

Politics and Music in Iran (1980-2023)

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ABSTRACT : Revolution in Iran, in 1979, established a new political system, known as Islamic Republic of Iran, which is based on strong relationship between religion and state. The preamble and many articles of its constitution, including fourth article, stipulates that in this political structure all law and policies should be made according Islamic Law (Sharia). So, music and other socio-cultural dimensions of life, has been made subjected to religious law, or at least this is the object of the government. But Iranians has followed their own ways of life, which in some major aspects is different from the formal ways of the government. This paper shows some major trends of music and their interactions or objections to politics in Iran (1980-2023).

KEYWORDS: Politics, Music, Social change, Culture, Iran

1. PROBLEMATIQUE

Music is a major sphere of human life and it connected with other human spheres, including culture and politics. My assumption and theoretical framework is that in a normal status of life, people select or listen to musical items which is related to their cultural and political values and norms. Even it can be said that culture, which music is one part of it, directs political behavior of people. Nevertheless culture is not the sole cause of political behavior, and also there is a mutual affection among all spheres of life, at least this is my opinion in this subject, and I must mention it obviously here. From this departure point we can say that changes and evolutions in politics or culture or economy in a country can affects gradually on other spheres in that country. So, in the selected period of this research (1980-2023), political and socio-cultural spheres of life in recent Iran has been changed clearly or unclearly I will show, in details, this mutual affects, and the major role of music in Iran. My hypothesis is that music in recent Iran has been affected by politics in first years, and has affected on politics after that, almost after first decade of Islamic Republic of Iran. My methodology here is discourse methodology.

2. POLITICS AND MUSIC AROUND THE WORLD

Music and politics has interacted during .contemporary world. Here I will have a short review of this interaction in other parts of the world, before I do this about Iran.

"Jakub Machek offers detailed analysis of the change of Czechoslovak music venues during 1980s and 1990s, i.e, across the political change. He points out that disco music was perceived by the communist regime as a suitable genre for the education and entertainment of socialist youth, but the trend towards the loosening of political control over cultural productive in the 1980s enabled broad bottom-up activities of young people fulfilling their social and cultural needs. The discotheques retained their role across the "Velvet Revolution" of 1989, even if the new wave music and club culture in the 1990s opened new spaces for the entertainment of young people who distanced themselves from the then mainstream cultural production".

The post-communist transformation brought the freedom to consume western popular music (Klaniczag and Trencsenyi , 2011:199-220)."(See: Karel Sima & Zdenek Nebrensky, 2022).

In France, the country of first modern revolution 1789 and many socio-political resurgence like 1968 unrests and recent unrest in 2023, which also we can see music presence in political arena of this country. "The upheaval that occurred in musicology during the last two decades of twentieth century has created a new urgency for the study of popular music alongside the development of new critical and theoretical modes. A relativistic outlook has replaced the universal perspective of modernism (The international ambitions of the 12-note style); the grand narrative of evolution, and emphasis has shifted to cultural content, reception and subject position. Together, these have conspired to eat away at the status of canonical composers and categories of high and low in music... Popular musicology is now a vital and exciting area of scholarship, and the Ashgate popular and folk music series presents some of the best research in the field (Lebrun, Barbara,2016,pp.1-3).

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One of the most important dimensions of the relation between Politics and music is a mediate variable, ideology. Briefing, we can define ideology as a collection of leading codes in socio-political life and struggle. Marxism, was the most influential ideology in 19 and 20. " During China's Cultural Revolution, the Piano was likened to a coffin ,in which notes rattled about like the bones of the bourgeoisie been one of the proud carries of western musical culture has been attributed to Mao Zedon'swidow,Tiang Cing. In fact, Jiang had a soft spot in her heart for pianos, which she helped save from Red Guard destruction, although she felt no affection for the music written for the piano by European composers. The piano became the object of hostile attempts because it is the western musical instrument, only tentatively rooted in a society busily rejecting western influence. Moreover, "the piano makes a poor fit with Chinese culture, even compared to, say, the ... oil painting, or ball-room dancing". The piano is industrial, it rose to prominence with Europe's bourgeoisie ...the piano's social base in China was weak and vulnerable. Those who owned and played the piano were urban, prosperous, intellectual, and removed from Chinese traditional culture. Two decades latter, many of these same faces have turned the piano and other western musical instruments into emblems of modernization. Western music is flourishing. Beijing has opened Chinese' first modern concert Kraus, 1989, pp.1-3).

