
Performance evaluation of interactive effects of music and poetry with social conditions of Iran

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Abstract: This study is a documentary study which investigates the relationship between music and Iran social conditions according to Marx-Weber theory through reviewing the history of music from pre-Islamic to the present time. It investigates the reasons for which rap music is welcomed in Iran, with the aim of analyzing that whether rap in Iran is an outcome of social conditions and community needs or just is a variety seeking and ground breaking type against the general rules of music. Comparative study of 8 historical period showed that music has always been influenced by the social conditions but this effect was not one-sided and it has influenced social conditions contravention, acceleration or fulfillment of a historical event in many historical periods, for example, dissemination of liberal ideas in constitutional revolution, the formation of a soft resistance in the revolution of 1978 and motivating young people to participate in the war during the Iran-Iraq, was through music. Therefore, the results of this study, regarding the relationship between culture and society, corroborated Marx-Weber theory and showed that the relationship between music and social conditions is not unilateral and passive, but the relationship is mutual and reciprocal. To answer the question on the reason for the formation of rap music in Iran, results showed that rap has a critical foundation and originally it was formed to criticize the social and political conditions. Iranian rap lyrics are mainly critical and made according to the needs of society with the aim of challenging the general rules. This article suggests that authorities should pay much attention on the message of rap music; criticisms and objections expressed in this language.

Keywords: Affection, Music, Rap, Social Conditions, Iran

1. Introduction

Sociology scrambling to determine the conditions of the emergence of consumers of cultural goods and their taste and describe the various methods of appropriation and application of those cultural goods that are considered as art works at that particular part of era (Bourdieu, 2012). In explaining the relationship between culture and society, social scientists have given different opinions. For example, Marx believes that is not human consciousness that determines their existence; on the contrary, it is the totality of social existence that determines their consciousness (Tavassoli, 2000). But Marx's opinion that thoughts are nothing but a reflection of material interests and these material interests determine the ideology has always upset Weber. Instead of focusing on economic factors and their impact on thoughts, Weber's paid much attention on thoughts

and its impact on the economy. Instead of simply assuming thoughts as the merely reflection of economic agents; he assumed them as autonomous agents that can profoundly affect the economic world (Ritzer, 2000).

Pierre Bourdieu, in his study investigates the relationship between taste and distinction of individuals and groups and believes that these two are effectively connected with each other and influential individuals and groups can determine vulgarity or excellence of a taste. According to Bourdieu, political power and economic interests are related to tastes and attempts to achieve a sociological and logical analysis of hierarchical differences within people and its relationships with tastes (Chavoshyan, 2009). The present study attempts to investigate this theoretical contrast through analyzing relationship between culture and society, in the context of the relationship between music and social conditions. Whether ideas and artistic taste are merely a reflection of the

economic and social conditions the same as what Marx and Bourdieu believe and in fact, basic structure is constructed by the economy, social and political conditions and artistic tastes are only the surface structures which are passively concerned with economic infrastructure, politics and society, or as Weber believes ideas determine the artistic tastes and in fact are cultural surface structure that specifies infrastructure. This study also investigates the reasons for different types of music formation in Iran including rap music, to answer this question that is whether Iranian music is only a bombast and art vulgarity as some critics argue (ISNA, 2013), or, conversely, a public need which as Habermas interprets can be a part of the unfinished project of modernity and enlightenment which its full realization leads to human freedom and fulfillment of civilization (Mehdi Zadeh, 1996).

2. Results and Discussion

Human being through understanding the beauty inspired by nature and through imitating natural shapes and songs and the reflection of these works, created the art which is one of the important factors to express emotion and beauty and reflected in different forms. Music, poetry and dance came into existence simultaneously with human and from that time he tried to show his internal interactions through the sound and through acquiring the weight of regular and various sounds of nature created music. The memoir of music can be divided into two parts.

I period: from the time Aryan race came to Persia and Sasanian extinct.

II period: From the Dawn of Islam to the present day (Mashhon, 2001).

2.1. The Pre-ISLAMIC Era; Music and Art Prosper

Music was highly regarded in Iran before Islam and at the time of Khosrow Parviz progressed highly (Pirnia, 2010). During Sasanid, due to the particular interest of the kings of this dynasty i.e. Ardashir Babakan, Bahram Gurand Khosrow Parviz to music and musicians this art prospered and highly evaluated (Mashhon, 2011).

