining Irish identity. Secondly, we can have greater insight into their potential functions as social nodes, which serve to connect people rather than celebrate a cultural practice.

In each city, representatives from the same Irish cultural organisations were selected, as well as the Embassy in each location. A brief definition of these will be given in this section and elaborated upon in Chapter 4: Findings. The rationale for choosing these organisations in particular, and the Embassies, is the following:

- The *Pop-Up Gaeltacht* is a relatively new phenomenon and thus is uncharted territory in the literature on the Irish diaspora. The *Gaeltacht* is an area of Ireland in which the main language in daily life is (Gaelic) Irish, as opposed to English. These organisations are emerging all over Europe. During meetings, members speak in Irish, thus replicating the experience of these unique areas of Ireland.
- The local Gaelic football team in each city (part of the aforementioned wider-reaching European Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) network) was chosen for their established role as a social outlet, as well as a way of uniting the Irish and local populations through national Irish sports.
- The Irish Embassies of Copenhagen and Madrid have long been involved in the promotion of Irish culture and the connection of Irish emigrants and will have insight into the changing profile of the Irish population in either city over time.

Outside of the representatives above, the selection criteria for other research participants were the following:

- those who had moved to either Copenhagen or Madrid as adults; and
- who identified as Irish (either from the Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland)

While not a representative sample of the Irish community in either city due to the small sample size, the variety of respondent profiles in terms of age and length of time spent in either Copenhagen or Madrid to date made for interesting and robust data.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Phenomenology does not entail prescribed methods (Van Manen, 1984). As this study is fundamentally an exploratory one, qualitative methods of research and analysis were employed. This study takes an interpretivist standpoint, where knowledge about social phenomena is gained

via explanations, interpretations, and interactions of others in their daily lives, and uses suitable methods of data collection for this (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea 2006 as cited in Van Manen, 1984). The chosen methods were twenty-two semi-structured interviews (three with representatives of the organisations and Embassies described above and eight with other Irish emigrants, in each city), and an online survey.

Triangulation strategies can be described as “the use of two or more methods, theories, data sources and researchers” in the research process (Santos et al., 2020, p. 656). In the case of this thesis, method triangulation strategies were employed. Thus, data was collected from both in-depth qualitative interviews and a survey. The choice to use two methods rather than a single one was important for a qualitative study of this type. First of all, it meant findings were more reliable as they involved a number of different perspectives. Secondly, it was necessary in order to acknowledge the complexity of such an abstract and intangible topic by viewing it “under different levels” (ibid., p. 656).

Individual methods may present blind spots. Method triangulation strategies can help to lessen these by approaching the research process from two or more angles. When findings from both methods are the same, the use of different techniques can give much sturdier confirmation of the results. When findings from both methods are different, this has value too: “Contradictory results obtained through different methods, on the other hand, offer the opportunity of searching for more context-specific explanations or pose new and original research questions” (Glückler & Panitz, 2021, p. 154).

In this case, data from in-depth interviews and from the survey were used in tandem to answer the same research question. The interviews provided much richer data due to the fact that follow-up questions and clarifications could be asked when necessary. Therefore, the main bulk of data came from these interviews. Survey responses were used primarily as a control in that they allowed for a reference against which to compare interview findings. Data was collected during the period of October – January (Copenhagen) and from February – April (Madrid).

Semi-structured interviews

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were considered the best way to collect accounts of personal experiences. They allow for the inclusion of key themes within the thematic framework but would also encourage interviewees to share additional information or stories that they thought were most relevant. Therefore, conversation flowed more naturally. As Van Manen (1984, p. 56) states: “Often it is not necessary to ask so many questions. Patience or silence is a more tactful way of prompting the other to gather recollections and proceed with a story”. Semi-structured interviews were a useful method for this thesis as they allowed interviewees to answer more honestly and personally, and yet they still provided an adequate framework for comparison (Edwards & Holland, 2013). Whilst awareness of positionality is important in qualitative interviewing, it will always entail a certain amount of subjectivity; as “subjectivity is often the focus and vehicle for research using qualitative interviewing” (ibid., p. 92). However, as discussed in section 3.1, this is an inherent part of the phenomenological research process, which focuses on personal experience as a source of data.

Interviewees – those from the aforementioned organisations/embassies as well as other members of the Irish community - were contacted in one of two ways; via the ‘Irish in Copenhagen’ and ‘Irish in Madrid’ Facebook pages, or via contact details (email/phone) provided by the Irish Embassy in each city. On the latter point, this helped to minimise the exclusion of those not on social media sites. Eleven in-depth, qualitative interviews were carried out in each city; roughly 330 minutes of (via Zoom and in-person). Thus, a total of 660 minutes.

The six interviews with Irish cultural organisations and the embassies of each city focused not only on the interviewee’s personal experience, and the reasons for their involvement in the particular cultural organisation or network in question, but also on their role and any observations. Thus, they could elaborate on broader trends which they may have observed with regard to the Irish communities in each city.

The other sixteen interviews followed similar questions as those in the survey (Appendix A & B); establishing personal motivations for moving, thoughts and feelings about their new ‘home’, and the ways interviewees established a sense of place upon moving. However, additional strands of discussion which emerged organically, and seemed relevant to the themes of this research, were expanded upon as well. A detailed profile of all interviewees will be given in Chapter 4: Findings.

The majority of interviews were carried out via Zoom and recorded with the interviewee’s permission. Most people are comfortable using Zoom since the COVID-19 pandemic, and this was generally far more convenient for participants. Interviews that were carried out in person (with representatives of both Embassies, the administrator of Copenhagen’s Pop-Up Gaeltacht, and Interviewee 17 in Madrid) were not recorded due to personal preference or for practical reasons (such as loud background noise which interfered with recording quality). In this case, detailed notes were taken during the interview. Transcripts or minutes of all interviews are available upon request.

Survey

A concise 15-question survey was created via Google Forms (see: Appendix A), containing open-ended questions. The survey was developed in line with themes outlined in Chapter 2; focusing on reasons for moving, respondents’ views of ‘Irish spaces’ in the cities and of the Irish community, and how/if they themselves had found a sense of place, and if they felt at home currently. The survey also provided some quantitative data which complemented a lot of the findings from interviews; such as length of time spent in each city, age at time of moving, etc.

The survey was published online on the ‘Irish in Copenhagen’ Facebook page at the start of the Copenhagen semester (October 2022). Additionally, in November, flyers with QR codes linking to the survey were distributed to three Irish pubs which were most frequently named in interviews and in existing survey responses: The Shamrock Inn, Kennedy’s, and The Globe. This was done in an attempt to reach more members of the Irish community, especially those who may not have an online presence. We can see that snowball sampling also occurred to a small

extent; 12.5% of respondents said that they had heard about the survey from a friend or family member. In Copenhagen, the survey yielded 16 responses.

Following the Copenhagen semester, an additional two questions were added to the survey and a small adaptation was made, based on the responses from Copenhagen. First of all, in the 17-question Madrid version of the survey, respondents were asked “Do you feel at home here?” and “Why/why not?”. When the original version of the survey was published in Copenhagen, the answer to these questions emerged to some extent from other responses. However, to get an even clearer answer, these questions were asked explicitly in the Madrid version. In addition, not only were respondents asked when they last lived in Ireland, but where they had lived since. This highlighted the mobility patterns of respondents which could potentially affect their perceptions of Madrid.

The Madrid version of the survey (Appendix B) was posted on the ‘Irish in Madrid’ Facebook page at the start of the Madrid semester (February 2023). A total of 18 survey responses were collected in the Madrid phase. Unlike in Copenhagen, flyers were not distributed to Madrid Irish pubs for two reasons. First of all, a very minor proportion of Copenhagen respondents (12.5%) answered that they had heard about the survey from flyers in Irish pubs. Secondly, fewer interviewees and existing survey responses seemed to engage with Irish pubs in Madrid at all. The combination of these two factors meant that it did not seem a fruitful way to collect data going forward.

The surveys reached a relatively small audience, however, as previously mentioned, they had an important function in acting as a comparison for interview data. Moreover, survey responses were monitored on an ongoing basis, so they could inform the interviews which took place throughout the semester. The survey responses can be seen in Appendix A (Copenhagen) and Appendix B (Madrid).

DATA ANALYSIS METHODS

INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION

After each interview had been completed, a transcript (or minutes of the meeting) was written up using the transcription program provided by Microsoft Word Online. Once this had been completed, interview recordings were played once more (or notes consulted) while reading through the transcription, so that any mistakes could be corrected. The finalised transcripts were then sent to each interviewee (regardless of whether interviews took place virtually or in person) for their approval. This was an important step in minimising human error, as it allowed interviewees to correct any misinformation, rephrase any parts which they felt did not accurately express their experiences, and confirm that the transcript gave an accurate account of the conversation held. In addition, at this point, their consent as a research participant was confirmed in writing.

OPEN CODING

Once data had been collected in each city using the aforementioned methods, a process of data analysis was conducted, beginning first with data collected in Copenhagen as suited the timeframe best. First of all, the relevant literature was revisited. Following this, interview transcripts were coded using the highlighting technique outlined by Van Manen (1984, p. 61). With this approach, a text is read numerous times, and the most pertinent phrases and points are noted. Once the key statements have been highlighted, common themes can be identified. In this guise, themes can be considered “knots in the webs of our experiences, around which certain lived experiences are spun and thus experienced as meaningful wholes. Themes are the stars that make up the universes of meaning we live through” (ibid., p. 59). Any themes that emerged during this first process of open, inductive coding could then be refined during the following stage.

URBAN HOME: AN OPERATIONALISED CODING FRAMEWORK

Following the initial process of coding described above, a second stage using operationalised coding framework based on the research of Fathi & Ní Laoire (2021) was performed. This allowed for a more structured approach to interpreting the data and provided some empirical grounding. A brief description of this framework was provided in section 2.12 and will be elaborated upon now.

The framework had to be operationalised for the purposes of this research for two main reasons. First of all, in the original study, participants were single men only and from various countries. Thus, adaptations had to be made that would allow for its applicability to a different set of participant profiles. The original study did not focus on the role of specific cultural practices, organisations, or spaces specific to one diaspora. As discussed in Chapter 2, these things are important in the Irish context and thus their inclusion in the analysis was necessary.

Secondly, the original study included refugees and international students from outside the EU/EEA. Therefore, participants in the original study were in a relatively precarious position in terms of their legal residency. This was not a relevant factor for the participants in this research, who all had EU passports. Visa requirements were not so much of an influence on participants’ decisions about where to live in the future, at least in the European context.

However, the framework was still sufficiently operationalised to compensate for the substantial differences in participant profiles, by adapting slightly the four original categories: instrumental places; memory, home and pre-migration places; spaces of civility and care; and future home.

In the initial study, ‘instrumental places’ referred to ways of “making a home of sorts in the semi-public spaces of the city”, either through certain daily practices or through “the establishment of familiarity and connections to a selected group of people in the city” (p. 9). When this category was operationalised for this research, it resembled more closely the idea of ‘Irish’ spaces and practices; those which played a social role or enabled Irish emigrants to feel at home by giving a sense of familiarity. Questions fundamental to this category included: *Which everyday practises but also physical locations have been key to you feeling at home here? Which centres of value contribute to your formation of a sense of place? What role do social contacts with other Irish people play in this?*

The second category, ‘memory, home and pre-migration places’, did not require operationalisation as it is universally applicable. It describes the way that a sense of place can be formed by connecting places in one’s current city to those of pre-migration life, typically through drawing parallels between ‘here’ and ‘there’:

home is reconstructed through memories and description of images in order to construct a general idea of home rather than a specific place attachment. These connections generate a sense of place-belongingness because of the feelings and sensations they produce that refer to place, not as a geographical unit, but as a non-local, imaginary, familiar space that facilitates a sense of belonging (ibid, p. 10).

Examples of key questions asked in regard to this category included: *How has distance from home and your memory of home impacted your experience of place here? What do you miss/ not miss and how do you replicate that here?*

The third category, ‘spaces of civility and care’, is described as “participants’ experiences of spaces of sociable encounter with peers and others which could translate into micropublics or spaces of care” (ibid., p. 11). Thus, these contribute explore “how a sense of belonging and feelings of inclusion are enabled or inhibited by the socio-spatial dynamics that constitute different city spaces” (ibid., p. 11). For the purposes of this research, this category was conceptualised as the ways interviewees relate to the local Danish population, and how this affects their use of public spaces in the city and their sense of place. Some examples of questions used to explore this topic included: *How do you feel that you fit in or integrate with the local population? How are you affected by the way public space is used and your interactions with locals? Which things influence this?*

The final category, ‘future home’, describes “imaginations about (one’s) future life but with reference to national, European and transnational concepts of home” (ibid., p. 12). This is a particularly interesting category for this research, as it admits the multi-scalar dynamics of home (and place). As previously discussed, participants in the initial study faced a precarious future in terms of their legal status. This category was therefore operationalised to instead focus on interviewees’ rationale for choosing whether to return to Ireland, their opinion of Ireland as it develops, and ultimately, how these choices affect their Irish identity. The following questions were used to explore this category: *Will you return back to Ireland? Why/ why not? Do you feel at home on the ‘European’ scale? How has your notion of being Irish changed over time spent away?*

PRELIMINARY NOTES ON CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

CATEGORIES

While the categories developed above were useful analytical tools, several important aspects emerged following the framework’s application. The overall goal of the research was the exploration of experience, and the initial operationalised categories above provided a solid starting point for this. However, some new categories, and numerous sub-sections, had to be created to encompass the full range of data collected. Rather than accepting the four previously

established categories as fixed or inflexible, they were more useful when considered as different lenses or prompts, from which additional themes could stem.

For example, within the first category - instrumental places – findings were plentiful, to the extent that the addition of subsections was necessary to aid with comprehension of the data. Three subsections were added to incorporate the emerging themes which broadly fit under the operationalised category of ‘instrumental places’; Irish spaces and locales; social contact (with other Irish emigrants); and cultural organisations and practices.

It was much more difficult to identify data relevant to the second category of memory, home and pre-migration places, as this had quite a lot in common with the first category. For example, some Irish emigrants may engage in cultural practices for the first time when they move abroad; thus, while these are connected with their Irish identity, they are not a product of their memory. Few participants seemed to use their memories of Ireland as a means to construct urban home, especially not by attaching to certain parts of the urban landscape as in the original study by Fathi & Ní Laoire (2021).