Some writers have written about "The Hopeful Politics of Pop". It's a reality that music affects on individual and community, hopefully and disappointing. "While popular music regularly provides listeners with a sense of hope in challenging times, this hopefulness is not only, or not even primarily made manifest in Pop music lyrics, as we ourselves have often tried to articulate in our own work, and as much of what is written in these pages demonstrates, the politics of popular music, whether they be about hope of anything else, resides in musical sound, in the embodiment of that sound, by both performers and fans, In the discourses created around the music, and so much more, we can both recall times in the past, when we relied on these many facts of popular music to glean a sense of hope (and with it, a sense of agency and empowerment) when faced with limited and limiting social realities. In these instances, being enabled by participation in popular music had tangible effects on the broader world and how we interpret our individual roles therein. Such an experience of pleasure is not an escape from the social sphere or the political realm- as Ray Prattargues, it instead serves "Catalytically, helping to empower and reinforce the energies of those who have gained real capacities for action (1990, 39)" (Fast & Jennex, 2019, pp. 25-28).

Latin America, Jamaica with it's post-colonial history and plurality in society with high- level of economic inequality, was an example of influence of music on politics. " It's two political parties, the Jamaica Labour party (JLP) and the peoples National Party (PNP), are highly competitive and enjoy comparable success in the electoral arena. Beginning in 1972, it has been noted , Jamaican Rastafalian symbols and reggae music in their electoral propaganda. The Rastafarians are the millenarian cult that accepts Selassie as the Messiah and constitutes about 3 percent of Jamaica's population: reggae music is an indigenous popular art from associated with, and frequently propagating the beliefs of, Rastafarians... in 1972 election the PNP came to victory after ten years in opposition using the Rasta language and music in an almost undistinguished form (Singham and Singham, 1973, pp.281). (Waters, pp.1-2).

3. POLITICAL AND CULTURAL CHANGES IN RECENT IRAN

Iran, has a long record in literature and music, then we can study different aspect of co-relation among music and society and politics in Iran. Music is an express instrument of affections. So, human in any period, has his/her own feelings and thoughts, and these will appear in music of each period and humans.

Gender is affecting on human living in recent decade through many ways, including identity and social justice demands. In other words, in recent decades, women have become more aware of their Feminism identity and wanted to express it through dressing, speaking, music and so on. In addition, women have objected the man-dominated socio-political and legal structure, in their societies, and adjusting the structures. In Iran there has been these two spheres at least, from 1960, the women and sometimes the government have followed some way to alter the male-centered political culture, and these efforts has been shown in music. Before 1979 revolution, women have reached a good position in music and expressed their points of views and feelings.

Some writes have discussed "The way Feminism and gender politics have been articulated in mediated popular music during the second half of the 2010s. Already in the 1990s, scholars acknowledged that thematic interpretations of Feminist issues, women pursuing careers in made-dominated fields such as law and the police, women juggling love, family and work, had entered popular culture (Tasker & Negra,2007). In the 2010, there were "Feminism" and the Vocabulary associated with Feminist activist politics stopped being taboo in popular cultural and media (Rottenberg, 2018). In popular music critiques of gender in equality, and support for Feminist activism lyrics, music and performances and in the gender equality work of the music industries."(Ann Werner, 2023,p.2).

Individual and collective identity of human being is consisting of many parts and factors: also it's evolving during time, from time to time. One of these, is music:

"That identities- musical and otherwise – are political is an epistemological truism. Fashioned and absorbed, imposed and rejected, twisted and streamlined, they are malleable and powerful instruments of negotiating introduction (Fauser, Annegret, 2016, Editor's note). In recent cultural devolution in Iran, a comparative view shows deep differences between two or three generation in their cultural attitudes and taste, in poem, music, feelings and others. As I can seek the roots of some differences among these three

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generations, I can mention that different musical types of these generations, has brought different cultural attitudes to them, meanwhile music is not the sole factor in these differences. For instance at the beginning years of the Islamic Revolution, the dominant musical trend was accomplished with poems of traditional and also new trend of Persian poems, like poems of Hafiz and Akhavan, and now it's alongside with some strange texts as poems of musical compositions.

