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*Akat A. /TURKEY/
Акат А. /ТҮРКИЯ/
Акат А. /ТУРЦИЯ/***POPULAR MUSIC AND MEDIA IN THE CONTEXT OF FREEDOM AND ALIENATION:
PROPOSALS FOR SELF-DETERMINATION****ЭРКИНДИКТИН ЖАНА БАШТАЛУУНУН КОНТЕКСТИНДЕГИ ПОПУЛЯРДЫК МУЗЫКА
ЖАНА ММК: ӨЗДҮГҮН АНЫКТОО БОЮНЧА СУНУШТАР****ПОПУЛЯРНАЯ МУЗЫКА И СМИ В КОНТЕКСТЕ СВОБОДЫ И ОТЧУЖДЕНИЯ:
ПРЕДЛОЖЕНИЯ ПО САМООПРЕДЕЛЕНИЮ**

Abstract. Popular music and media create a dynamic that deepens social alienation by restricting freedom and self-determination rights. However, music is an art form that has established itself by effectively addressing all aspects of society, such as its problems, joys, sorrows, and pains. Therefore, music must appeal to the essential and structural functions of the society it exists within. Popular music, from its production to its delivery to the consumer, is subjected to various structural, cultural, and ideological influences, which renders its function of directly serving humanity and art questionable. This study examines contemporary music within the framework of capitalist production modes and their associations, evaluating both musical production and consumption processes together, as music is not only a commodity but also because cultural institutions and organizations related to music are integral parts of the same market structure. The aim of the study is to propose solutions such as independent music production, media literacy, the preservation of local cultural values, and the support of democratic media structures, offering strategies for societies to reclaim their musical and cultural identities. In this context, it is essential for societies to act consciously, resist cultural imperialism, and explore their own creative potential. When music is liberated from being merely a consumption object and repositioned as a free art form reflecting society's shared values, social bonds can be strengthened again. In this regard, the relationship between popular music and local musical values depends on societies' determination to preserve their cultural and artistic heritage in the future.

Keywords: Popular music, media, freedom, alienation, self-determination, media literacy, independent music production, local culture, mass communication, democratization.

Аннотация. Заманбап музыка жана маалымат каражаттары эркиндикти жана өз тагдырын өзү аныктоо укуктарын чектөө менен социалдык бөтөнчүлүктү тереңдетүүчү динамика жаратат. Анткен менен музыка – бул коомдун көйгөйлөрүн, кубанычын, кайгысын, кайгысын эффективдүү чечүү менен өзүн көрсөткөн искусство түрү. Демек, музыка ал ичинде жашап жаткан коомдун маанилүү жана структуралык функцияларына кайрылууга тийиш. Популярдуу музыка жаралуудан баштап керектөөчүгө жеткиргенге чейин ар кандай структуралык, маданий жана идеологиялык таасирлерге дуушар болуп, анын адамзатка жана искусствого түздөн-түз кызмат кылуу функциясын күмөндүү кылып коёт. Бул изилдөө заманбап музыканы капиталисттик өндүрүш ыкмаларынын жана алардын бирикмелеринин алкагында изилдеп, музыкалык өндүрүштү да, керектөө процесстерин да бирге баалайт, анткени музыка бир гана товар эмес, музыка менен байланышкан маданий мекемелер жана уюмдар бир эле рынок түзүмүнүн ажырагыс бөлүгү болгондуктан. Изилдөөнүн максаты көз карандысыз музыка өндүрүшү, медиа сабаттуулук, жергиликтүү маданий баалуулуктарды сактоо жана демократиялык медиа түзүмдөрдү колдоо сыяктуу чечимдерди сунуштоо, коомдорго музыкалык жана маданий өздүктөрүн кайтарып алуу үчүн стратегияларды сунуштоо. Бул шартта коомдордун ан-сезимдуу аракет кылуулары, маданий империализмге каршы туруулары, ездерунун чыгармачылык потенциалын изил-деесу ете маанилуу. Музыка жөн гана керектөө объек-

тисинен бошонуп, коомдун жалпы баалуулуктарын чагылдырган эркин искусство формасы катары кайра жайгаштырылса, коомдук байланыштар кайрадан бекемделет. Бул жагынан алганда, популярдуу музыка менен жергиликтүү музыкалык баалуулуктардын ортосундагы байланыш коомдордун келечекте өздөрүнүн маданий жана көркөм мурастарын сактап калууга болгон чечкиндүүлүгүнөн көз каранды.