A subsection entitled ‘the role of language’ was added to category 3, spaces of civility and care. The role of language was largely neglected in the original study undertaken by Fathi & Ní Laoire (2021), however, it came up frequently as a factor in sense of place and belonging in both interviews and survey responses, particularly in Madrid.

An additional two categories, loosely connected to ‘future home’ were added to the framework in response to the findings, entitled ‘Stage of Life’ and ‘Digital Networks’. The former was necessary to counteract the difference in participant profiles (as previously discussed). Participants’ relationship/marital status, and whether or not they had children, affected heavily the ways in which they formed a sense of place. The emergence of new forms of social media and the growing influence of communication platforms also has an important effect on the construction of urban home and required a separate category.

STRUCTURE

To begin chapter 4, findings from the six interviews with cultural organisations and the embassies (first; Copenhagen, then; Madrid) will be given, as these provide context for the following section. Then, the profiles of the sixteen other interviewees will be given. To protect participants’ identities, names are excluded, and they are instead referred to as ‘Interviewee 1’, ‘Interviewee 2’, etc. in chronological order of when interviews took place. This enables patterns related to age, length of time in the city, or relative mobility (whether they had lived abroad prior to moving) to be easily compared among interviewees. All interviewees had completed some form of further education and the majority had spent time in an urban setting in Ireland at some point.

Motivation(s) for moving were classified into broad categories; “work”, if they came for a specific employment opportunity; “partner”, if their partner was from the destination country, “lifestyle”; if they came for weather, food, work-life balance, etc.; “study break” if they were on a

temporary study sabbatical; and “friend”, if they moved to the city as a friend offered to help them settle in. Although simplified, these categories provide a solid way to compare motivations for migration, which can affect sense of place.

Findings from the sixteen semi-structured interviews and the survey responses will then be presented under the categories outlined in the previous section, where relevant. All findings will be discussed in greater detail, with reference to the literature, in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4:

FINDINGS



4. FINDINGS

INTERVIEWS WITH IRISH CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS

COPENHAGEN

Interviewee 9	Representatives from the Embassy of Ireland in Copenhagen
Interviewee 10	Administrator of Copenhagen Pop-Up Gaeltacht
Interviewee 11	Founder of Copenhagen Gaelic Football Club

THE EMBASSY OF IRELAND IN COPENHAGEN (INTERVIEWEE 9)

Firstly, the embassy confirms that to be effective, cultural events must reflect the lifestyle of the city/country in question. In Denmark, most socialising is done through organised groups or clubs. Thus, the importance of structured groups such as Copenhagen Gaelic Football Club is acknowledged, as a social network as much as a connection to Irish culture. A difficulty that often arises for the embassy is the fact that it can be difficult to get in touch with Irish immigrants in the city who are completely integrated, especially those with a Danish partner and/or family.

Aside from organising cultural events for the Irish community, the embassy uses its social media channels to promote external events organised by Irish people in Copenhagen as well, such as book launches and theatrical productions. An increase in the number of informal and virtual networks, such as WhatsApp groups, has meant that socialising happens a lot more on these channels and reduces the need for physical ‘Irish spaces’ in the city.

COPENHAGEN POP-UP GAELTACHT (INTERVIEWEE 10)

As little literature exists on the Pop-Up Gaeltacht, the administrator of Copenhagen’s branch gave some important background information for context. The concept of the Pop-Up Gaeltacht was founded in 2017 in Dublin by two Irish language activists/revivalists, Osgur Ó Ciardha and Peadar Ó Caomhánaigh, who wanted to provide “urban” speakers with an opportunity to practice their Irish outside of the (more rural) Gaeltacht areas. The first meeting took place in 2017, in Dublin, and these have since expanded to other Irish cities in cities such as Cork and Limerick.

The Copenhagen Pop-Up Gaeltacht was founded in March 2020 and had its first meeting just before Denmark’s COVID-19 lockdown. The current administrator took over from the initial founder at the beginning of 2022, having originally heard about the group from an Irish friend in Copenhagen who had seen it advertised on Facebook.

Interestingly, he says most members are in their 20s and 30s, in contrast to meetings that he has attended in Ireland where members tend to be older. There are usually a handful of people at each meeting, and it is a community in flux, so many members come only once. Members are not necessarily only Irish – some Danes attend, especially those with Irish heritage. The meetings take part on average once a month, in Kennedy’s Pub.

Interviewee 10 decided to learn the Irish language independently and has spent a lot of time in Gaeltacht areas of Ireland. To him, language is an important part of any culture and Ireland is no exception. He is not Irish by nationality (he is French/Estonian) but he feels at home in Ireland:

When I'm in Ireland, I don't feel like a Frenchman/Estonian person/foreigner visiting/holidaying in Ireland — I feel home. I feel immersed and connected to my surroundings — the place and the people there. I belong there. I have my friends and acquaintances, I know the "Irish ways", the slang/lingo, I speak the Irish language, I know the history of the place, I know dozens of songs by heart, including Cork City and county songs, ballads, Christy Moore songs, rebel songs, etc. In fact when I see French people in Ireland I don't feel like one of them — although I might have a lot in common with them, I feel that I have a local Irish identity, distinct from their French one, and an attachment/connection to the place, which they don't have.

COPENHAGEN GAELIC FOOTBALL CLUB (INTERVIEWEE 11)

Interviewee 11 is one of the original founders of the Copenhagen GAA club and still plays an active role as an administrator and coach. The club played its first tournament in Luxembourg in 2004, and at present, it has roughly 65 players and 120 people registered. He views Gaelic football as a fundamental part of Irish culture: “You can be part of the club and not necessarily play the football. But definitely Irish - you talk about anything that's purely Irish, and it's Gaelic football. It's renowned, and it's our first sport in the country” (Interviewee 11).

He says that nowadays, there are Gaelic sports teams (including football and hurling) all over Europe. Many of these are founded where there is a massive influx of Irish people moving to a place for work; however, these clubs involve local people too: “You go to Eastern Europe, and there are (even) clubs there (...) I turned up at a hurling tournament down in Dresden. And there was a bunch of guys that turned up, and every one of them were German” (Interviewee 11).

In this sense, he says that it is “very much a social club” and opens its doors to anyone who wants. Networking is done in two ways: the first is via the Facebook page, which he says is the first port of call for Irish people arriving in Copenhagen: “We will get people coming into town and they'll contact us ahead on Facebook. There could be two or three of them coming into town, or on their own. The automatic reply is ‘just come up to training’” (Interviewee 11). The second way of networking is at the unofficial clubhouse, Kennedy's Pub:

they come to Copenhagen and then they get this connection, and that's why it's good to have the likes of Kennedys Pub as our little clubhouse. Someone will walk in there and then the conversation will happen: “Do you speak Gaelic? Do you play Gaelic football? (...) a lot of it is done by word of mouth - you could be sitting in the pub on a Friday night and you might meet a couple there that have arrived in town and I'll always say to them, regardless of where they're from or what nationality they are: If the conversation goes on to Gaelic football, I'll just say ‘just give me one training session’ (Interviewee 11).

MADRID

Interviewee 20	Representatives from the Embassy of Ireland in Madrid
Interviewee 21	Administrator of Madrid Pop-Up Gaeltacht
Interviewee 22	Ladies Officer of Madrid Harps Gaelic Football Club

EMBASSY OF IRELAND IN MADRID (INTERVIEWEE 20)

The Spanish embassy is a very busy mission, as Spain is one of the priority markets for Ireland within the EU for exports and bilateral trade, and because tourism levels between Ireland and Spain are very high (~2 million Irish visitors come to Spain each year). A lot of the Irish networks in Madrid, therefore, have a business focus; Enterprise Ireland and the Spanish - Irish Business Network, to name just a few. According to the embassy, Irish emigrants in Madrid tend to be in one of three groups; language assistants and Erasmus students, long-term or permanent residents, and those in Spanish - Irish relationships (who often have children and are highly integrated).

Interest in Irish culture is strong all over Spain (though particularly in Galicia), and in reflection of this, there are numerous clubs and associations celebrating Irish culture; many with a musical focus. As Madrid is the main embassy in Spain, it is responsible for informing those interested in Irish cultural events on a national scale. They do so via a mailing list, Twitter, and on their website.

MADRID POP-UP GAELTACHT (INTERVIEWEE 21)

Interviewee 21 says that while the Pop-Up Gaeltacht in Europe is a relatively recent concept, *ciorcail combrá* ('conversation circles') have been happening in other large European cities such as Berlin and Paris for a much longer time; and relatively large get-togethers with music were hosted every month or two. In comparison, in Madrid, gatherings happen once a month or so and are much more spontaneous. To Interviewee 21, the Pop-Up Gaeltacht meetings revolve around "creating a space where people with different levels of Irish can practise", and numbers vary, from a handful of people up to twenty. The chosen dates are published on social media (Twitter and Facebook) and sent to the Embassy for circulation.

In contrast to Copenhagen, the average age of members is slightly older (late 30s/early 40s), and older members come more regularly. Meetings are held in a Spanish café in a central location (which can change for convenience's sake) rather than an Irish bar, as this is too noisy when there are sports on the TV.

He sees the Irish language as a very important part of the culture:

I think it's very, very important, particularly in the context of Europe. In the Anglosphere monolingualism is quite typical and seen as a norm (...) if you are immersed and acquire and live in another language, as I do with Spanish, then there's personal motivation, but also I think when it's shared with other people, you become aware that you do have your own unique language - which is something worth

preserving and something very enriching to engage with, particularly with where Ireland is in the world and we as Irish people are in the world (Interviewee 21).

He agrees with several perceived trends of the Irish abroad; first, that communities exist online to a great extent (“our socialisation is happening so much virtually”), and secondly, that Irish networks are built around specific interests and operate as social outlets rather than an “essential network”: “the imperative of kind of integrating yourself and getting on and prospering and maybe in others, like for example, the United States, the essential network was other Irish. And these established historic communities. Whereas now, if there's a network it is more around specific things”.

MADRID HARPS GAELIC FOOTBALL CLUB (INTERVIEWEE 22)

The Ladies Officer (and previous Chairperson) of Madrid Harps Gaelic Football Club estimates the club to be roughly 25 years old, with around 100 active players (not including supporters). The club is part of the broader association of GAA Iberia. Roughly 80% of members are Irish, with others from “America, the UK, Australia, Argentina, and Venezuela”, many of whom have never played before.

Recruitment is usually done online through social media (Facebook and Instagram), and Irish people usually message prior to arrival, to get more information. Unlike Copenhagen GAA club, Madrid Harps do not have a physical base in Madrid - primarily due to complex and preventative restrictions around sports clubs. At present, therefore, the organisational committee change the location of their meetings constantly.

She confirms that the club has grown in popularity for its social value, especially after COVID-19:

I think people saw the community aspect of it and then they joined and there was a big push for social outings. Once people learn about it, they come, and it's not just about sports. There are many social aspects – training, then going for a beer. Going for food. It's more than just a sports scene.

Interviewee 22 has previously lived elsewhere in Spain, and has always been involved with the Gaelic Football clubs to some extent wherever she has gone, as this helps her to feel at home:

...in Barcelona and Galicia and then Cadiz as well. I never had the opportunity or the commitment to have a role in any of those clubs, but they were all central to me having a community and a family - basically - and friends here in Spain. So, I recognise the importance of that.

She feels that the Irish community in general in Madrid is large, but divided into “different pockets”, including people who aren't Irish but have a *grá* (love) for the country and its culture. There's a WhatsApp group, she tells me, where people send messages looking for Irish language classes, including some of the more established members of Madrid Harps.

PARTICIPANT PROFILES

COPENHAGEN

Interviewee	Male/female	Age at time of interview	Time spent in CPH	Reason (s) for moving	Straight from Ireland?
Interviewee 1	Female	51	~ 17 years	Danish partner/Work	No
Interviewee 2	Male	24	<1 year	Break from studies	Yes
Interviewee 3	Female	62	~ 37 years	Danish partner	Yes
Interviewee 4	Female	67	~ 26 years	Danish partner	No
Interviewee 5	Male	56	~ 6 years	Danish partner	Yes
Interviewee 6	Female	49	<1 year	Work	Yes
Interviewee 7	Female	29	~ 4 years	Danish partner	Yes
Interviewee 8	Female	25	<1 year	Work	No

The majority of Interviewees (five out of eight) moved to Copenhagen as their partner was Danish. Interviewee 1 found a job in Copenhagen while living in London with her Danish partner, and thus her reasons for moving to Copenhagen fell into two categories. Interviewee 2 moved to Copenhagen as he wanted to take a break from studying for his undergraduate degree in Ireland. He chose Copenhagen as he'd been before and liked it, and he wanted a European destination. Interviewee 6 had been previously studying elsewhere in Denmark and moved to Copenhagen to accept a job offer; while Interviewee 8 found a niche position in Copenhagen and moved directly from Ireland with her family.

Survey participants arrived in the period from 1982 to 2022, with the oldest participant being 48 on arrival. Unlike the interviewees, the most common motivation for coming to Copenhagen was work-related reasons.

MADRID

Interviewee	Male/female	Age at time of interview	Time spent in Madrid to date	Reason(s) for moving	Straight from Ireland?
Interviewee 12	Male	40	~5 years	Friend	No
Interviewee 13	Female	44	~10 years	Lifestyle	No
Interviewee 14	Male	52	~15 years	Work	Yes
Interviewee 15	Male	53	~ 8 years	Spanish partner	Yes
Interviewee 16	Male	27	< 1 year	Lifestyle	Yes
Interviewee 17	Female	27	~1 year	Friend	No
Interviewee 18	Female	41	~16 years	Friend	Yes
Interviewee 19	Female	34	~ 5 years	Friend	No

Interestingly, a large proportion of those moving to Madrid fell into the “friend” category of motivation. Those who fell into this category had been living abroad prior to moving to Madrid and simply wanted a change of scene; but Madrid as a city itself wasn't necessarily the main reason for their move (Interviewee 12, for example, was attracted to the lifestyle and was only interested in moving to a Latin country, but this didn't have to be Spain). Interviewee 13 was

attracted by the “sunshine and cheap red wine”, but also the proximity of Spain to her and her partner’s home country (Scotland). Ultimately, Madrid won over Barcelona as it was considered a more accessible option in terms of language. Interviewee 16 came with his girlfriend from expensive Dublin, for the affordability Madrid offered. In comparison to Copenhagen, only one Interviewee moved to Madrid because of their Spanish partner – also fleeing (together) the expensive cost of living in Dublin.