Twentieth century was the era of totalitarian regimes and two world wars. Ideology was dominant on any thing. So, it was natural that music be used as an instrument in governing and political mobilization. "When considering the role that music played in the major European totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century-principally those of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia-music's usefulness as propaganda that leaps first to mind. Certainly, it may be true that no major political movement has ever done entirely without music, whether we think of marching bands in the Orangemen's Parades in Northern Ireland,..."(Fairclough, p. 1). Although, in early years of Islamic revolution, the government had adopted narrow-minded ideological policy in socio-cultural sphere, but the imposed war against Iran by Iraq, lead it to use some styles of music as an instrument for political mobilization for recruitment. There were widespread riots in European countries, specially by youth, students and workers during 1968. "Has Righart has described as a "moderate, cultural version of new attitudes and modes of expression took precedence over the vigorous political-ideological activism developing in other countries. Prove helped to established this pattern through it's emphasis upon creativity and imagination as primary weapons against consumer enslavement". Militant student protest would not arise in the Netherlands until 1969, when a wave of university occupations swept the country. The authorities' forcible ending of a five-day occupation at the radicalization of some student groups, but rapid government legislation security. Greater student involvement in the running of university prevented this radicalization from becoming anything more than a fringe phenomenon. One of the primary distinguishing features of the international protest movements of the 1960s was the centrality accorded to the wezd for cultural changes, as well as (or indeed instead of) revolution in a more narrowly political severe (See: Kutschke & Norton, pp. 47-51). In Iran we can review the role of music and composition and poem during recent decades, from 1979 Revolution to riots against Islamic regime thereafter. The Song "My primary school friend! : Yar e dabestani e man!", is a famous song which almost has been reading in any oppositional gathering by students in schools and universities.

Music is a main part of our humanity. Human-kind, in all ethnic groups has some kinds of music, so it shows that music must be an important dimension of human being. For ethnomusicology "the definition assumes that all humans, not just those we call muscious , are musical to some degree, and that musicality (the capacity to make and make sense of music) defines our humanity and provides one of touch experience. Musical thinking and doing may be as important to our human being in the world as is our ability to speake and to understand speech. Ethno-musicologists would claim we need music to be fully human ... to understand why need music to be fully human, we must study music in all it's diversity."(Rice, 2014, pp. 1-2)

Here, we must discuss some aspect of popular music. I intend of " popular music ", a kind of music which is welcomed by a variety of different stratum of people in a society, not a special stratum ."In today's culture, popular music is a vital site where ideas about gender and sexuality are imagined and disseminated". In a book, which is a collection of edited papers, the writers have studied some political aspect of the popular music, which contemporary pop music performances of gender and sexuality have emerged radically and politically some popular music can be classified in so-called "Critical Hope", that means "making and consuming popular music as activities that encourage individuals to imagine and work toward a better, more just world"(Susan Fast and Craig Jennex, 2019 ,p.2).

I think popular music can affect political sphere through many mediate variables like individual and collective ideas and values in personal and common memory of a community or society. For example a famous contemporary Iranian song, "Ay Iran: Oh Iran!", awakens the feeling of belong to Iran in the mind of the listener: and an Iranian song "Miran Adama Az in Khooneh: The persons go out from this home (: die)", brings a feel of sadness for persons and about who passed a way in family or neighborhood or other familiar or popular persons.

Also, a popular song can irrigate the feel of social disappointment, like the songs of Mohammad Reza Shajarian, with a poem of Sayeh (Ebtihaj), that indirectly describes socio-political sphere of Iran, early 1970, before the revolution 1979, THE song 'Dar in Sarai e Bi kasi: (In this loliness home)".

Nowadays in Iran, we hear some widespread song, like those of "Habib", which are full of disappointing and socio-political criticism, He has read a famous critical poem of Hafiz, "Vaezan kin Jelveh bar ...: The preachers who preaches behinds tribune or on the pulpit ..." which is a religious and political criticism, has attracted many different peoples who have disappointed in recent years in Iran.