Негизги сөздөр: Заманбап музыка, медиа, эркиндик, бөтөнчүлүк, өз тагдырын өзү аныктоо, медиа сабаттуулук, өз алдынча музыка өндүрүшү, жергиликтүү маданият, массалык коммуникация, демократиялаштыруу.

Аннотация. Популярная музыка и медиа создают динамику, которая углубляет социальное отчуждение, ограничивая свободу и право на самоопределение. Однако музыка – это форма искусства, которая утвердилась, эффективно обращаясь ко всем аспектам общества, таким как его проблемы, радости, горести и боли. Поэтому музыка должна апеллировать к основополагающим и структурным функциям общества, в котором она существует. Популярная музыка, от её создания до доставки потребителю, подвергается различным структурным, культурным и идеологическим влияниям, что ставит под сомнение её функцию непосредственного служения человечеству и искусству. Данное исследование рассматривает современную музыку в рамках капиталистических способов производства и их взаимосвязей, оценивая одновременно процессы музыкального производства и потребления, поскольку музыка – это не только товар, но и культурные учреждения и организации, связанные с музыкой, являются неотъемлемой частью единой рыночной структуры. Цель исследования – предложить такие решения, как независимое музыкальное производство, медиаграмотность, сохранение местных культурных ценностей и поддержка демократических медиаструктур, предлагая обществам стратегии по восстановлению своей музыкальной и культурной идентичности. В этом контексте обществам крайне важно действовать осознанно, противостоять культурному империализму и раскрывать свой творческий потенциал. Когда музыка перестаёт быть просто объектом потребления и начинает позиционироваться как свободная форма искусства, отражающая общие ценности общества, социальные связи могут вновь укрепиться. В этом смысле взаимосвязь между популярной музыкой и местными музыкальными ценностями зависит от решимости обществ сохранять своё культурное и художественное наследие в будущем.

Ключевые слова: популярная музыка, медиа, свобода, отчуждение, самоопределение, медиаграмотность, независимое музыкальное производство, локальная культура, массовая коммуникация, демократизация.

Introduction

The relationship that popular music has established with the media restricts the freedom of contemporary societies in the realm of music while simultaneously fostering alienation from music. "Society is a union formed by a large number of people who interact and share a common culture to meet their social needs" (Fichter, 2002: 79). There is a cultural interaction within societies, facilitated by the essential and structural functions of the society. One of the most significant features enabling interaction within a society is music, which aligns—or should align—with the essential and structural functions of societies.

Music must effectively address all aspects of society, such as its problems, joys, sorrows, and pains. If music fails to appeal to the essential and

structural functions of the society it exists within, it indicates that the society has fallen under the influence of certain forces. Popular music, from its production to its delivery to the consumer, is subjected to various structural, cultural, and ideological influences; however, the necessity for music to directly serve humanity and art is evident. Today, music that cannot fulfill this function healthily has been stolen from humanity and is being used indirectly. In other words, standardized, appealing music has replaced "own" music. This standardization restricts human freedom while alienating individuals from both society and its essential and structural functions. "Today, the subject of music must be addressed within the framework of capitalist production modes and their associations. This approach is not only due to music being a 'com-

modity' but also because cultural institutions and organizations related to music are integral parts of the same market structure. Music production that supports dominant ideologies and cultural relations is the fundamental product form of this market structure" (Erdoğan, 2000: 11). According to Adorno, "the absorption of musical production and consumption by the capitalist process has resulted in music being reified and rationalized" (Oskay, 2001: 39).

Music plays a crucial role in enabling societies to create their own dynamics. Therefore, to influence or dominate a society, one must restrict its freedom in music production and ensure it consumes one of the options provided. The easiest way to achieve this is by controlling the market, producing according to one's own desires, and reaching the consumer at the highest level through mass media. Those who control the popular music market and decide the direction of production utilize extensive technological capabilities and advanced media sectors to achieve this. "A developed capitalist system is needed within a developed industry. This is precisely why the center of pop music is not Pakistan, Turkey, or Czechoslovakia, but the United States. This is why there is U.S. dominance in pop concepts" (Solmaz, 1996: 11). In his book *Pop Goes the Culture*, Craig McGregor describes the situation in Australia as follows:

"One of the bitter truths of our time is the dominance of mass media, controlled by a very small minority, over our culture. Television, radio, cinema, and newspapers have destroyed the creative aspects of most of us, turning us into passive spectators. When we sit in front of the television, we are bombarded with highly commercial and manipulative images. Almost every moment of our lives, we are subjected to advertisements or advertisement-related programs. These programs push us to behave in ways desired by advertisers and media monopolies" (McGregor, 2000: 32)¹. Here, Australia is just one example; the masses at risk of disappearing constitute entire global societies. The freedom of all global communities has been restricted, and their creativity has been stifled by the power of popular music and media. As a result, these

communities have become slaves to the monopolized music industry and mass media.