Of the 18 survey respondents, the earliest arrival year was 1986, and the most recent was in 2022, and moved here between the ages of 21 and 59. Again, work-related motivation was the most common reason to relocate here.

CATEGORISED FINDINGS

INSTRUMENTAL PLACES AND PRACTICES

As outlined in the methodology, instrumental places can be semi-public places of encounter, as well as routinised, everyday practises that contribute to a sense of belonging. Applying these themes to the interview data, three main points emerged which will be discussed under this broader heading. Thus, this section will be broken into three subheadings: I. Irish locales; II. Social contacts; III. Cultural organisations and practices. To begin with, a visual representation of the cultural ‘centres of value’ in the urban landscape in each city is given (Figure 2 & Figure 3); including the most popular or ‘authentic’ Irish pubs (according to data collected from interviews and the survey), and the embassies in each city. In Copenhagen, Kennedy’s Irish Bar (also referred to as ‘Kennedy’s’ within this text) is the headquarters of the Gaelic football club and the Pop-Up Gaeltacht meetings. As previously established, these organisations have no fixed headquarters in Madrid.

FIGURE 2.

Map of key cultural 'centres of value' in Copenhagen (Google Earth (2023) with own text added)

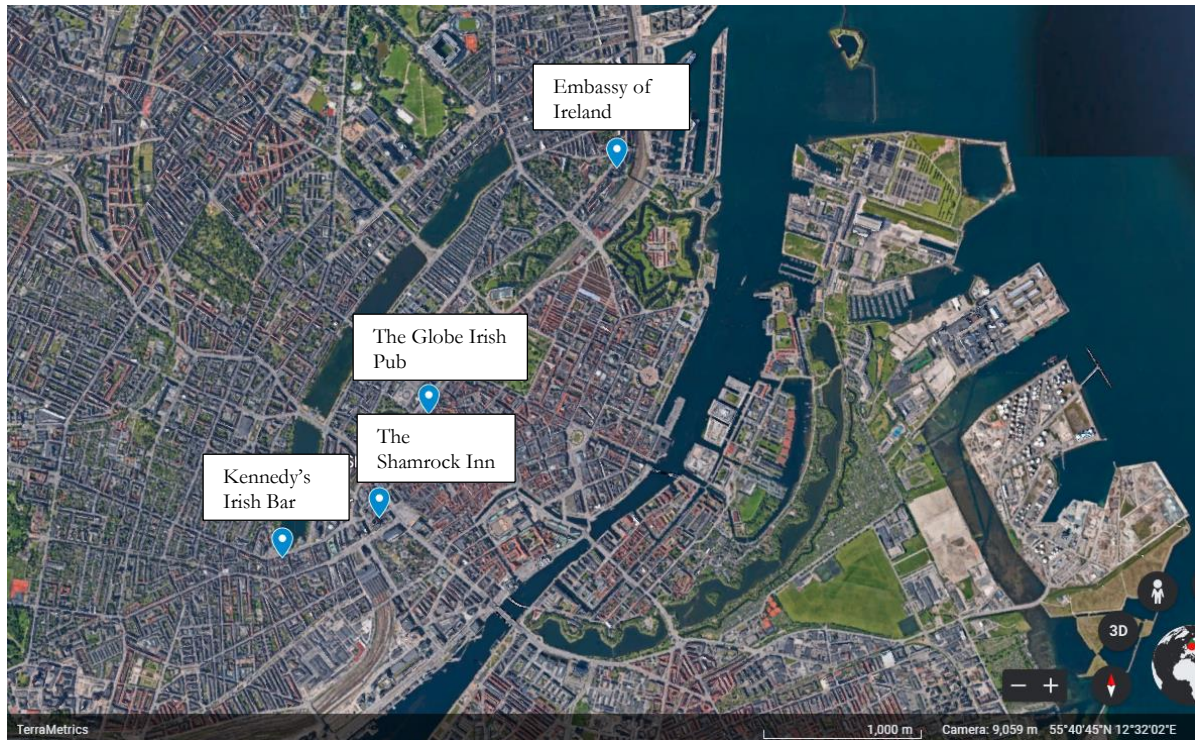


FIGURE 3.

Map of key cultural 'centres of value' in Madrid (Google Earth (2023b) with own text added)



IRISH LOCALES

In terms of physical places which are instrumental for the Irish community, Kennedy's Pub in Copenhagen is undoubtedly the unofficial hub of Irish culture. It is the site where the Copenhagen Gaelic Football Club and the Pop-Up Gaeltacht have their meetings, so it provides a central base for these activities. However, Kennedy's is also where it is most likely to meet other Irish people, in a setting that feels familiar: Interviewee 5 describes it as "a brilliant little exclave of Ireland" and Interviewee 1 maintains that when it comes to meeting other Irish people "it's always Kennedys".

Interviewee 7 has similar feelings for the Globe; "[it] felt like an Irish pub, hearing all the staff who are actually Irish talking to you and you could kind of go into your Irish-isms and they'd understand you". Interviewee 3 worked in the city's first Irish pub, The Shamrock Inn - which still exists under the original order but on new premises - when she first arrived in Copenhagen in the 1980s, which allowed her to get on her feet. It is clear that several Irish pubs in Copenhagen play a real role in connecting members of the diaspora and may even function as a socioeconomic support function, and they hold a lot of importance to members of the Irish community who opt into their Irish identity.

In Madrid, all interviewees (even those who did not go to Irish bars) immediately recognised the James Joyce Irish Pub as an important Irish space – although it is a sports bar lined with TVs which affects the type of crowd which go there. Several other pubs were mentioned as 'authentic' or 'good' Irish pubs, such as Triskels, Collins, and the Irish Rover. One interviewee warned to steer clear of any of the Irish bars in Sol (Madrid city centre) which she deemed to be unpleasant, and unrepresentative. Many interviewees noted that their local Irish pub was far from authentic; the staff didn't speak English, no Guinness was served, and they did not feel they were in a familiar setting at all.

Several interviewees commented on the fact that Irish pubs pop up as a sort of 'trend', and often disappear after a while. Interviewee 14 theorises that this occurred after the financial crash of 2008/9 when many English speakers left, and thus demand for these types of bars lessened.

when I came here, there would have been four or five Irish bars [in Malasaña], and they ranged from bars that were really for English football fans through to bars that were very Spanish. Now those five bars are down to one. There's been a cull, and I guess it's not as trendy anymore (Interviewee 14).

The clear distinction between 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' Irish pubs was also a prevalent theme in the survey responses on Irish spaces. For example, in Copenhagen, answers included: "The (real) Irish pubs (Kennedy's, Shamrock)"; "definitely the Globe Bar and Kennedy's" – only "*some* of the Irish bars" (emphasis added). In Madrid, survey respondents seemed less informed about, or interested in, the range of Irish pubs. Those mentioned included the Triskel, James Joyce, and Collins.

SOCIAL CONTACT

Social contact – in this case, with other Irish people – also plays an important role in constructing a sense of place. Interviewee 2 says he has been struggling to fit in, as he has not

made many social connections. While he has not been actively seeking out Irish friends (he met one person through the 'Irish in Copenhagen' Facebook page, but they rarely meet), the simple act of speaking to Irish people is something he considers part of feeling 'at home': "I would say it is not something I seek out, but it's probably something I miss too. You *feel* at home when you're talking to an Irish person, it's a different *feeling*" (Interviewee 2).

Interviewee 6 considers her social nature to be part of her Irish identity, and an important contribution to her sense of place. Feeling at home is something that comes with getting closer to people: "I think that's an Irishness, a real Irishness, that we just get to know people. It's easy for us to get to know people (...) How nice is that, how much at home can I feel if I feel like I've got my best friend here?". She says that even within her office, there are six Irish people, and they frequently meet up outside of work functions. They are connected through their Irish identity as well as their love of Irish tea ("a secret tea bag network"). She considers this immediate connection through shared nationality to be something specific to Irish emigrants – at least in Copenhagen - and compares this to a recent interaction with a Turkish girl she had met, who said she actively avoided meeting other Turkish people as "there might be an expectation of one helping the other one out".

However, this is not a universal feeling. Interviewee 8 says she is not bothered about connecting with Irish people specifically: "I've never actively gone to seek out Irish people (...) when I went to Kolding I lived with another Irish guy who I did my bachelors with (...) neither of us tried to find other Irish people". However, the fact that she already lived with an Irish flatmate may have influenced this to some degree.

Whether they actively sought them out or did not, all interviewees in Copenhagen said that they appreciated social connections with other Irish people. There were various reasons given for this; they felt a sense of shared emotional and cultural values, a shared style of upbringing, and importantly, a shared sense of humour; "we have really a good laugh about things that we could never laugh about with Danes" (Interviewee 1).

This sentiment was echoed by all interviewees in Madrid. Some interviewees sought out Irish friends specifically, as a way to help them relate to "new/foreign, Spanish/Latin experiences" (Interviewee 17). Others did not seek out Irish connections but stumbled upon them organically. Motivations for these social connections to other Irish people were both practical and social. When navigating a new city and new lifestyle, another Irish person can provide a reference point as well as a miniature support network: "It was really nice to feel like you weren't lost. You weren't alone. Other people were in the same boat as you. And of course speak your language" (Interviewee 18).

Again, the way Irish people talk, the ability to quickly connect and relate to each other is seen as an "Irishness":

I don't see myself as actively seeking out to specifically meet Irish people. But I do feel an immediate affinity and kind of ease when it comes to meeting Irish people. It really is just such a unique kind of way that I feel and how we communicate, I think there's something very special about how Irish people are (Interviewee 19).

Interestingly, unlike in Copenhagen, several interviewees met other Irish people in Madrid in public or semi-public spaces, simply by being overheard. Interviewee 15 was approached by his now-closest friend at his daughter's school when she heard him speaking with an Irish accent. Likewise, interviewee 13 told the following story:

I was in the kid's toy store one day, like two years ago, and a woman overheard me talking to my son, and she interrupted and was like 'Sorry are you Irish?' She was also from Kerry and she was so friendly. And really just obviously wanted to connect because we were both Irish and we did actually end up swapping phone numbers (Interviewee 13).

Several interviewees mentioned that members of the Irish community in Madrid exist in "social pockets". Most interviewees were aware of the presence of these pockets, whether they felt part of the Irish community or not.

68.8% of survey respondents in Copenhagen said it was important to meet other Irish people, for a variety of reasons, including "a shared understanding" and "feeling at home". However, many also emphasised the need to seek other friends too. The most common places for meeting other Irish people included work, sports bars and through other friends. In Madrid, 61.1% of survey respondents found this important, for most of the same reasons as Copenhagen. However, unlike in Copenhagen, speaking a shared language was a much more important factor.

CULTURAL ORGANISATIONS AND PRACTICES

Cultural organisations and practises can be considered instrumental in constructing sense of place. In Copenhagen, Interviewee 6 said that her sense of home came purely from the cultural practices her Irish parents involved her in. Growing up in England, Ireland was always home: "We think of Ireland as home, full stop (...) we'd arrive in Ireland, and they'd say welcome home (...) it wasn't (real) England that we grew up in because we had Irish parents and they went dancing at the weekend and we learned Irish dancing".

Irish cultural groups, such as the Gaelic football club and the Pop-Up Gaeltacht, are interesting to study with reference to instrumentality. Some of these Irish cultural groups and societies are tied into memory and feelings of nostalgia (which will be expanded upon later), but for some, they simply offer a social outlet: For example, Interviewee 8 joined the Gaelic football club for the first time when she moved to Copenhagen - she did not play Gaelic football in Ireland and for her, it is simply a way to meet (Irish) people. She notices that a lot of Irish people coming to Copenhagen immediately seek out the Gaelic football club, and "only really hang out with Irish people".

Sports clubs frequently fulfil this function. As Interviewee 8 says; "sports are one of the best ways to meet people". She goes on to say that she did not choose the Gaelic football club to meet other Irish people in particular, but she realised that it would be a good way to meet people from other places, too.

Few interviewees in Copenhagen were aware of the Pop-Up Gaeltacht. However, Interviewee 8 attended one session. She enjoyed it but said that she had to stop, as it was too much along with learning Danish: "I went before COVID and I quickly realised all my Irish is gone - it was so bad I'd start speaking Danish (...) it was a bit of a car crash".

In Madrid, Irish emigrants were part of a variety of cultural organisations; Interviewee 17 teaches Irish lessons online and translates to and from Irish for work. She is no longer on social media and had not been aware, until our conversation, of the Pop-Up Gaeltacht. However, she now frequently attends monthly meetings.

Other interviewees mentioned different Irish organisations such as traditional Irish music sessions in the pub, the Spanish-Irish Business Network, speeches and events organised by the Embassy, sports games at the Irish pubs, and the Gaelic football club. Despite the range of Irish cultural organisations present, Interviewee 12 feels that there's no option which suits his needs. He refrains from getting fully involved in the Irish community when he lives away from home as he feels that "a lot of the Irish expat thing revolves around GAA and Irish bars and stuff and that's not my cup of tea". He compares his experience in Madrid to where he lived in the Middle East previously: "I was friends with a lot of Irish people just being there, but I wasn't fully involved in the real Irish thing because I don't play GAA. So, I was kind of on the sidelines" (Interviewee 12).

Other interviewees in Madrid questioned the authenticity of these cultural groups and some of the events marketed as 'Irish'. For example, Interviewee 15 says "I don't need to connect to any of the groups. I went to some of these events, but I just found them not really 'Irish'. So, kind of half Irish or pretend Irish". As with 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' Irish pubs, it seems that most Irish emigrants in Madrid are wary of places marketing themselves as 'Irish' without truly representing Irish culture. In Copenhagen, the divide between authentic and inauthentic was less severe.

The survey results revealed that sports groups were one of the main networks that enabled Irish emigrants to connect to other Irish people, and Irish culture, in Copenhagen; whether Gaelic football or rugby and the local football team. In Madrid, survey respondents were less clear on the role of cultural organisations in adding to their sense of place, with many admitting that they struggled to find Irish people in Madrid.