During the recent feminist insurgency in Iran, 2023, A famous song, "Baray e: For", by Ibrahim Hajizadeh, a young man, has become a popular song, and a voice symbol of political objection by women and other parts of Iranian society against gender and other restriction in the political structure of Islamic Republic of Iran. This song has been heard millions times in cyber-space and social networks and through other means.

There is no single "concept of world music", it indicates many meanings. "World music is very old and very new; it chronicles the ancient and the modern; it lives in the past and in the present. World music sounds the local and the global; it contains stories of the

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every day and histories of epochs; it touches the most intimate parts of our lives and expresses the most transcendent qualities of human existence...In all these ways, world music comes into existence because of its power to connect and to sound the common diversity of all human beings. It is because of the vastness of world music that it has so many and such different meaning where we encounter it in the world (Bohlman,2020,pp.1-2). So, I think we can abstract two main concepts from "world music": First, all music of all human societies and communities, nation or sub-nations communities; Second, the concept which means a music has proceeded from its original **source** and has been extended to other communities and has been welcomed by them. I think, in recent Iran we have seen many kind of this concept. Shah's era, many of middle and upper class persons have been educated in west, Europe or USA, and they were interested in some kind of western music. For example, in a birth ceremony for crown-prince by the prime- minister- Hovaida – which a western singer was performing, shah was repeating the song (See: Nahavandi, 2013, p.91).In recent years , Turkish music was imported to Iran. Also, during second -world war, when Iran was under occupation of The allied Forces, American soldier established their own radio broadcasting station. So at least people of the Iranian capital, Tehran, got familiar to Jaz and American music (Ibid,p.163).

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4. MUTUAL AFFECTS OF POLITICS AND MUSIC IN RECENT IRAN

Some researchers has studied "The relationship of popular music to places". Local, national and global dimensions of humanity can be studied. In other words, identity has several layers: local, national and global. This identity's dimensions are formed and articulated through music (Biddle & Knights, 2016, p.2). Iranians like others, have these three layers of identity. We can see emblem and symbols of each local, national and global identities. In personality of Iranians, local music (folklore), national and global transfer these signs and construct the layers of identity. For example a famous song " Ay Iran: Oh Iran!" refers to national, a Pop music refers to global, and a local song of Shiraz or Birjand ,like songs of "Sima Bina"; The singer, refers to local layer of identity. The proportion and quality of mixing, determines the personality identity of each era.

Sometimes, selection a specific music or listen to it, may indicate that the listener belongs to a specific political trend and wing. "In January 2008, The French Conservative head of state, Nicholas Sarkozy, married his singer-song writer girl-friend, ex-model Cavla Bruni. In the weeks following the ceremony popular music critics in the left-wing press Liberation, Telewrama, L'Express, wondered whether they would ever be able to listen to Bruni's music in the same way again. In Telerama, a journalist stated that he now even though he had enjoyed the previously, since he felt that the simple act of putting Bruni's CD into hi-fi would amount to a declaration of support for the right-wing policies of her husband Ferenczi,2008,pp.4-5)."

In recent years in Iran, also some types of music, is understood as a symbol for belonging to special political trends, defender or opponent to regime. For a clear sample, I can refer to song of "Hajipour" song, "For (Baray-e)" as a sign for critical view-points to Islamic Republic .Also there is now a improving trend of religious mourning songs, monodies and dirges, known as "Nouha". Some weepers who have critical political attitudes select critical poems and texts for their dirges. It is worthy to be said that at Islamic Revolution years, dirges have also these functions, as a symbol of traditional Shiite or political Shiite. During the war between Iran and Iraq, dirge was a helpful means for government in political mobilization against Saddam aggression.

In recent years, from early 2020 till more than two years, the world faced consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, like lockdown . In many countries in which music industry had experienced a good situation, for example in late night (overnight), suddenly it stopped. Many revenue's sources like live performances, tours, festivals were postponed or ceased. Some researchers have done studies with the aim to provide an innovative exploration of the complex politics of resistance, subversion containment, and reconciliation in popular music in its contemporary formations. Recent history provides us with ample instances of the power of popular music to speak to, through, and" against various political moments. The contemporary socio-political situation of the late 2010, into early 2020s also offers countless opportunities to explore how popular music revisits, reconstitutes, rewrites, and reconciles itself to this past." (Hoad & Staw & Wilson, 2022, pp. 1-2).