2.2. Post-Islam Era; the Content of Music Changed

After the fall of Sassanid dynasty and the establishment of the Islamic caliphate and historical transformation caused by it for a long time no attention was paid to music. Arab conquest and the collapse of Iranian civilization and culture and spread of Islam led to the sanction of some of the artistic disciplines including music thus Iranian music failed to progress rapidly and changed. But despite discouragements, it did not disappear and like the other arts continued its life in many other ways. But the conditions of this period i.e. lack of tranquil environment and dismal atmosphere due to wrong policies of the Umayyads and their oppression on Iranian, impressed artists and Sasanid joyous music was replaced by somber melodies. After the establishment of Abbasid Caliphate and extinction of Umayyads partial freedom was

emerged due to the interest of Abbasid dynasty in the royal splendor of Iranian kings and picturesque fine arts such as calligraphy, painting, poetry and music popularized (Khaleghi, 1998).

2.3. Afghans' Conquest to Qajar Dynasty Establishment, Dark Eras of Science and Art

The Afghans conquest of Isfahan broke the chain of social affairs in Iran and chaos, insecurity and instability lasted until the establishment of the Qajar dynasty, general decline was seen in all social, scientific and artistic aspects and not much attention was paid on science, literature; darkness and ignorance prevailed everywhere. For this reason, this period which started with the weakness of the Safavid, Afghans conquest and ended with the establishment of Qajar dynasty, was called the century of sedition, turmoil and war. Thus, twelve centuries AD is among the darkest centuries of Iranian literature and art (Khaleghi, 1998).

2.4. Qajar Period; Supporting Music and Dastgāh Music Formation

Early at this period Qajar encountered various forms of unrest but with the arrival of Fath-Ali Shah, Qajar established in 1820AD. Some arts such as music prospered greatly, 28 years after the advent of Naseroddin Shah and his 50-year rule provided a good opportunity for the collection and compilation of Iranian music. Direct support of Naseroddin Court from musicians extended a type of Iranian music which nowadays is called Dastgāh music or Iranian traditional music. In addition; Iran- Europe relationship gradually formed a different type of western music in this period. Two great symphonists of late Qajar, Ali Akbar Sheida and Aref Ghazvini had significant role in the formation of music in this period. Aref Ghazvini had revolutionary tendencies and almost all of his works were about constitutional revolution (Chavoshi, 2009). Up to this point in the history of Iranian music, only the passive influence of social conditions on music is evident. But constitutional period was a starting point for the magnetic field of music and glorified music an independent and effective entity.

2.5. Constitution Period: Regeneration in Music and Poetry; Music, a Means for Dissemination of Liberal ideas

Prior to the outbreak of constitutional revolution in 1906, popular music in large cities often had romantic, entertaining and worthless themes. Constitutional decree of Naseroddin Shah in 1906 changed the government from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy. But political change did not last long and a few months after the patient king died and his successor, Mohammad Ali Shah's rescinded the decree of father was and re-established autarchy. This three-year period in the political history of Iran is known as the Minor Autarchy (estebdad-e saghir) and was the prologue of the developments in urban music of Iran. Along with thoughts awakening which was started in the middle of Naseroddin

Shahsome poets thought about composing critical lyrics. After constitution, composing songs with social and critical themes were used to dissemination of liberal ideas and the songs of Aref Ghazvini which mostly had social and critical themes were whispered by everyone in all the country (Mashhoh, 2001). Since these songs were the talk of the day and linked with the certain elegance of the Iranian music were spread by word of mouth and intensified the wave of popular opposition to authoritarian regime. Aref Ghazvini composed some songs for the death of youths, generals and repressive atmosphere of that time which in later years functioned as model for similar works. E.g. The opus named 'tulips have grown from the blood of our land's youth' is one of them. Aref Ghazvini mentions that maybe the ones who says I didn't do anything for the Iranian music and literature are right, but I made this song when from among ten thousand Iranians; one hardly knew what country and land mean? They thought that fatherland or country is where a person born (Farabi electronic database, 2013).

2.6. Pahlavi Regimen, Industrialization and Lifestyle Change due to the Entrance of Pop Music into Iran

Charlie Chaplin in the film of 'Modern Times' tried to illustrate the inconvenient truth of that time America, he played the role of a factory worker who had no more control over his nerves just because of much working with machineries. Giant metal gears and machine-like humans, those mesmerized and mechanical are among the feature of 'Modern Times'. Throughout the film, mobility and flexibility are evident in people movements. The hidden chamber in the factory is the workshop of changing human into car. According to Abdollahyan and Nazer Fasihi (2010) the entrance of pop into the Iranian music and the tendency of Iranian music in 40 and 50 decades toward pop is the effect of such reasons. This study considers pop song as the shout or sound of work. In fact, mobility, rapid and specific rhythms of life in this period which was due to the entrance of industry into Iranian community and the radiations of industrial revolution in Iran; does not coincide with the traditional tones emanate from the heart of nature. Thus new conditions of life required the rhythms which were able to express the desires of that day generation. Pop music with its fun, friendly and casual tone was against Persian poetry which had heavy structure and literary rules; in this type of music creativity was done through simple words. Therefore, it can be said that pop music formation in Iran was influenced by the life style, voice of industrial job in 40s and voice of resistance in 50s which was in need of a voice with a nature of resistance.