MEMORY, HOME AND PRE-MIGRATION PLACES

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the role of memory in constructing sense of place was less explicit among interviewees than expected. While Fathi and Ni Laoire (2021) focused on the projection of memories of home onto physical features of the city, this was not a very common phenomenon among research participants in this thesis, and the role of memory had some overlap with the role of cultural practises and routines. For example, practices rooted in nostalgia and memory can form a sense of place:

When I moved to Ireland and was with my cousins the same age as me, spent every summer-time with them, they didn't give a care about ballads. And they didn't give a care about the Wolfe Tones, and they didn't give a care about Irish dancing. They were just living their lives, whereas we were like 'this is what it's like to be Irish - you have to hold on to that' (Interviewee 6).

Now that she's moved away from Ireland, she craves these things more, and is nostalgic: "That bit of Irishness (...) It means so much more to me now. You feel more part of it because you're

away, reminiscing, and that nostalgia you have about home, that connection, you crave it for sure” (Interviewee 6).

Interviewee 5 describes how he feels most connected to home when he goes to Kennedy’s Pub, which he describes as “a little piece of Ireland cut and paste” and “the real deal”. For him, Kennedy’s has an important function linked to his memories of Ireland; entering the place is like being transported back to Ireland and he goes there when he is homesick.

For those who practised or watched sports at home, this could also be replicated in Copenhagen:

“I think the most I felt at home is when I went to watch a rugby match of my colleague at the weekend and I was standing at the sideline in the pouring rain and it was like being at home watching the Sunday match (...) that was just the most Irish thing I’ve found” (Interviewee 8).

For others, nature and the natural settings within Copenhagen have been an important factor in forming a sense of place, but also create feelings of nostalgia. He does not necessarily use memories of Ireland to feel at home in Copenhagen, but he certainly misses Ireland more when he sees “the mountains, the beaches”:

the city definitely felt very liveable to me. And there are parks and green spaces and I really like being close to the water. In a sense, it would nearly remind me of little bit of home (...) I think there's probably something to the fact that when you move somewhere else you have this romantic notion of where you are from. So I'm kind of aware of that, but I would say I definitely feel a little bit nostalgic and again, it's the scenery that I would miss - the mountains, the beaches... (Interviewee 2).

As with Interviewee 6, Interviewee 12 finds that social and cultural events in Ireland are more important to him now that he’s lived abroad for so long. He felt as though his friends’ lives at home were moving on without him and became more aware of time passing: “For the first two years I was really homesick, missing bank holidays, Paddy's day and really kind of had that FOMO” (Interviewee 12).

For others, smaller acts of remembrance of home, such as preparing Irish food and drink items or other small daily practices, were rooted in memories of home. However, for Interviewee 16, he becomes less nostalgic when he remembers the reality of daily life in Ireland and the parts of the culture that he does not like:

I miss simple things. Like the spice bags [a type of takeaway meal] and Barry’s Tea bags. I got 600 delivered a while ago. But in terms of the day-to-day living, I found it bleak [in Ireland], I find sometimes the culture is just too based around drink (Interviewee 16).

In the survey responses from Copenhagen, sports were most linked to memories of Ireland; either going to Gaelic football training in Copenhagen or watching sports games. Drinking tea was also considered a meaningful daily routine which was strongly based on memory. The natural environment also emerged as a key factor in survey responses: “It's the closest I can get to a trek up a Wicklow mountain”; “The beach and outdoors remind me of home”. However, numerous respondents also said that they did not rely on memories of Ireland as they knew they could go back regularly.

In Madrid, survey respondents found that their lives in general were totally unrelated to Ireland. Even their eating times had changed. However, they brought up memories of “Irishness” by speaking to their Irish friends when they wanted. Again, however, some of the respondents mentioned that they miss the culture now that they are further away; “I feel more Irish and realize how rich and vibrant the culture is now (that) I’m not surrounded by it” and also appreciated green spaces in the city: “I really enjoy being in Retiro park as the greenery reminds me of being at home”.

SPACES OF CIVILITY AND CARE

Sense of place can be affected by the relationship between emigrants and the local or host population. For interviewee 5, the “haphazardness” and spontaneity of social interactions in Ireland is something he misses: “Walking into a pub and saying hello to a random stranger. Meeting someone on the street - you cannot say hello to people on the street here”.

Interviewee 5 says that he enjoys life in Denmark but meeting other Irish people is important for him – mainly because it is not always easy to meet Danish people. In fact, he said one of his friends went back to Ireland for this reason: “He just couldn't make friends and he didn't have enough Irish people around.” Interactions with the local population in public spaces were not fulfilling for him to the extent that they inhibited his ability to develop a sense of place or feel at home.

Numerous interviewees mentioned that they found it difficult to socialise with Danish people at times, which may be down to differences in the ways public spaces are used: “There is definitely a separation between all the different places Danes have their social contacts and they don’t overlap so much” (Interviewee 1). In Ireland, it would be typical to meet in a “neutral venue”, such as a pub, to socialise. However, she says that Danish people tend not to use this public or semi-public space as a meeting point, preferring to go to their home – which seems like a bigger step and much more intimate than meeting in a neutral space.

Interviewee 2 came here independently on a study break, without a partner or a job set up in advance. He says this has made it harder to find a sense of place and belonging, and he finds it difficult to meet people here: “I (have) no specific reason to be here as well, so maybe that kind of made it a bit harder to settle, you know? (...) I would say it's probably hard to meet people here. That's definitely been my experience” (Interviewee 2).

However, Interviewee 5 also says that his Irish identity is an important part of his experience of the city, and something he cherishes: “I like being the Irish guy in Copenhagen (...) I'm an Irish citizen, very proud of being Irish, and it is the sort of country where you can be Irish.” His children have both Irish and Danish passports, but he says he “will never be a Danish citizen”. He works as a writer in Copenhagen, and often participates in cultural events or adapts Irish plays for Danish audiences, where his Irishness is a key factor: “What I bring is a little bit of authenticity – to Irish events”. Thus, his Irish identity is an essential part of the way he uses space in the city and how he interacts with the local population.

Interviewee 15 in Madrid has the same experience, and his Irish identity is part of how he is identified within the workplace: “I’m happy being Irish. Yeah, I’m Irish. That’s it. And you know, I work as a native teacher in the school and there’s no issue”.

Likewise, in Madrid, Interviewee 19 is part of an Irish dancing group, and her Irish culture and identity are important in how she navigates the social interactions with her Spanish peers:

I just googled Irish dancing Madrid and this group came up. I contacted them and they were super friendly. It’s turned into a really big part of my life here, which I wasn’t expecting at all. We meet every week on a Monday to do rehearsals together, and then we do lots of shows and festivals. I’m the only Irish person apart from another Irish girl who’s joined sort of occasionally this year, they’re all Spanish (...) in some ways it’s the most Spanish thing I do here because everybody’s Spanish and we all speak Spanish – it’s one of the only situations I’m forced to - but on the other hand, it’s the thing that connects me to home the most as well (Interviewee 19).

Interestingly, Interviewee 14 says that since Brexit, he feels a renewed sense of pride to be Irish, as he feels Irish people integrate better than British people and “know the value of the EU”. While he says that Spanish people may not always distinguish between Irish and English immigrants in Madrid, he makes the distinction clear:

I work in sales, so particularly when I’m dealing with anyone in Europe (the meetings are all in English), I make a point of saying something like, ‘I’m Irish, so I might speak a bit fast. So tell me if I’m speaking too quickly’, but what I’m really saying is ‘I’m not British’ (Interviewee 14).

In opposition to Copenhagen, life in Madrid is described as largely taking place outside the home. While similar to Ireland in some ways for the pub culture, Interviewee 18 says she struggled to adapt to the different use of public space at the start:

One huge thing that’s so different, especially to me, was how everyone lives outside of their homes. Life is outside and so you are socializing a lot, and it’s uncomfortable a little bit at first because you’re just not used to it. We’re used to going out, drinking pints to get drunk. That’s how I grew up. And then you come here and it’s like everyone’s out all the time after work. But it’s controlled and you have tapas and a small beer, but every day (Interviewee 18).

Interviewees in Madrid agreed that Spanish people in general are welcoming and “warm”, and they felt they had overall positive interactions with the local population. The multicultural nature of Madrid lessened the feelings of being a ‘foreigner’: “You never felt like, oh, I’m the foreigner. Because it’s so multicultural. It was easy to be like, oh, well, no one’s looking at me as the pale Irish boy.” (Interviewee 16). For this reason, Interviewee 16 says Madrid is like the “perfect home”. There are no ‘Irish places’ in the city; “In the past, these Irish places – there’s nowhere like that. I’m not saying it should be like that. It’s just it’s different now” (Interviewee 15). The transient nature of life these days has impacted the ways people settle in the city; as Interviewee 14 says, Irish people come and go. Rather than Irish neighbourhoods, Madrid has numerous

other mixed neighbourhoods which have “expat vibes (...) British, French, Italian, Spanish, a few Irish people” (Interviewee 16).

The survey results in Copenhagen brought up an interestingly varied collection of places where people felt they had positive interactions with local or non-Irish people; Christiania (Copenhagen’s hippy commune), bars (due to a similar drinking culture), and parks or outdoor spaces: “there is a huge sense that you are meant to use public spaces in this city”. However, some people said that settling in took a while: “Gradual integration including therapy! At first regarded myself as a refugee from a priest ridden backwater”. Some people struggled to fit in - “of all the countries I’ve lived in Denmark was the least welcoming” – however, a positive picture is generally painted of interactions with the local population.

In Madrid, bars, terraces, and plazas emerged as the main public spaces that provided a sense of comfort; however, little was said about interactions with Spanish people. Many respondents felt they met Spanish friends quickly when they put in the effort. However, they also felt that “we have our own type of humour and sometimes when speaking with Spanish people, they don’t seem to get it, whereas when you speak to someone who is also Irish, they get it straight away”.

THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE

The role of language in negotiating public space became clear during interviews. In Copenhagen, those that had been living in the country for a long time and with a Danish partner learned to speak Danish. However, as English is spoken so widely in Denmark, a lack of Danish is not necessarily a barrier to assimilation. In fact, Interviewee 5 relies on the high level of fluency as part of his work as an English-language writer. He has been trying to learn Danish for years, but has recently decided to give up:

If I speak Danish to a Dane they will always switch to English at some point (...) after a few years, I just had a chat last year with my wife and said you know what? I'm just never going to be able to speak proper Danish so I'm just gonna stop and she says, yeah, you're wasting your time trying to learn it.

Interviewees 1 and 4 had the shared experience of struggling at dinner parties when everyone would simply forget to speak English:

...it was hard the first few years, because you're sitting at a party and everyone's really nice at the beginning and then they forget that you don't understand what they're saying (...) I'd be sitting at these dinner parties thinking I can't even be myself here. I can't express myself (Interviewee 4).

Therefore, while language may not necessarily present as a barrier when it comes to daily interactions such as buying a coffee or going to the shop, a lack of Danish can certainly impact sense of place when it comes to more intimate settings or relationships. However, younger interviewees and those not in relationships with Danish partners didn’t mention language at any stage.

In Madrid, learning Spanish was seen by most as imperative to assimilating for interviewees. However, that does not necessarily mean that everyone does:

I know people who've been here for years and still don't speak Spanish, which I think is appalling. How are you ever going to integrate? (...) there are all these degrees of integration, and I've seen it from the people who've nearly forgotten about home and English, to the ones who might have been here for years and still don't speak very much Spanish now (Interviewee 14)

Most interviewees felt inspired to learn Spanish and were happy about it, and the majority had a basic level before moving. Several interviewees mentioned that Spanish people were incredibly helpful with correcting their mistakes and were far friendlier to those that made the effort to speak Spanish. However, for some who struggle with language learning, the lack of English in Madrid has been a huge barrier to their integration (Interviewee 15). Some were surprised at the low level of English in Madrid, as a European capital city.

However, even those who reach a high level of Spanish find that they do not understand cultural references and this impacts whether they feel at home:

Lots of things about my life here are much easier. I do feel like although I can speak enough to get by and I even use Spanish at work now - I still feel like there's a disconnect and that I'm not fully integrated because I still don't understand cultural references. I won't be able to super easily join in a lively conversation in a bar. All these things that come very naturally when you're in a country where you speak your own language, just small things like socializing in the office, there will be a delay (Interviewee 19).

Language was not mentioned by any Copenhagen survey respondents as a factor influencing their sense of place. However, the opposite was true of Madrid. Several respondents mentioned that learning the language was a key factor in integrating or feeling at home. It was also a reason why many respondents felt the need to meet Irish friends.

FUTURE HOME

Many of the interviewees based in Copenhagen – even those who came to Denmark with a Danish partner – said that they had left due to push factors from Ireland rather than the pull of Denmark specifically. Interestingly, this was equally valid for those who emigrated decades ago and those who left more recently. For example, Interviewee 1, who left in 1998 to live in London, says of Ireland in the 90s: “There were no jobs, so it wasn't really a choice (...) if you wanted any kind of career, you would emigrate and you just accepted that, you didn't really think about it”.

Likewise, Interviewee 6 (who grew up in an ‘Irish community’ in the UK before going to live in Ireland as an adult) dislikes the lack of understanding of the reasons why previous generations had to leave:

there's the generation of people in Ireland that don't understand or have the respect for my parents' generation that I would like them to have, where they think that they just

went off and had the craic for themselves in England. But actually, they didn't want to do that. They had no choice. They had to go raise their family in England. They had no choice and they sent a lot of money back.

Aside from economic reasons, Interviewee 3 left due to the “repressive Catholic society” in Ireland, in order to experience “Denmark's more open and progressive liberal society, which is now what Ireland has become”. She realises that Ireland is now much more open and progressive, however, she would not return: “I wouldn’t go to Ireland for the simple fact that the basic structures of society are insufficient to meet my needs. Mainly as someone who faces the prospect of getting older”.

This sentiment is echoed by Interviewee 5, who states that as he gets older, he has become more grateful for the security provided by the Danish welfare state: “If you're prepared to go into that type of system, it's brilliant, and I'm old enough to know that I kind of appreciate that. If I was 20 years younger, I'm not sure this country would be for me, there are a lot of rules.” He does not plan on returning to Ireland, as things in Denmark work far better: “I love Ireland BUT. Compared to Ireland, everything works”.

This sentiment was echoed by younger participants. Despite Ireland’s ongoing economic development, young people are still deciding to leave: “(there is a) better quality of life here, just less stress. I feel like I've more of a safety net governmentally, family-wise, everything, here. I look at Ireland and I just see hardship, to be honest” (Interviewee 7). This is also described as a broader trend;

I love Irish people and Irish culture but I don’t want to live in the country (...) how ridiculously expensive it is to live in Ireland now (...) I think that's the reason why we're *all* leaving now, *there's another wave of us* (...) either I stay with my parents, or I move country (Interviewee 8, emphasis added).