Edip Günay (2006: 200) identifies the factors contributing to alienation as anomie, over-conformity, and isolation. The influence of the media is evident in the formation of these three factors, particularly in over-conformity, where the media's role in directing and homogenizing society is more apparent. "The media's relentless effects, which almost oppress and manipulate individuals, weaken their ability to establish, maintain, and critically evaluate their own social interactions, transforming them into beings with dulled values who unquestioningly follow imposed norms. These media effects pave the way for alienation" (Günay, 2006: 201-202). The Alienation Generation also held a deep belief in this regard: "The preferred type of consumption had become socially generalized due to the manipulation of tastes and desires by mass media. According to this view, everyone was directed to like, be satisfied with, and feel a need for the 'same' thing (regardless of whether this 'same' referred to objects, products, art forms, practices, etc.)" (Heller – Feher, 1993: 203-204).

Music has begun to carry class interests within itself to dominate the market in line with the interests of hegemonic states. Music produced in accordance with these interests has stripped societies of their consciousness and freedom. Through popular music, "cultural contact" has been established, and the cultures deemed superior by colonial powers have been imposed on many societies awaiting exploitation.

"Pop music is a popular culture product, a consumption culture, dealing with marketable elements, i.e., commodities" (Solmaz, 1996: 11). According to Simon Frith, "[c]onsumption is an ideological act" (McGregor, 2000: 12)². When popular music is marketed, the product must be made appealing to the consumer each time. We have already discussed how mass media and their management facilitate this marketing strategy. Popular music products, produced for specific purposes, are presented so attractively by this "monopoly" that consumers, far removed from aesthetic concerns, are programmed to consume these products thoughtlessly and un-

¹The author has drawn from the Turkish translation of the book, and this section has been translated from Turkish to English.

²From the introduction written by Frith himself for this book.

consciously. The intended outcome is rapid consumption and fast capital flow.

Another characteristic of commercialized songs is that they meet society's immediate needs to increase consumption, or in other words, provide instant gratification. According to Adorno, the listener of this type of music "is directed to drift away from their social position and reality through the satisfactions found in music. More explicitly, they are pushed to disconnect from both society and its history, as well as from music itself" (Oskay, 2001: 64). This is one of the factors leading to societal alienation.

In short, the consumer is the exploited, adorned, satisfied, gratified, hollowed out, and trapped in that emptiness by states advanced in exploitation. When the exploited awaken from their slumber, they encounter the message "it's too late" and are silenced through other methods, re-exploited, repeatedly exploited, perpetually exploited. According to the ideology of the capitalist market, "like other products, music in a free market gives the people what they want" (Erdoğan, 2000: 12). The claim of giving people what they want is entirely meant to deceive and does nothing more than legitimize cultural imperialism and the ideology of the capitalist industry. Music, co-opted by the capitalist system and grounded in globalism, has been stolen from humanity and has begun to serve those who control the system.

Self-Determination and Popular Music

Self-determination refers to the right of individuals and societies to freely define and express their cultural, social, and artistic identities. In the context of popular music, this concept emphasizes the ability of individuals and communities to act in accordance with their own values, needs, and aesthetic sensibilities in music production and consumption processes. However, the monopolistic structure of the popular music industry and mass media significantly restricts this autonomy. Standardized music genres imposed through the media deprive societies of their right to produce and consume music that reflects their own cultural dynamics, thereby deepening cultural alienation. In this context, self-determination represents the struggle of societies to create their own musical narratives and protect these narratives from the influences of global cultural imperialism. For example, blending local music traditions with popular

music forms can be seen as an effort by societies to reconstruct their cultural identities and develop resistance against the homogenizing effects of the global market.