2.7. Years Before 1978 Revolution, the Formation of Resistance and Struggle Music

A variety of campaigns which their plat form has been provided years ago was done against the Pahlavi regime in this period (1961-1978). New discourse of protest appeared in two forms: 1-military and political institutions, guerrilla

and armed conflicts against the regime and 2- the formation of a culture with resistance and defense nature in the form of poetry nights, resistance music, paintings and illustrations. Pop music style was close to the Iranian protest and epic language than its classical music- although during the revolutionary and epical ups and downs of classical music instead of describing beloved has been involved in protests and criticisms. So once again music appears in social and political scenes along with its active and influential tendency. Thus social and political changes and evolutions lead to the formation of a type of resistance music in that time; since society needed a voice to be consistent with its resistance voice. These types of voices emerged in the areas of poetry, theater, music, cinema and other aspects of art but the ones in poetry and music were more powerful than others, since music was involved with emotion. Music of Resistance was a reaction to a common sense and need of community, the need for change, being like others, rise and revolt. Farhad Mehrad can be known as the best representative of resistance discourse in resistance music since in his song named 'Friday' he tries to narrate the arrest and execution of fighters in the Siahkal guerrilla bases in northern Iran. It was an effective bloody incident in which, hoot of owl and howl of wolves, epic rhythm, military marches and wind instruments and drums, choir singers and terms such as night, Fridays, alley and childhood nostalgia were used as the only resort of innocence and hope which led the participants of this musical dialogue toward a type of soft resistance (Abdollahyan and Nazer Fasihi, 2010).

2.8. Iran-Iraq War, Formation of Epic Music

Social and political unrest in 1979 changed the Pahlavi Dynasty to the Islamic Republic of Iran thus various spheres of Iranian's life changed dramatically. All common genres of Iranian music experienced profound changes. First of all pop as a popular genre of music at least for a decade was eliminated thoroughly. Although 18 months after the victory of Islamic Revolution, Iran's western borders was invaded by Iraq and an 8-year long war, was started but epic flow still continued its activities and various defensive themes were included in Iranian music therefore, religious music and a variety of combat and epic music, found fertile ground to flourish. Epic music during this period due to a temporary ban on music in some congregations, get two different forms. First a special type of religious music without instrumental accompaniment and only with the voice of soloist and companionship group was formed, another type was formed by professional musicians with a variety of Iranian and western instruments. E.g. jeremiads of Sadegh Ahangaran which was done mainly for mourning had some elements of religious music and gradually found epical mode and used to motivate young people to participate in battlefield and strengthen the moral of fighters. The Dirge of 'Ey Lashkare Saheb Zaman' is an example of these works. In this period radio and television started to compose epic songs and many Iranian and western works composed along with soloists and choirs. The song of 'Victory' was composed by

Mohammed Ali Ragheb and sound of Mohammad Golriz for the occasion of the liberation of Khorramshahr by Iranian army in 1982, is one of the most prominent examples. In addition, to urban musicians, native music minstrels based on their native language composed some Epic works which had much effect on encouraging and strengthening the fighting forces. Native ballad of 'Daye Daye Vaghte Jange' which was based on the indigenous music of Lorestan is one of them which quickly widespread in Iran and went beyond its origin (Farabi electronic database, 2013).

2.9. The Relationship between Music and Social Situation in Iran Endorse the Ideas of Marx or Weber

Iran's music is full of periods in which music is passivity influenced by the social and political conditions. Approved and rejected by the rulers of each period it has gained or lost its dignity and has undergone changes due to the changes in social atmosphere. Sometimes its song has been changed from bracing to tragic and from lyrical to combat. But this effect was not always unilateral in some periods music influenced social and political conditions, accelerated or realized a social and political event which its turning point can be sought in constitutional revolution. Composing and arrangement of special songs for fatherland during constitutional in order to disseminate liberal ideas perhaps was the first presence of music as an independent influencing identity in the social and political currents. It the creation of a soft resistance at 1978 revolution or encouraging young people to participate in the battles of Iran-Iraq war is among the impacts of music on social conditions. Thus music is not the only effect of social conditions and not independently affects them. Interaction between social conditions and music their continuous interaction confirms the theory of Marx and Weber (regarding the relation between culture and society).