Economic and social changes within Ireland have left many Irish emigrants in Copenhagen feeling like a foreigner in both their home and host countries. This has an effect on diasporic identity which can affect sense of place:

You become a foreigner in your home country as well. It’s been said to me ‘You are a foreigner here and you're a foreigner at home’. You don't belong anywhere (...) the Ireland that I left doesn't exist anymore (...) it's very hard to lose your kind of national identity, but I can't say it's home for me anymore (Interviewee 1).

Home is also not a single location. Multiple interviewees mentioned that this comes up annually at Christmas time when people speak of ‘going home’ when going to Ireland: “Copenhagen is home – although I do say when I'm talking to my Irish friends here that I’m going home for a few days when I’m going to Ireland” (Interviewee 3).

While the European scale was not generally mentioned by interviewees, Interviewee 3 was the exception. She credits her European identity to her father, who had always instilled in her family the value of Europe: “I'd kind of always been pre-programmed to feel very European (...) I

think there probably is a more European identity among people nowadays, especially young ones”.

In Madrid, interviewees agree that living in Ireland is difficult now due to the expense. With an increasing amount of time spent abroad, they feel that there is a clear disconnect between the country they left and the country now:

...when I go home, I don't feel connected, I feel different, like a bit of a tourist. If you asked me for recommendations in Dublin for a restaurant, I couldn't tell you (...) trying to get on the bus to Cork and asking how does it work, do I tap, do I pay cash - I don't know how the place functions, like wow, I'm a foreigner. You kind of belong to nowhere but you belong to everywhere when you decide to move away. I'm not Spanish and never will be Spanish. I'm more distant from Ireland as the days go by but I wouldn't be thinking of changing my passport (Interviewee 12).

Despite this, respondents are generally happy, or proud, to be Irish and love the country. As time passes, they feel more and more distant from the home that they left. This is also true of those from smaller towns and rural areas:

it's not the same place as it was 20 years ago when I left home. I'm from a very rural place and it's a sadder place now in many ways. It's full of people I don't know. It's changed a lot and there are no young people at all (...) It doesn't have that community spirit that I grew up with (Interviewee 18).

What becomes clear is that home is not one set place or even two set places. After all, many interviewees had lived in multiple places before and found that all of these places can be considered home:

...there's not one place that's, like, a natural kind of home. Northern Ireland is home, but England in many ways was also my home - it's where I made my kind of lifelong best friends, and that for me is a huge part of home, I guess as well (Interviewee 19).

Several interviewees consider Madrid an “adventure chapter”, or a place where they “have their things” or “have a life”, rather than a true “home”. However, home is not always based on the place we have things, but rather where we *feel* at home:

when I'm here, I talk about going home and when I'm in Ireland, I talk about going home and I mean for coming back here (...) Ireland and Scotland, yeah. I feel at home in both of those countries (...) I mean, I feel like *we have a life here* [Madrid]. You know, the boys are both enrolled in school (Interviewee 13).

For numerous others, Madrid is home simply as they have reached the stage of stopping to think about when or where they will go next. Usually, this has something to do with their partner staying here permanently:

I would say probably in the last 7-8 years I've stopped thinking about when this is going to finish and when I'm going to look for somewhere else or when I'm going to start investigating other places to visit or other places to move to, and I think I was doing that

for a very long time at the beginning. But I've had a partner here for about 11 years, so I think that that obviously had a massive impact as well on me feeling at home here (Interviewee 18).

Like Copenhagen, few interviewees in Madrid are keen to return to Ireland in future. Many feel a sense of neutrality when it comes to Ireland, due to a perceived disconnect from current affairs there. For some, however, staying away from Ireland is more about staying in Madrid:

...it's not that something there is stopping me from wanting to move back. It's that something here is keeping me here. My impression of Ireland is kind of neutral, I have to say (...) I'm trying to live my life here and focus on my life and my future here and my partner here (Interviewee 18).

Others have a much stronger outlook on this, seeing Ireland as unliveable and not somewhere they will be returning. However, even those who have no desire to move back to Ireland and view it unfavourably still maintain their Irish identity.

Ireland for me is dead. I know that sounds harsh, but everybody is leaving. I don't want to be 30 and living at home. It's not good enough and I'm not saving to pay rent for a place that I don't want to be in just to get by. And the cost of living got so expensive, even for lunches like little things (...) I'm not going back unless it's for a funeral or something, I'd never move back. If I was to move again I'd probably move to America, or else it would have to be somewhere like maybe Japan or South Korea with a job that wants me (Interviewee 16).

As with Copenhagen interviewees, the majority of interviewees in Madrid did not acknowledge their identity at the European scale. However, Interviewee 14 notes that identities occur across multiple scales: "There's this funny kind of triple identities. You could be Irish, Spanish, European. And I'd say #1 Irish, European #2 and I've been here so long that even the way I use English has been influenced by Spanish".

STAGE OF LIFE

Stage of life has a huge impact on how Irish emigrants navigate their sense of place. Whether people are single or in a relationship, whether or not they have children, and their age are all factors which influence the ways they construct home. Stage of life in terms of length of time in the host country also plays a factor in the types of relationships sought, and affects relationship to one's Irish identity, too.

Home is often where those we are closest to can be found: "Home is where my children and my boyfriend are. I think they are the things that tie me to a place more than anything" (Interviewee 1). Likewise, her social activities for the first 8-9 years revolved around her children, and she met the majority of her friends in Copenhagen through her children's school or extracurricular activities.

Thus, children emerge as a major influence on the construction of a sense of place. Interviewee 6 says she doesn't often socialise as much as she has a young son, but if she were younger she

would consider going to the pub and the GAA (Gaelic football) club in order to socialise with other Irish people:

...when I first came to Copenhagen and I was thinking there were Irish people here, but where are they and where do they hang out? And then quite quickly, I got a sense of actually there's not a lot of them (...) If I was in my 20s it would be around the pubs that you'd find the people and through the GAA for sure.

For her, community formation is “the next step” after sorting out the practicalities that come with having a child. She is the sole earner of the family, so she is not going out often.

Interviewee 1 feels that while she enjoys meeting Irish people, it's not as crucial to her sense of place as it used to be. She considers this a common pattern:

...as time goes on and the longer you live in the country, the less important it is to see Irish people, I think. I think everyone has the same pattern (...) I wouldn't go around seeking Irish friends. I don't feel it's so critical to myself anymore, but I really do enjoy the company of those few Irish people I've gotten to know.

However, this differs massively from person to person: Interviewees 3 and 4 have both been in Copenhagen for over 25 years and have maintained a core group of Irish friends who are very important to their identity. While they have both assimilated well, with Danish partners and children, their long-term friends are primarily Irish (they are also friends with each other) and they are both part of a book club of predominantly Irish women which has been continuing for 20 years.

Thus, time in the host country or city is a very important feature of this. For example, Interviewee 2 says that he considers moving to be related to phases: “After the first phase that you've moved somewhere...it's between that and the phase where you finally feel like you're settled - I would probably say I'm in the like middle phase”.

The impact of stage of life was much clearer to interviewees in Madrid. Several interviewees mentioned the difference in how older people navigate the city in comparison to younger people. There is less of a need among older emigrants to meet new people: “I suppose most of the people here are young. I just keep tabs of what's there. I don't have a need to meet up with loads of people anymore” (Interviewee 15).

This idea that younger emigrants are less keen to be involved with other Irish people was repeated by Interviewee 14. He also describes the process of assimilation as phasal, changing over time:

I think there are more Irish people here than ever now. But I think that there's an age thing. I think the younger ones tend not to want to hang out with other Irish people. I went through phases as well where when I got here first I was hanging out with Irish people a lot and going to Irish bars a lot. And then I was kind of going ‘Why am I spending time in Irish bars in Madrid? I should be in Spanish bars’ and I had more Spanish friends. So I kind of drifted away from it (Interviewee 14).

Thus, some people find they have less reliance on fellow Irish emigrants once they have been in the destination country for a longer length of time and are more established.

Interviewee 13 compares the ways she has found a sense of place in Madrid, in her 30s, to when she studied in France when she was younger. At present, meeting other Irish people is not important to her. But when she was younger, she said that there was a “sort of affinity based on being Irish” and the Irish pub was the centre of gatherings during her French exchange. However, this has become much less important for her over time, especially now that she has a family.

However, the impact of children on navigating sense of place is also interesting when it comes to explaining Irish identity to them. For example, Interviewee 13 is in the process of teaching her youngest son (4) about his Scottish and Irish heritage. He has not been to either country very often as the pandemic has prevented them from travelling. She says she is simply “at a loss” about how to teach him about the Irish side of the family, as he’s still too young, but she constantly tries to tell him about Irish writers and is sure he will find out about the pub culture when he is older. At the moment, he often confuses the English language with English identity:

He knows he has an Irish passport, but he's the only native speaker in his class. We didn't send them to like a bilingual school (...) he keeps saying we're English, which I keep correcting him on, I keep saying we're English speaking. It's not the same thing. But he'll get there eventually (Interviewee 13).

Likewise, those who see their friends in Ireland settle down and have “children, houses, cars” say that this influences their perception of home. Having elderly parents in Ireland can also be a factor in wanting to stay within Europe, or at least not go too far:

There are other people I know who do go back much more frequently, but they've parents in Ireland and I think that is a big thing that makes you go back and keeps you more in touch. If you don't have that you become a bit more like me where you go ‘yeah this is home, this is where I am’. Ireland isn't really home anymore. I'll always be Irish. But I view myself as being European as well (Interviewee 14).

In the survey responses from Copenhagen, a few people mentioned that being a parent has highly influenced their assimilation process and their routines: “Being a Mum means we meet other parents at classes for my child so I think our routines change as he joins local activities”, and “once my son started in school, friendships with parents of his classmates blossomed”. In Madrid, this distinction came up only once as an influential factor: “Life and relationships have changed and friends have moved away or home. Since I have had children, I have reconnected with some Irish girls through these groups which is nice”.

THE ROLE OF DIGITAL NETWORKS

The increasing connectivity between different countries has impacted the way Irish emigrants form a sense of place and construct home. First of all, many interviewees mention the benefit of using digital methods to keep in touch with family members who are located all over the world: “I've got two siblings living in Ireland, one sibling in New York and one sibling in England. We

keep in exceptionally close contact with one another by phone, facetime and meet up twice annually in Ireland” (Interviewee 4).

Many people also use other forms of social media and technology to connect to fellow Irish people or other expats in Copenhagen:

social media is fantastic for expat groups that idea of this sort of diaspora, you know, clinging together (...) I have a WhatsApp group which is much more...close. We call ourselves the 12 apostles. That was arranged through the Embassy (...) without social media definitely it would have taken longer to establish a foothold (Interviewee 5).

In addition, this has allowed connections to blossom that may not have occurred naturally. Thus, social media networks, and other forms of communication, influence sense of place by allowing for new relationships to be established outside of one’s typical networks:

to be honest - this is an interesting one – we are probably the sort of people that might not have hung out in Ireland. You know I think that's fair to say - we're from very disparate backgrounds and interests, but the badge of honour among us all is that we're expats (Interviewee 5).

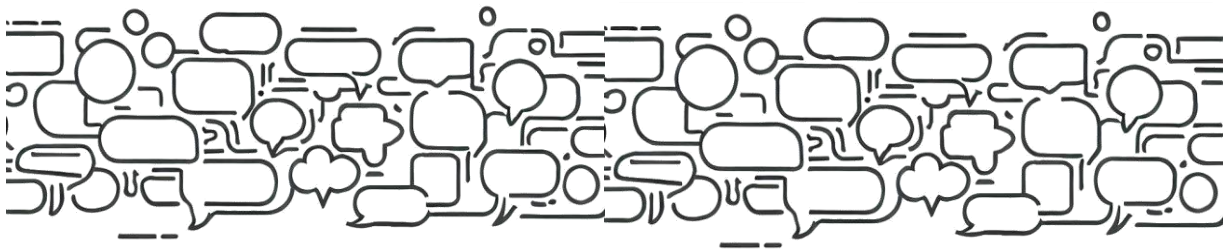
Interviewee 5 goes on to say that he realises the value of these digital networks and of social media in their ability to replace physical communities or pockets. He goes to Kennedy’s Pub when he wants to be in an Irish space, but aside from that, he compares favourably the physically disparate nature of the Irish community in Copenhagen to the ethnic clustering of Irish emigrants in New York City, which he noticed on a recent trip there: “here my Irish friends live all over Copenhagen and outside Copenhagen. There's no discussion about moving towards a little pocket together or some kind of a hub. We’ve just got WhatsApp.”

In Madrid, interviewees tended to use social media or online platforms for practical reasons more than to socialise. For example, the Irish in Madrid Facebook page was described as a “no bullshit page” which provided a good source of advice: “I would go for recommendations for things. We need to replace our windows and might, you know, ask if anyone has any contacts or things like that” (Interviewee 13). Rather than to make friends, social media was simply seen as a way to keep an eye out on what was happening in the community: “Every so often you have to see what's going on but it's not really to meet up” (Interviewee 15).

In Copenhagen, while one respondent mentioned that they use a dating app (“Grindr”) to meet people, there was less emphasis put on digital networks or the role of technology for this purpose. However, one respondent in Madrid mentioned that it was less important to meet Irish people as “being able to call people at home a lot more than before, including video calls means I have less of a need to hang out with Irish people”.

CHAPTER 5:

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION



5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

As discussed in the methodology section (chapter 3), this research focused on collecting and analysing experiences. In order to do this, it was necessary to pluck common themes running through these experiences, to allow them to be compared and contrasted, and a broader overall image to emerge. Therefore, the operationalised coding framework based on Fathi & Ni Laoire (2021) was certainly a useful tool as it proposed categories which highlighted different facets of the data. However, there are two important points to add to the discussion in relation to this.

First; the purpose of this research is not to summarise all of the experiences of the Irish diaspora and place them neatly into simple categories. In order to stay within the scope of this research, the focus was on recurring or common themes. However, every effort was made to represent fairly and accurately participants' views. Considering this research's exploratory approach, and the role of subjectivity as discussed in Chapter 3, meaningful results were generated. Secondly; in an attempt to view data within the four operationalised categories of the 'urban home' framework, it quickly became clear that additional categories and sub-categories were necessary as four categories were too restrictive. Thus, an important conclusion in relation to the framework used is that it is clearly important to operationalise based on the case in question (which may be a dynamic process that adapts to new themes as they emerge).