We mentioned the relation between music and politics through ideology. Here we can continue it through religious fundamentals as a religious ideology in modern era. Like non-religious ideologies, religious ideologies put many should and should and should not norms for socio-political life, and even for private sphere of living.

In Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh), music was referred as " Ghena", which doesn't have a positive meaning. Just some minorities of Islamic jurisprudents allows music, even some kind of music which is not erotic. Mohsin Kashani was an exception in 17th century, who even was praying alongside live music.

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After 1979 Revolution in Iran, Islamic Ideology was the basic socio-political platform of governing and music in almost first decade of Islamic Republic, just was accepted in a rhetoric music for mobilization in war between Iran and Iraq.

Folklore, is public and informed culture of a society, and is important for many reasons. One of them, as I think is that: people in their informed communications express their intentions, ideals and beliefs more freely than formal relations, furthermore, diversity of ethnic, linguistic and religions groups produces some diverse kinds of culture, including music, we can understand also political dimension of a society, their political ideals, beliefs, attitudes and Iran has a rich history of folkloric music, or local music, because the country has many ethnic groups like Kord, Azari (Tork), Gilani, Balouch, Turkmen, Arab, and inside Persian people also any region has a special music and songs. So it is possible to analyze these songs to realizes political sphere of life in Iran.

Kurds, Balouches, Arabs and Turkmens have same ethnic groups in their neighborhood. Along frontlines, and in recent decades in some frontiers like northwest and west, and Eastern frontiers there has been in the music of these regional music.

In 2023 unrest in Iran, "Mahsa-Gina Amini", whose death erupted the flame of protest, was a girl of Kurd of western region of Iran, Kurdistan. Kurdistan has a very interesting and rich music record."Khoda Nour", was an anonymous young man who was living in eastern region, and was a Balouch young man of eastern Iran. 'Mehran Sammak", was a young man of northern province, Gilan.

Although in first decade there was a religious-ideologic norm for acceptable and non-acceptable music, nowadays it seems that actually for state agencies music styles are not important, what is important is that written composition and singers are among pro-regime or anti-regime.

We have many singers and songs that have intelligence and spiritual contents but the singers are not defenders of reign and so are not accepted and some others that have lower level of spirituality and also we can say they have negative spiritual signals are encountered I can mention "Moein" first and second kinds.

"Shervin Hajizadeh", a young man who was living in northern part of Iran, in early weeks of protests of Women, Life, Freedom" resurgence, composed a song which rapidly became as the emblem of this protest movement. This song can be studied to show why it has reached these position of popularity. First it Iranian society and was indicating that people live in a situation of crisis. Third, the singer was a young man who was indicating that people live in a situation of crisis. Third, the singer was a young man who was speaking about women and so could attract women. Fourth, it's text was a simple words and statements that was different from classic music which needs some literal knowledge to be understand, and the level of knowledge to be understand, and the level of knowledge was rapidly decreasing in recent years.

It was in new styles of music and song, not Iranian classic music. Second, it's composition's contents, written text, was referring to many socio-political problems of Iran society.

For these and many other reasons. This song gained a vast popularity, specially among women, the youths, students of schools and universities, and on social networks. It was replayed more than 42 million times on an estimation.

Women and sometimes the government have followed this process. Islamic revolution of 1979, the government has implemented many reformist programs about human rights, like the Franchise and divorce right of women. Also, some Iranian women have entered in new socio-cultural spheres like singing and feminist poem-telling first famous Iranian singer women in contemporary history was "Ghamar-ol-molouk", and many others after her. Also "Foroogh Farrokhzad" was one of the famous women who expressed her feminine feeling in her poems. In recent years, we cannot trace both of these trends many Iranian women and the song of "woman, lives freedom" shows clearly both of these spheres".

5. CONCLUSION

Politics and music have long record of interactions around the world. In these paper, I considered this interaction about contemporary Iran, specially from 1970 to 2024. My study revealed a strong link between music and politics in recent decades in Iran, which has different political attitudes and trends. I showed also some of political consequences of some major musical tastes and trends in recent years of Iranian society. My major points of view is that recent musical trends among Iranians is an important sign of social change that has major political consequences, which must be taken as an important sign for who are governing and whom are governed in Iran.

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