The right to self-determination is often overlooked within the capitalist market structure of popular music. Therefore, fostering this right in society requires supporting strategies that promote a more democratic and participatory approach to music production and consumption. First, local music communities and independent artists should be provided with financial and structural support to produce music that reflects their cultural values. For instance, cultural funds established by the state or civil society organizations can enable local artists to create independently of the pressures of the global music industry. Second, increasing the transparency of algorithms on digital platforms can enhance the visibility of diverse cultural and musical expressions. This ensures that consumers have access not only to content imposed by the popular music industry but also to local and authentic music. Additionally, self-determination can be strengthened through media literacy, which supports individuals in making conscious choices in music consumption. When societies are educated to understand the manipulative effects of mass media and to question their own cultural preferences, they become more resilient to the standardizing effects of popular music. This enables individuals and communities to rediscover their artistic and cultural identities and express them through music. Accordingly, self-determination should be regarded not only as a right but also as a solution to reduce the alienation caused by popular music and to restore cultural freedom.

Proposals for Self-Determination

The relationship between popular music and media, which restricts individual freedom and alienates society, presents a significant cultural and social issue. To address this problem, various strategies can be proposed at both individual and societal levels. Below, solutions aimed at restoring freedom and reducing alienation in the processes of music production and consumption are discussed:

Supporting Independent Music Production: To break the monopolistic structure of the popular music industry, support for independent music production is essential. Independent art-

ists can create music that reflects the essential and structural dynamics of society, free from commercial pressures. In this regard, cultural funds can be established to support local music communities and artists, independent music platforms can be encouraged, and local radio stations and digital platforms can allocate more space for such music. For example, platforms like Bandcamp enable artists to connect directly with listeners, reducing the influence of intermediaries.

Enhancing Media Literacy: Raising societal awareness of media influences plays a critical role in reducing alienation. Media literacy education can help individuals understand the manipulative effects of mass media and develop a critical perspective. This education, particularly when integrated into school curricula for younger generations, can foster a consciousness that questions the consumption-driven nature of popular music. Media literacy can encourage individuals to make informed music choices, promoting a shift away from standardized music consumption.

Emphasizing Local and Cultural Values: To counter the global standardization of popular music, music production rooted in local and cultural values should be promoted. Blending traditional musical elements with modern forms can preserve local identities while enhancing creative originality. For instance, works by local artists can be showcased globally under the “world music” category. This approach reduces the impact of cultural imperialism and enables societies to rediscover their cultural dynamics.

Democratizing Mass Media: The control of the media sector by a small minority is a primary factor limiting the freedom of popular music. To create a more democratic media structure, public-oriented media organizations should be strengthened, and independent media platforms should be supported. Additionally, the transparency of algorithms on social media platforms should be increased to facilitate user access to diverse music genres. This can prevent the monopolization of the popular music market and enhance diversity.

Art and Aesthetics-Focused Music Education: Music education should focus not only on technical skills but also on aesthetic and artistic

values. Developing society’s ability to express itself through music can reduce alienation. Art-focused music education can unlock individuals’ creative potential, fostering resistance against the commercial impositions of popular music. Music workshops organized in schools and community centers can enable individuals to produce their own music.

These proposed solutions aim to mitigate the negative effects of popular music on freedom and alienation. However, their implementation requires the active participation and commitment of both individuals and societies. Efforts to protect and develop cultural values can revitalize music’s mission to serve humanity.

Conclusion

In conclusion, music’s primary role is to serve humanity and art directly, but as noted, this role has been supplanted by simple, everyday, standardized, and appealing music under the dominance of capitalist forces. The harmonious relationship between popular music and media, while satisfying a small minority, dulls the abilities of global communities to think, create, and produce. Popular music, lacking aesthetic concerns, failing to reflect societal values, and offering no benefit to humanity or art, confines the concept of freedom and free creativity within certain molds through media pressure, serving the market with its political-economic agendas. This situation restricts individual freedom while deepening societal alienation.

The solutions proposed in this study can be further expanded, but they provide a core roadmap for addressing this issue. Steps such as supporting independent music production, enhancing media literacy, prioritizing local cultural values, democratizing media, and promoting art-focused music education can restore popular music’s mission to serve humanity and art. In this process, it is essential for societies to act consciously, resist cultural imperialism, and explore their own creative potential. When music is liberated from being merely a consumption object and repositioned as an art form reflecting humanity’s shared values, societal bonds can be strengthened once again. In this context, the future of popular music production will depend on societies’ determination to preserve their cultural and artistic heritage.

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