The following section discusses the findings in relation to the research question(s), with reference to the theoretical foundations explored in the literature review (chapter 2).

Which factors contribute to, and affect, the sense of place and construction of urban home of the Irish community in Copenhagen and Madrid?

Based on the findings of this research, the factors that contribute to, and affect, the sense of place and construction of urban home of the Irish community in Copenhagen and Madrid are the following:

- Instrumental places: Irish spaces and locales, social contact with other Irish emigrants, and cultural organisations
- The role of memory
- Spaces of civility and care; and the role of language
- Future home imaginaries
- Stage of life
- The role of digital networks

This section builds on the detailed breakdown of these factors given in the previous chapter and discusses the relationship between them.

Research participants in both cities were diverse in age, gender, and length of stay in the host country. Furthermore, the findings of the interviews confirm that Irish emigration is still taking place extensively; especially among young people (Interviewee 8: "There's another wave of us"). Many of these emigrants are repelled by the growing expense of day-to-day life in Irish cities, especially Dublin. Irish emigrants are still a highly mobile group; many were already living abroad

or had been at some point, prior to coming to Copenhagen or Madrid. Others spoke of having family members living elsewhere in the world. While it was much more common to move to Madrid to follow a friend than in Copenhagen, where the majority moved for a romantic relationship, it is hard to establish if this is a broader pattern due to the small sample size. However, one possible reason for this is the strong tourism link between Ireland and Spain, confirmed by the Embassy of Ireland in Madrid, which may have increased exposure to Spain as a destination.

Interestingly, two interviewees from Copenhagen knew each other as they are members of the same book club. However, this did not occur in Madrid, and we can see from the survey results that no respondents heard about the survey from a friend. This fact, along with the finding that the Madrid Irish community seems to fall into ‘pockets’, would indicate the Irish community in Madrid is more socially dispersed than in Copenhagen. The growth of virtual networks and the changing profile of the ‘typical’ Irish emigrant in these cities has led to a reduction of reliance on physical networks or communities. While Kennedy’s Pub in Copenhagen provides a hub for emigrants – not only as an Irish pub but also as the physical headquarters for the Pop-Up Gaeltacht and the Gaelic football club - no such hub exists in Madrid and these organisations are baseless. However, one key consideration is that there is a huge difference between authentic and inauthentic Irish spaces and Irish experiences, based on specific memories of these spaces or traditions at home. In Madrid, the fact that one main hub for Irish culture does not exist may also add to the appearance of “pockets” of Irishness, rather than a solid community. Generic places, those which are the product and symbol of globalisation, did not feature heavily in responses; the closest thing mentioned to this were public parks in which many emigrants felt a sense of comfort.

Considering the profiles of interviewees is important, as we can see that factors such as age, relationship status, and the presence of children have an impact on sense of place. The extent of this became clear during the structured coding process when an additional category was required to incorporate this angle (‘stage of life’). First of all, those with partners or children will stay somewhere where they aren’t entirely happy if it suits their loved ones better. A clear example of this is Interviewee 15, who is waiting until his daughter is older before he moves to Ireland. Secondly, Irish emigrants with children will typically build their daily routines and social interactions around their child.

What can be established from these findings is that – in line with previous research - the particular group of Irish emigrants assimilate well for the most part. However, despite high levels of assimilation, they remain loyal to their Irish identity; echoing the concept of “global nationalism” described by McMahon (2015). Even those who do not feel part of any Irish community, who have no desire to return to Ireland and/or view the country negatively – such as Interviewee 16: “Ireland to me is dead” – hold their Irish identity close. However, this does not mean that emigrants actively pursue a connection to this identity through cultural practices.

The way that one’s personal Irish identity interacts with the place in question can also be based on “specific political and social structures” (Walter et al., 2002, p. 26). Thus, broader-reaching processes - including international politics – can affect daily interactions with others in the city

and alter spaces of civility and care. For example, in the wake of Brexit, Interviewee 14 made an extra effort to distinguish himself as Irish rather than English.

Cultural organisations in both Copenhagen and Madrid play an important role in sense of place. Not only do these organisations offer a way to connect to Irish cultural practises, but they function as social groups which connect the Irish community. They also allow for connection between the Irish community and the local population (and/or other expats) through the medium of Irish culture. Thus, these organisations also play an important role as spaces of civility and care. The fact that many of the members of the Gaelic football clubs in Copenhagen and Madrid are beginner players, or simply non-playing members, speaks to this – anyone is allowed to join. For many, cultural practices or “the Irish ways” (Interviewee 10) become more exaggerated, or hold higher importance, when they are far from home. Interviewee 21, for example, has a heightened interest in the Irish language since he lives the majority of his life in Spanish. Thus, these organisations may be more important for Irish people living outside of Ireland than those who remain.

The majority of survey respondents and interviewees said that it was important for them to connect with other Irish people. Even those interviewees who did not feel part of an Irish community felt that it was somewhat ‘nice’ to meet other Irish emigrants. As expected, the modern Irish emigrant does not require an Irish network ‘for survival’, but it can be useful for practical reasons; such as finding someone to provide a certain service. Moreover, Irish networks no longer need to have a physical base. Communities can now exist virtually on digital platforms. As per Massey (2013) in Pemberton & Phillimore (2018, p. 737); “the emergence of social networking websites may reduce the importance of place, particularly for younger people”. Social media enables networks and events to be shared to a community quickly and easily and even introduced people to each other who never would have met otherwise.

Moreover, the possibility of connecting to family and friends in different countries has altered place-making processes, as friends and family members can easily be contacted over the phone. In addition, digital networks have reduced the role of memory required in the construction of home, as home can be ‘visited’ virtually more easily than ever. Memory still plays a role in how we relate to the places around us. However, findings from the interviewees showed that this was not so much in the projection of landmarks from home onto the new setting. Rather, this takes place through small daily acts or routines, or through being in nature.

What does this tell us about the broader meaning of place and home in the context of mobility?

The findings from this research on the Irish community shed light on the broader meaning of place and home in the context of global mobility. First of all, what emerges from these findings on a broader scale is that indeed, place (and home) are concepts based on ‘feeling’. Interviewees regularly mentioned that they ‘feel’ at home when they speak to someone or perform a certain ritual, like drinking their favourite type of tea or walking in nature. This follows from the initial discussion in Chapter 2 of “place as a feeling or experience”. Thus, as established by Tuan (1977), “‘Center’ is not a particular point on the earth's surface; it is a concept in mythic thought rather than a deeply felt value bound to unique events and locality” (p. 150). As interviewee 2

describes, creating a sense of place, or a 'feeling' of home, certainly appears as a process; something which changes with time and involves multiple phases. As multiple interviewees state, simply 'having your things' in a place is not enough to make you feel at home; having an emotional connection is what truly allows a sense of place to form.

Secondly, place can be considered a social production (across larger and smaller scales). Sense of place at the urban level largely hinges on social contact with peers. The findings of this research prove that a particular place can have multiple identities depending on personal desires and past experiences; "places are fragmentary and inward-turning histories, pasts that others are not allowed to read" (de Certeau, 1984, p. 108). Having a partner, a supportive friend group, or children is one of the most influential things to one's sense of place; it can mean the difference between feeling like you belong somewhere and feeling as though you are floating around aimlessly.

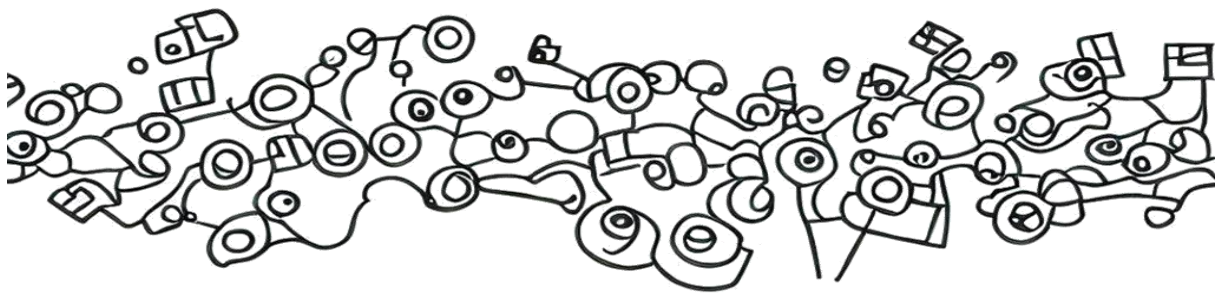
Place can also be seen as a social production on a larger scale. They are subject to change stemming from socio-spatial processes occurring on a global scale and shifts in power dynamics. Thus, shifts in Ireland's macroeconomic position and social developments affect the experience of Irish emigrants. In the same way, any emigrant who spends a prolonged period of time away from 'home' is likely to feel as though they are a 'tourist' when they return, as places are created via processes which are inherently changeable with time. However, this does not necessarily affect how emigrants view their national identity.

Thirdly and finally, in considering that home is multiple places; Massey's (1991) "global sense of place" is now more relevant than ever. Home can clearly be seen to follow the rhizomorphous pattern identified in the literature; as people move, they re-establish their centre(s) of value. Home and place, therefore, exist across a network which comprises more than two points or the 'here' and 'there'. Rather, home can be whichever spaces we choose to give meaning to along the way.

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CHAPTER 6:

REFLECTIONS AND LIMITATIONS



6. REFLECTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

CONCLUDING COMMENT

This thesis answers the research question(s) “*Which spaces and places contribute to, and affect, the sense of place and construction of urban home of the Irish community in Copenhagen and Madrid?*” and “*what does this tell us about the broader meaning of place and home?*” by exploring the experiences of Irish emigrants in two very different European cities. In doing so, it adds to the relatively limited pool of research on Irish emigrants in European destinations, and sheds further light on the experience of place, space and urban home, especially in the context of migration. This section builds upon the conclusions of the previous chapter and presents potential applications for this knowledge on a larger scale, while also acknowledging limitations that emerged during the research process.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings of this research have highlighted numerous future research pathways, as well as limitations. Some of these have already been acknowledged throughout this thesis (in chapter 3 and chapter 5). Future research which acknowledges and improves upon these limitations could be incredibly fruitful.

While the ‘urban home’ framework was adapted in this case to research the experiences of Irish emigrants, it has potential applicability as an analytical tool across a range of other migrant groups. Considering my own interest and position in this research, the Irish diaspora was a good case study. However, it would be interesting to compare the experiences of Irish emigrants to members of other emigrant groups in Copenhagen and Madrid. The inclusion of other comparison groups has the potential to shed light on how the city can influence sense of place and urban home in a broader sense and would be a worthwhile subject for a larger study.

As previously mentioned, generating a representative sample for this research was an almost impossible task. The lack of reliable statistics on the Irish based in European cities makes it difficult to establish a community profile. This limitation was acknowledged by MacÉinrí (1989) who struggled to create a scientifically random survey due to incomplete statistical data, as well as by O’Keeffe-Vigneron (2019) in her follow-up study:

Irish emigration to the European continent in the most recent period has not generated the same level of interest, perhaps because European countries have not attracted Irish emigrants in the same numbers as the English-speaking destinations but also because it is extremely difficult to obtain reliable statistics on the Irish based on the continent (p. 388).

While research participants were diverse in terms of age, gender, and time spent in the host country; interviewees and survey respondents had still opted into the Irish community - whether online or through connection to the Irish Embassy. It wasn’t possible to reach those who had

assimilated to the extent that they had no contact with other members of the Irish community. The same can be said for those who did not have a social media presence or any contact with the embassy. Therefore, those who were unable or unwilling to connect to other Irish people were not represented in this research.

This thesis introduced a range of Irish cultural organisations and social groups of which I had no previous awareness; some of which were context-specific such as Madrid's Spanish - Irish Business Network, and others, like the Pop-Up Gaeltacht, which can be found in numerous places, but are very recent phenomena. Due to time and word constrictions, it was not possible to speak to representatives of every 'Irish' organisation in each city. Those chosen are therefore not a representative sample of such groups or organisations.

MacÉinrí & Lambkin (2002) describe three categories when it comes to identity formation: "how the subject constructs her/his own identity, how/whether the community or communities of the said identity perceive the subject, and how the host community perceives both the subject and the subject's imagined community". It could therefore be an interesting addition to this research to include the local populations' perceptions of Irish culture and the Irish community. This would shed further light on how groups such as Gaelic football clubs have a social function and unite Irish arrivals with the host population.

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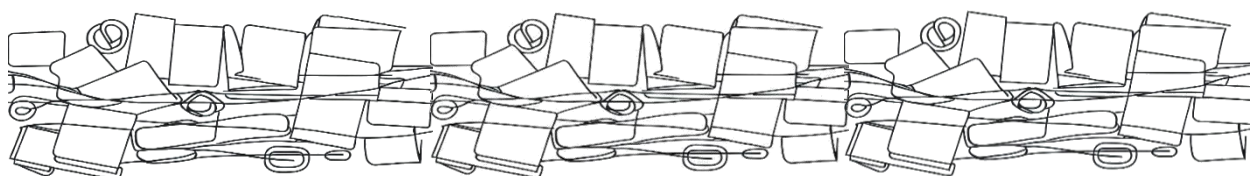
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APPENDICES

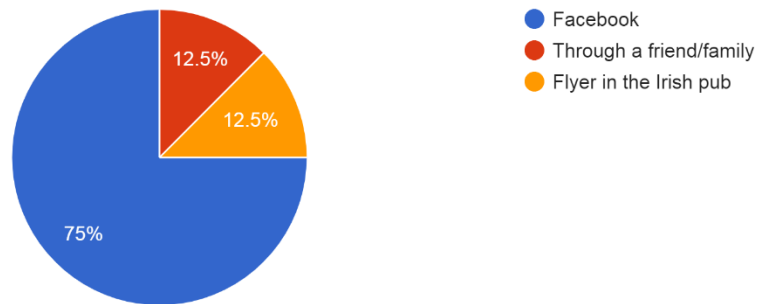


APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. COPENHAGEN SURVEY RESPONSES:

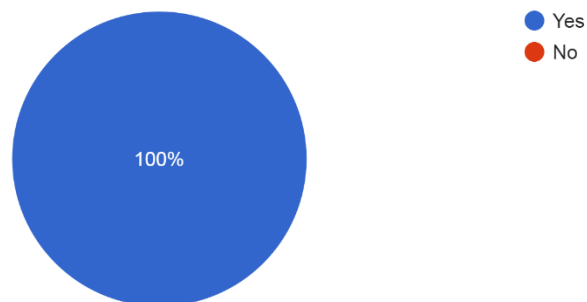
First things first - how did you hear about this survey?