2.10. Rap Progression into Iranian Music

Rap was born from among the music of poor blacks in late 1980s. Rap music in fact is a type of Street protest. Tricia Rose (1994) in her article 'Black Noise', admits that rap is the voice of marginalized people who try to challenge the legitimacy of the dominant culture via different means. Rap is called the CNN of black people through which blacks try to express their situation and status to each other and especially white people. The easiest and most common words are used in rap. In writing rap songs, there is no obligation to observe the literary rules. Class differences, hypocrisy, street battles, the dominant culture of the world and political crises are among the topics of rap music. In other words the specific frame work of music which has strict rules is broken so that music is available to the most common people of community. The significance of rap music is in its distinctive characteristic. It has plurality, diversity and conscious mind in dealing with social and political issues and its most important feature is its planned strategy in responding the specific social and political issues which youth are facing in local situations (Foroughian and Delavari, 2011).

2.11. Persian Rap

Abdollahyan and Nazer Fasihi (2010) in their study have considered rap as the Iranian Resistance music of 70 and 80s. Persian rap is a type of rap music signed mainly in Iran and in Persian language. Although this style of music is mainly influenced by western rap, but does not have some of its features. Persian Rap was formed at the end of the 1991 in Iran and many singers are formally and informally activate in this style. Iranian Rap music is intimately tied to the social concepts of its origin. Iranian rap music is the representation of cultural, social and political atmosphere of Iran. It is one of the few areas with unmediated representation of social thoughts which covers a wide range of topics (Foroughian and Delavari, 2011). Foroughian and Delavari in their study on hidden messages in the Persian rap showed that from among the 932 lyrics of collected Persian rap, 507 cases had critical theme (about 54%), 332 had theme positive and 93 had anti-social themes and among the lyrics with critical theme 34% had political, 48% social and 18% ethical. The study concludes that rap has been introduced itself as a message of protest. Maybe for this reason Bourdieu believes that modern art seeks to challenge all beliefs and general rules (Bourdieu, 2011).

3. Conclusions

According to Mashhoon Iranian music in its historical and natural path have been affected by the communication and intermingling of kinfolks and invade of neighboring nations, it has passed ups and downs and changes have been occurred in it by various natural, political, social and economic factors. Reviewing the history of Iranian music showed that although music has been influenced by many socio-political cases but according to Marx social, political and economic conditions have always overshadowed arts in general and music in particular but this effect was not one-sided, art and music by influencing the conditions - although not strongly as influenced by them - once again proved the theory of Weber about the influence of ideologies and ideas on socio-political conditions. The role of music during the constitutional revolution, revolution of 1978 and in Iran-Iraq war, proved that music can influence social and political trends and can accelerate or even guide them. the role of effective heroic and revolutionary opuses such as the 'Homeland' of Aref Ghazvini during constitutional revolution, 'Friday' by Farhad Mehrad, 'You come along' Parviz Meshkati during the revolution of 1978 and many other revolutionary songs reveals the affection of music and lifestyle in Iran history. In analyzing the promotion of rap music in Iran, the results of this study showed that when a social event, in a wide range, faces with public acceptability and attracts its own audiences, it means that the ones who accept it have felt its need. As Sadr-ol-Mote'allehin says: 'No one can accept an attribute that is opposite to his nature' (Soroush, 1999), and Iqbāl-e Lāhorī writes: 'no idea can be a good idea, unless it is somehow dependent on people's lives' (Alizadeh et al.,

2009) it can be concluded that dominant art and music style has been emerged according to a social demand in each period. Abdollahyan and Nazer Fasihi (2010) in their research conclude that the discursive mission of rap is to convey the message of resistance to new generations. Foroughian and Delavari (2011) in investigating the hidden messages in the Persian rap found 54% of Persian rap has critical content. Thus the musical tendency of today's rap music in Iran can be a reflection of the harsh rhythm of life and a form of protest discourse. Therefore since today's society is in a critical and risky way of transition from tradition to modernity and cultural and social development thus no sign can be crossed simply. Today's Iranian music reflects the aspirations of a generation that understands the differences, attempt to compare and criticizes the situation. Therefore it seems that the tendency of today's society toward rap- which apparently is not does have congruity with Iranian musical accent and language- has been investigated from another point of view and through some researches in musical discourse one can deal with the desires, aspirations, criticisms and complaints of the generation which has tended toward it.

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