16 responses



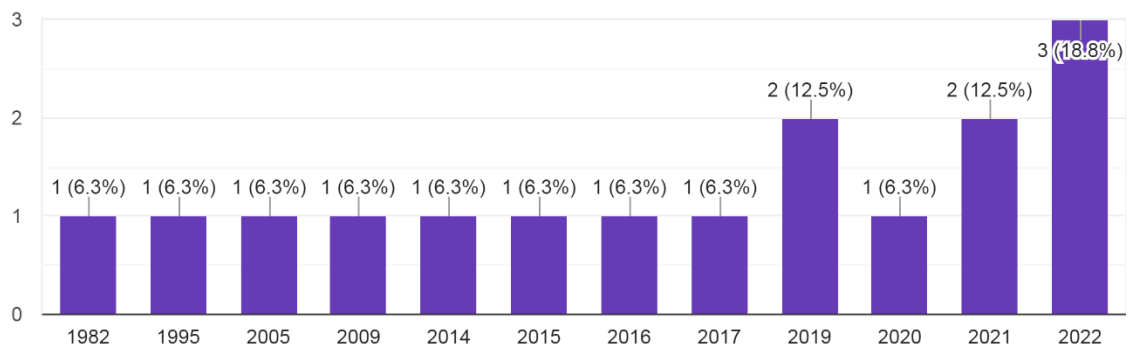
Are you Irish?

16 responses



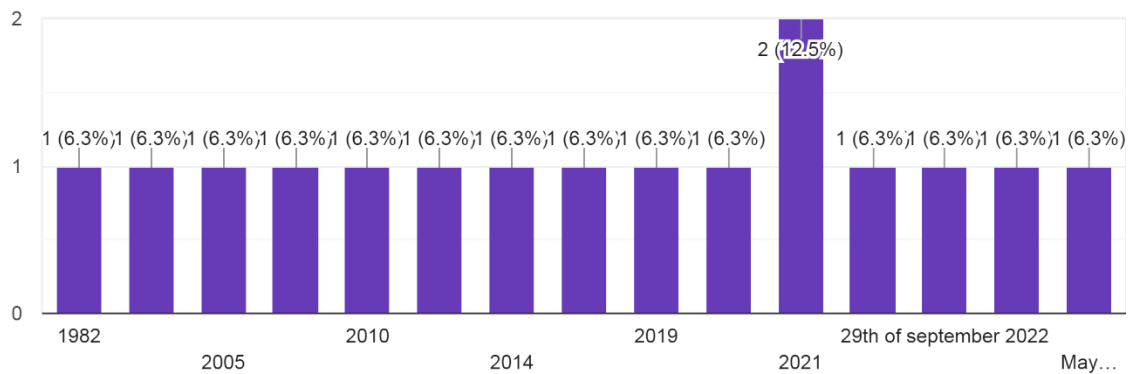
When did you move to Copenhagen (which year)?

16 responses



When did you last live in Ireland?

16 responses

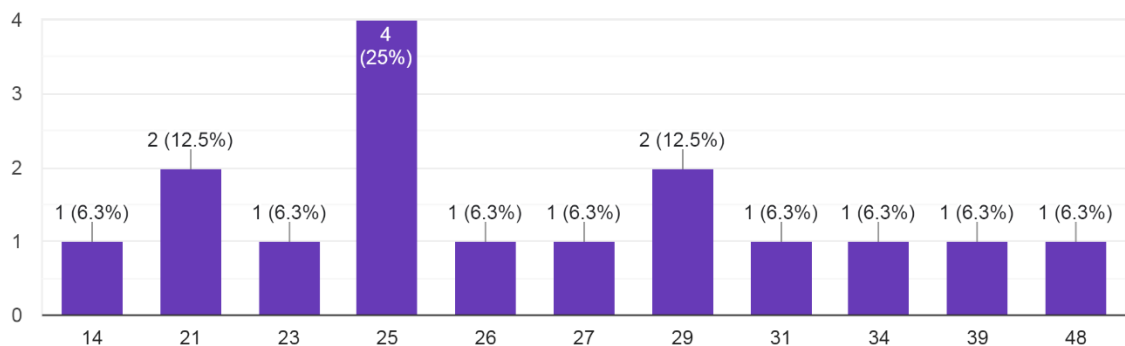


Why did you move here (work/family/relationship etc.)?

- Work
- Relationship
- Work
- Work - new job
- Family
- Studies, Them work
- Studies/Relationship
- Work opportunities
- Work, travel and a fresh start ☐
- An internship
- Relationship
- Working holiday.
- Danish Girlfriend

How old were you when you moved here?

16 responses



In which public places/spaces (parks, bars, sports facilities etc.) do you feel most at home in Copenhagen, and why?

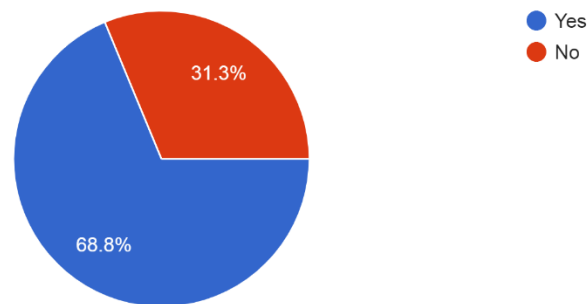
- Parks, I'm a Mum to a 5.5yr old so it's the best I get 😊
- The dubliner and the globe cause there's most Irish people there
- All of them, there is a huge sense that you are meant to use public spaces in this city.
- The Globe and the Gentofte Rugby Club training at Gentofte Sports Park. I felt welcomed and supported by fellow expats most of whom happened to be Irish. Denmark was my 10 country to live in and it's the first I ever had Irish friends
- Sports facilities (because of GAA training)
- Places like absalon are great for meeting new people and talking to lots of people. Irish bars with Irish people seems very like you are in Ireland
- Kenedys
- The beach and outdoors. Reminds me of home.
- I haven't been to an Irish bar yet unfortunately but me and a few mates have spent some time in christiana and that seems like a welcoming place to hang out with a wife mix of people
- Bars. The drinking culture is very similar in Ireland and Denmark!
- Klampenborg
- Cycling anywhere.
- Kennedys
- None
- I live in Gilleleje now but Kennedys and maybe the Shamrock are the places i would like to visit again.
- Bars, nightclubs, music venues, gym, corner kiosk.. basically anywhere I'm a 'regular' and know the people

Do you think there are Irish areas/spaces in Copenhagen? If so, where are they?

- No
- In my experience it only seems to be Kennedy's pub
- Not besides the pubs!
- Some Irish bars I guess
- Oh definitely the Globe Bar and Kennedy's
- The (real) Irish pubs (Kennedy's, Shamrock).
- Irish bars, Irish football team
- Kenedys/GaA club
- Just the irish pubs.
- Apart from the bars I'm not to sure, I think there might be a gaa club here
- To be honest I don't think there are... I haven't met any other Irish people that live here.
- My workplace 😊
- Irish pubs
- Dont know
- Bars and restaurants here almost always have at least some. Irish involvement. Gaa and Copenhagen Celtic

Is it important for you to connect with other Irish people in Copenhagen?

16 responses



And, why?

- Lovely to make connections with home
- Keep in contact with that culture and feel at home
- If I wanted to connect with Irish people, I would have stayed home. It's more important to connect with people generally
- I found of all the countries I've lived in Denmark was the least welcoming and I lived in Japan for 3 years among others
- Easier to connect with than the Danes. Reduces home sickness.
- Yes, as it's nice to speak to others who have travelled over and have the sense of familiarity. But it is also very important to extend your group to other nationalities
- Ah it's nice to connect with home
- Miss the culture and the craic
- It's nice to not have to filter what you say or how you say it cause I think the Irish have a unique sense of humour and a unique style of conversing with each other which you have to change when talking to people outside your community
- I really want to experience Danish culture with Danish people. I also left Ireland to get a break and experience what the rest of the world has to offer so it seems counter intuitive to spend my time abroad with other Irish people.
- I see enough in work.
- Reach a fast rapport with fellow Irish. But it's not such a big deal for me now after so many years living here.
- My circle is with people I relate with through hobbies and not culture
- Because I commute
- I've lost all contact, I'm very integrated. However I wish I had more contact.
- A shared understanding of what it is to move here, both what's gained and lost

How do you meet other Irish people in Copenhagen (bars, Facebook, sports club etc.)?

- Through work where Irish people meet each other and form their own community
- I don't

- Well I firstly reached out via the Irish in Denmark Facebook group asking where I might watch the Ruby games. The Globe was suggested and that's where I began to build my network
- Sports, bars.
- Sports club and bumble friends , bars
- Before kids yes,
- Work and bars
- The Irish I have met so far was threw my work I haven't ran into an Irish person any other way yet
- I don't...
- Work
- Accidentally, through my network.
- Clubs
- Grinder
- Kennedys.
- Initially Irish pubs, then general socialising

When you first arrived, how did you settle in?

- Still settling!
- By going to folkeskole
- I made friends through university and got a job in a bodega
- The first night I arrived I went to The Globe to have dinner.
- Joined the GAA team.
- Joining the football team, building a routine , working with Danish people
- Haven't really
- It took a while, but I got there. The first year was difficult to make friends.
- Settled in pretty good, the city transportation system is easy to navigate which made life easier and the people I work for were the most friendly and welcoming people I've come across to date
- I worked a lot, tried to make local friends but it took a while.
- Getting my first pay pack after being told I'm not getting paid until I had a CPR number.
- Slowly. Once my son started in school, friendships with parents of his classmates blossomed.
- Ok
- Went to a bodega
- Reasonably fluent after 12 months. Lonely. Unsteady relationship and 1 saughter after 3 years.
- First 3 months it snowed and I lived like a hermit, then went and got a job and built up a social network very quickly

Are there any routines/practices that make you feel more at home here? Did these change over time?

- Being a Mum means we meet other parents at classes for my child so I think our routines change as he joins local activities- similar to home
- Not really
- Drinking a cup of Barry's in the morning and before bed
- Very much changed over time. My family arrived about 6 months later and then the International school parents over took the social scene, though through the rugby club and going to watch matches I still kept in the loop
- Going to GAA training. Set up a book club (a large proportion of which are Irish). Watch Ireland in sports games (mostly rugby). These haven't really changed much over time but the book club is pretty new.
- I used to played football, but met friends and then stopped playing football. More focus on meeting friends at the weekend
- Cook potatoes every day
- Making friends, mostly expats at the beginning and now lots of Danes.
- Just the work comradeship, in Ireland especially in the area of work I'm in (carpentry) there was always a lot of stress involved with the job but that disappeared once I came here
- Not that I can think of
- Going bouldering, going to Cafe Mellemrummet.
- Running/jogging in nature. It's the closest I can get to a trek up a Wicklow mountain.
- Hygge - people letting me live my life without interfering
- I get up go to work and come home late just the same as Ireland
- Gradual integration including therapy! At first regarded myself as a refugee from a priest ridden backwater.
- No

If so, are these linked to memories of Ireland?

- Yes
- No
- Yeah, soccer club here n same in Ireland
- -
- I guess I do bring my children along to the pub to watch the matches. I have found memories of having a lucozade and taytos while my father had a pint
- Not necessarily. My experience of GAA here is very different to at home for example.
- Not really but my routine is more similar to what I used to do in Ireland
- Sure
- Not really
- N/a
- No not at all.
- Absolutely. Miss the mountains.
- Read above
- Well I always went back over the years to see my family.

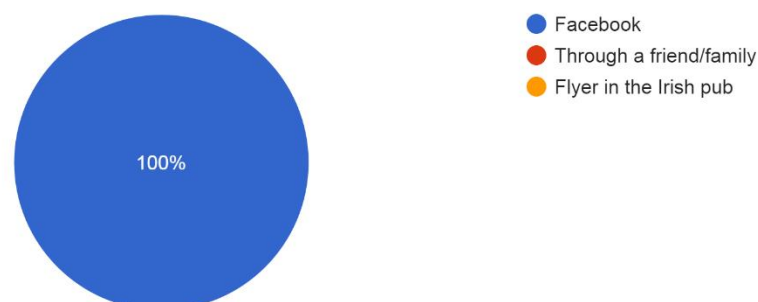
Finally, is there anything specific that impacts how 'Irish' you feel while living here?

- Teabags! Always on the hunt for the ones we like
- Irish people tend to be more laid back than the Danes, so when I meet an Irish people it's almost always an immediate connection
- No, feeling "Irish" is not a concept that I find important. I'm proud of Ireland and where I'm from in many ways, but there's a reason I moved abroad.
- The difficulty of making Danish friends was a huge barrier and I am not Expated with a bunch of Danes and it's still the same. They seem to keep to themselves and have little or no interest in mixing with others
- Watching Irish artists (most recently Mick Flannery, Villagers, Fontaines DC) here.
- My love of tea ☺
- Lack of use of Irish. My children speak with American vocab instead of Irish
- My accent!!
- Nothing that stands out so far
- A lot of people comment on how my accent isn't that strong. Which kind of hurts because I feel very connected to Ireland and it's culture. Not having a strong accent, which is a pretty defining part of us Irish people, sometimes makes me feel "less than". Also I don't have a typical Irish name which also doesn't help!
- I don't feel like I really need to? I am Irish 😊
- Nope. I just feel Irish.
- No
- Pints of Guinness and my friend from Donegal
- Reading the Examiner every day. Millstreet.ie on facebook.
- Irish events and holidays always make you feel somewhat connected to home, any time you can socialise with 'new' Irish and help people with settling in

APPENDIX B. MADRID SURVEY RESPONSES

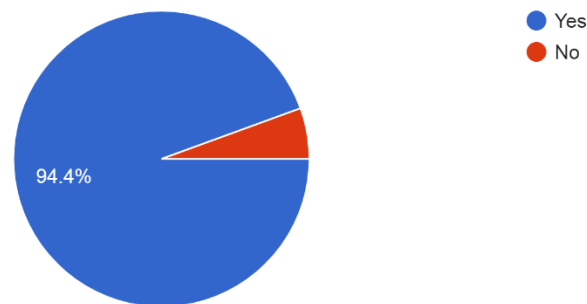
First things first - how did you hear about this survey?

18 responses



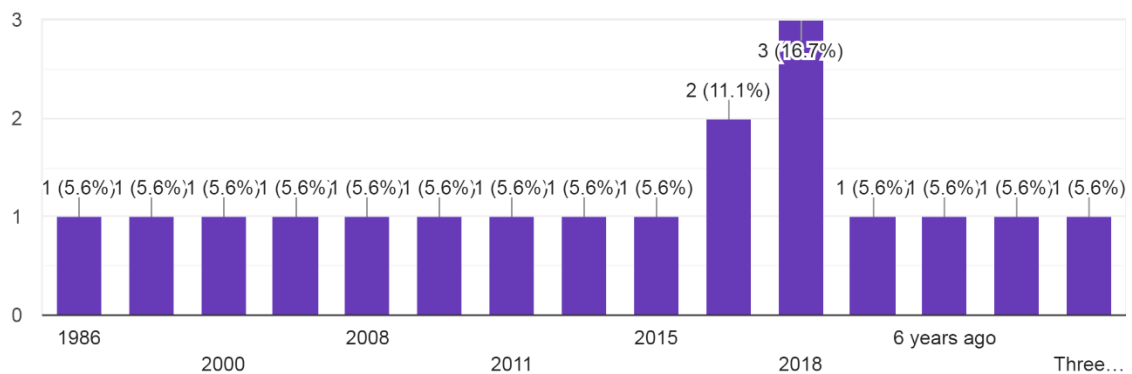
Are you Irish?

18 responses



When did you move to Madrid (which year)?

18 responses



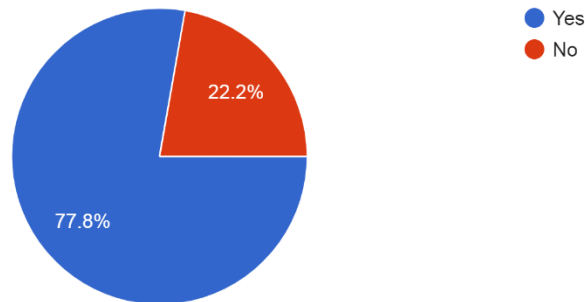
When did you last live in Ireland? Where have you lived since?

- 2008
- 12 years ago. Barcelona and then Madrid
- 2020 in Madrid
- 1993, different parts of Spain
- 1972 England (Nottingham, Manchester, London), Turkey (Istanbul), Portugal (Lisbon), Italy (Palermo)
- 2011
- Armagh
- Left in 2011 (2011-2015: Scotland, 2016-Present: Spain (not Madrid))
- 2014. The UAE.
- 1989
- 12 years ago. Spain (Madrid and La Rioja) and London
- I last properly lived in Ireland during my final year in university (2020-2021). Since then, I've lived in different places in Spain, mostly in Andalusia, such as Baeza (Jaén) and El Carpio (Córdoba).
- 1986 (One year in France)

- 2018
- 2017 (went back for 3 months during Covid in 2020)
- Limerick, Cadiz and Sevilla
- 2004, granada, Málaga
- 2009 China and Spain

Do you feel at home here?

18 responses



Why/why not?

- Relaxed lifestyle, good community of friends here and partner is from here
- It s my home
- The people where I live are generally very welcoming.
- bought my first, last and only flat here
- I have struggled with the language, so its my own fault.
- Big Irish community, very friendly people affordable so much to do
- Accessible, plenty to do, friendly
- Friendly, fun vibe in Madrid. Spanish partner so I feel settled here right now.
- Always feel like an outsider, although I speak Spanish my accent defines me straight away as a foreigner and in general spanairds dont embrace the unfaniliar
- I have my own family here now (2 children)
- In Madrid, it has been hard to make connections as it is such a big place. I know I haven't been here for that long but it's possible that maybe the big city life isn't for me.
- I love the people and the food. I also enjoy tavelling around Spain.
- the people are very friendly, most are from latin america so they are also awat from home, easy to make friends, very social city!
- Yes and no. It is my home, and I am comfortable here, but I know I am not going to be here forever.
- I have now lived practically more years here than in Ireland, but Ireland will always be my home..so I am a bit of a fusion of both countries and take the best parts of each culture . I miss some of my friends and family from home and the craic but in Spain ,the climate ensures you have a fantastic lifestyle and culture and the arts are amazing and just on your doorstep.
- Its a great spot

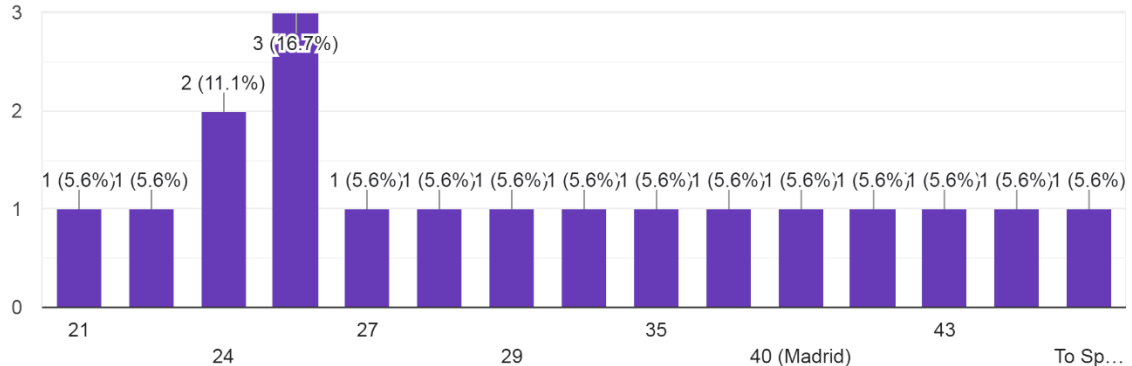
- Family friendly, good life style

Why did you move here (work/family/relationship etc.)?

- Work
- work
- Work
- Relationship
- Family and work
- Family
- Worm
- New adventure, to learn Spanish and to push myself out of my comfort zone.
- Because of my Spanish husband
- work
- Change of scenery. Had opportunity to move offices in work, and I chose Madrid out of 3 options.
- Finally ,Work and relationship.Met Spanish partner in Ireland ,lived there and came back here.

How old were you when you moved here?

18 responses



In which public places/spaces (parks, bars, sports facilities etc.) do you feel most at home in Madrid, and why?

- Bar
- Local bars
- I am from Madrid
- Everywhere! Because of the people
- Retiro...it;s near my house and i'm there often...El Prado...same as last answer
- I enjoy going to bars.
- Retiro park/ casa de Campo are both so green in the middle of such a big city. Temple de debod

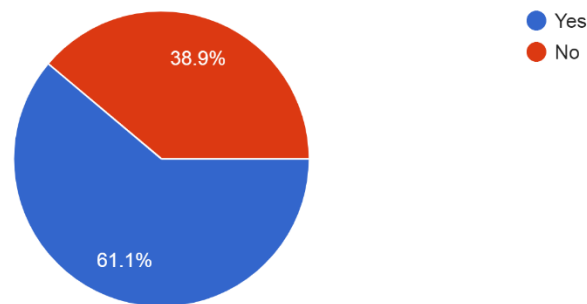
- Parks and bars, the city has a nice laid back atmosphere. It's easy to go anywhere and just feel at ease
- Any plaza or terrace in the centre. Good busy buzz. Feeling anonymous.
- Bars
- Retiro, El Corte Inglés!
- I really enjoy being in Retiro park as the greenery reminds me of being at home, and the lake there also makes it very calming.
- Anywhere.
- every space, the only neighborhood i am a little wary of is around tirso de molina at night
- Football stadiums, Retiro, Quinta de los Molinos, The Triskel (bar).
- Everywhere
- The only irish bar i would ever go to is the james joyce 2-3 times a year
- Parks, pools, city center

Do you think there are Irish areas/spaces in Madrid? If so, where are they?

- Yes
- Irish bars and occasional Irish events
- Yes I do
- Have no idea. Probably Irish bars
- I'll go to the James Joyce to watch all ireland hurling final if Galway are in it
- Not that I'm aware of, other than some irish bars.
- There are a few Irish bars etc but I feel like Irish people gravitate towards eachother no matter the place
- The Irish bars (James Joyce, Collins)
- Not many, but I don't seek them out. Perhaps there are. Irish bars also.
- Maybe bars
- I suppose pubs but I don't go
- I've heard of a few Irish bars in Madrid's centre but haven't been to many. Any time I have been to one, there are a mixture of people like tourists or other Spaniards, and maybe the odd irish person mixed in.
- The Irish pubs. I used to be a shareholder in one of them.
- not hugely, i actually struggle to find irish people here, in a way it helped me adapt as i needed to make other friends and not rely on Irish people
- Not really. The "Irish" bars are a little tacky, the only one that doesn't try to be something it is not is The Triskel.
- Irish pubs ,some facebook groups have been set up
- No. I dont know any other irish person in madrid after 15 years...
- Yes, couple of bars

Is it important for you to connect with other Irish people in Madrid?

18 responses



And, why?

- To share some time together and to see things via an Irish perspective
- It is always nice to have connections that remind you of home and can relate to your background/culture
- I missed a lot my life in cork, ireland
- Because Ive been in Spain for a long time and being able to call people at home a lot more than before, including video calls means I have less of a need to hang out with Irish people.
- no real reason to, i suppose
- Im quite solitary
- Similar experiences and helps to feel more at home
- There are certain things that I just connect better with other Irish people than anyone else. However I try to make sure that I have a mix of friends from various places, including locals.
- I have a good mix of friends and one very good Irish friend here. Happy to meet people from all over.
- To share culture, language, humour
- Similar humor, similar experiences, language
- To be able to share like-minded opinions and share stories that are bound to be similar in some way. Also being Irish, we have our own type of humour and sometimes when speaking with Spanish people, they don't seem to get it, whereas when you speak to someone who is also Irish, they get it straight away.
- I miss the humour and the craic.
- it help you feel a little bit of home away from home, and take a break from the other culture to slip back into your own language etc etc
- I don't actively try to connect with one specific nationality of people.
- It was not so much before as I wanted to immerse myself in the culture and had lots of international friends. Life and relationships have changed and friends have moved away or home. Since I have had children ,I have reconnected with some Irish girls through these groups which is nice as they have a similar outlook on life as well.
- Ive never felt the need
- I have a mixed group of friends, nice to meet some Irish but not essential

How do you meet other Irish people in Madrid (bars, Facebook, sports club etc.)?

- Sports
- Bars and work
- Facebook
- I don't, normally.
- work
- Occasionally in bars, unplanned.
- Bars clubs work
- Facebook groups
- NA
- Bars work
- I met a friend through a st Patrick's day event
- Firstly on Facebook.
- Pubs and via sports like rugby.
- irish bars
- Sports club (Madrid Harps)? Not sure though, have never tried.
- Facebook
- On a rare occasion in an irish bar

When you first arrived, how did you settle in?

- Fine
- Great
- It took time, not speaking the language...etc
- Really good
- Fine after 6 months or so
- wasn't my first time at the rodeo and as i speak portuguese and italian i was able to survive without having much spanish
- Quite well. Hard to get yourself set up with little Spanish but got there eventually
- Quite well.
- Joined a local dance group and socialised a lot.
- It was difficult, until I met an irish girl who lived here and helped me a lot with language issues, getting a flat, connecting a phone
- I was busy being a mum and I settled in my getting to know other mums (Spanish and Irish)
- I joined some groups on Facebook to meet some new people and just went with it.
- I made Spanish friends very quickly by working at a summer camp.
- pretty well, just put myself out there 100% to make friends
- Quickly! As I moved offices I already knew people here through work.
- I learned the language and had bilingual and spanish friends and boyfriends which helped;)
- Very well, I teach in primary school and have a daughter who attends same school, so had ready made community

Are there any routines/practices that make you feel more at home here? Did these change over time?

- No
- Doing sport, working out, going for dinner
- I think Spanish people are very like Irish people so I feel at home in every aspect here
- I work in the local school, which helped me get to know the people here.
- menu del dia....harder and harder to find these days
- Work passes the time.
- Surrounding myself with the right people. Sunday dinner in The James Joyce and sometimes they have trad sessions
- Occasionally go to irish bars (once per month roughly), buy food from import shops or bring some back here whenever I travel to Ireland
- General day to day routine, working commuting etc just normal life. Watching the news here in Spanish.
- Not really
- The routine of going back to Ireland. Nothing elsewhere
- When I first moved to Spain, I found most routines very different to what I was used to. Nothing was really similar to home as far as I remember. After living in Spain for over a year now, my routines have changed ever since. I remember initially my eating times changing to the times that the Spanish eat, and also having a siesta in the summer time, or when necessary!
- NO
- i have to have irish tea, and i keep connected to Ireland where I can like going to see an Irish directed movie in the cinema. its a little thing but it gives you a little boost of "irishness" and feelinf of home. also we always talk about ireland with Irish friends her
- Not particularly. Madrid is quite different than back home.
- Immersing myself in the culture and life and pushing myself to be fluent in the language opens many doors!
- Zero. Ive no contact at all with irish culture

If so, are these linked to memories of Ireland?

- No
- no
- Many things here remind me of home
- Yes
- Not really
- I do have lots of Irish friends which helps alot. Irish music
- The food, yes.
- NA
- Yes, most people seem to warm to the irish
- Not really, no.
- 100%
- N/A
- I suppose buying Irish food at Christmas and organising St.Patrick's day nights out.

Finally, is there anything specific that impacts how 'Irish' you feel while living here?

- I feel more irish and realize how rich and vibrant the culture is now Im not surrounded by it. Miss my aging family more the more time I am here
- Don't understand the question
- When people comment on my pale skin and blue eyes, that definitely reminds me that I'm Irish as it's quite different to most Spaniards. For that reason, when I speak Spanish, most people are surprised as I speak quite fluently but they just assume that I can't speak Spanish or would speak with a guiri (foreign) accent.
- I feel that, in general, the Irish mix better than the English with Spanish people.
- talking about home, with either Irish or people who have visited Ireland. reminiscing
- Nothing in particular. Although I think people here in general have a good perception of and respect for Irish people, so when they talk about Ireland it makes me proud.
- I feel if you have more Irish friends that helps as you remenses a lot .You have similiar childhood memories / experiences and way of thinking.