Chapter 2

SOCIAL CHANGE AND CULTURE: AN ASSESSMENT ON ARABESQUE MUSIC

Hülya ÇAKIR[1]

INTRODUCTION

Culture, language, religion, value, norm, history, science-art, customs and traditions, behaviors, etc. The heritage, which is learned, shared, and transferred to future generations by everyone living in the society through its elements, can be defined as the total lifestyle. In Tylor's definition, the condition of being a member of a society is sought for the acquisition of culture. As a member of the society, inheriting the inheritance transferred from generation to generation, gives a total lifestyle form in terms of society. Tylor (1871) stated that this form consists of the components of people, society, content and learning elements. The material and spiritual elements of culture expand its scope, and the fact that change is experienced requires the diversity of learning elements.

Social and physical environment, period conditions, technological and economic reasons, communication and interaction with other cultures, and changes and developments within the culture itself are effective in social change. Periods of sociological break in social life (migration, economic crisis, war, internal turmoil, etc.) can be an active subject in creating dynamics of change, determining the speed and direction, especially through the conditions of the period in which they live. In this study, social change and culture are evaluated with an emphasis on the emergence of arabesque music, one of the elements of popular culture, and the process of change. Culture is affected by many factors and changes and renews as a result of these interactions. This study aims to make a general evaluation on arabesque music in the context of social change and culture.

CULTURE

According to Tylor (1871), culture or civilization is a complex whole that includes knowledge, art, tradition and similar abilities, skills and habits learned by human

[1] Assoc. Prof. Dr., Yozgat Bozok University, hulya.cakir@bozok.edu.tr, ORCID iD: 0000-0001-8115-4076

beings as a member of a society. In this definition of Tylor (1871), there is a lack of information about why people need culture, as well as the condition of being a member of a society for the acquisition of culture. Malinowski defines culture as a whole of ideas and arts, beliefs and traditions that arise due to living in a social community with consumer goods and tools that meet the biological needs of people (Aman, 2012). Max Weber, on the other hand, defined culture as equipping a limited part of the endlessly meaningless events in the world with meaning and importance from the point of view of human beings (Schroeder, 1996).

Culture is human-specific, social, and transmitted. Culture is not static because it has a changing and renewing structure. Technology and economic factors of culture, physical environment factor, contact with other cultures and change in itself, movement along with the development process are inevitable. People learn and teach culture, which has cognitive and behavioral dimensions, not innately, but later on. As the society transfers its cultural characteristics to new generations through socialization, the process of knowing and learning about culture takes place. In this way, cultural accumulation takes place with enculturation. Societies change slowly or rapidly at the end of the exchange that takes place not only with their own cultural accumulation, but also with the interaction of different societies and cultures. Because culture encompasses everything that the inhabitants of the society learn and share, it guides people and directs relations between people.

POPULAR CULTURE

The concept of popular culture has been transformed from the meaning of "belonging to the people" to the meaning "preferred and loved by many", and this transformation is not thought to be accidental. The concept of popular in communication media means that what the programs, music and film industries offer to the cultural market is held by the public. This culture has come to cover a wide area that is everywhere in our lives, in the home, in the food, on the street, at work, on the television, in what we eat and drink (Erdoğan, 2001).

When the concept of popular culture is examined, it is seen that it is generally used in two different meanings. While the first meaning includes everything that the public likes and does, these condmeaning includes the things that the public likes and quickly consumes. It is seen here that while the first meaning reflects the culture of the people, that is, it is a positive concept, while these condmeaning evokes a negative concept as it serves the concept of commercial and capitalist because it evokes massiveness. In the Social Sciences Dictionary, popular culture is generally considered as the cultural characteristics that can be produced

and lost rapidly, without historical significance and historical continuity effort, without the feature of being elite, and with average level people (Acar and Demir, 2005). Despite the imposition of mass culture from above, popular culture differs from the concept of mass culture because it is produced by the public and the producer and also the consumer are not uniform, passive and unresponsive, and it becomes a much more appropriate term for the characterization of arabesque culture (Kaya, 2012). According to Adorno, who does not accept that there are opposing symbolic practices in mass culture, mechanization hides the origin of art and leads people to rudeness, aggression, violence and to obey the dominant rules. Popular music is one of the embodied forms of popular culture (Arık, 2004). Although the general form of popular music is a popular culture structure, it has changed in accordance with the culture and contents of the period, equivalent to the social periods (Aydar, 2014). When we look at Protest, Anatolian Rock-Pop, Arabesque and Light Turkish Pop music, it is understood that a search for innovation is dominant, the music tastes and demands of the people are taken into account, the tendencies of the musicians and the traditional are handled in a universal context (Duran, 2012).

Popular culture and popular music that develops in this culture affect the leisure, consumption and music habits of individuals and can determine the consumption tendencies of individuals. Popular music, as a product of the culture industry, is thought to completely pacify the listener. The listener does not need intense thought while exhibiting reflexive behaviors in the accompaniment of standardized music. Because listening to popular music is both easy and habit forming (Tan, 2021).

ARABESQUE CULTURE

As a cultural product, arabesque has ceased to be just a musical genre in Turkey, and the culture, lifestyle, and way of thinking of those who listen to arabesque music have been called arabesque based on the formal and content features of arabesque music (Dönmez and İmik, 2020). Music has become a way of relying on "everyday life practice" (Özbek, 1991). Those who do not say no to modernization; however, an arabesque mass emerges that clings to the new values imposed by the changing order (modern life) and traditional values despite the practices (Uğur, 2009).

> *"It reflects a strange hybrid (and degenerate) type that rejects the traditions of the agricultural culture based on the feudal value system*

that dominates the rural areas but does not adopt a culture with the value system of the industrial society, which is seen as temporary, hybrid (and corrupt). (…) According to him, the supreme value in this culture is money." (Kongar, 2010).

Arabesque culture is an undesirable result of a modernization effort. The acceleration of migration from rural to urban, which is one of the parts of the modernization process, and the strengthening of the effects of the urbanization and urbanization process, has expanded the scope of spreading arabesque to society. Because arabesque has become the othering culture, the voice of the "others" who migrated with good dreams and hopes, who could not find what they were looking for where they migrated, whose culture they found in the place they migrated was very contradictory to the culture of the place they came from, and who had difficulties in adapting both materially and spiritually (Kaymal, 2017).

Those who define culture as the level of development in the first of three different attitudes towards arabesque culture despise it by calling it "degenerate" and "unconscious". The other view includes discourses pointing out that arabesque is a concrete cultural situation. According to the third view, arabesque is seen as an urban culture unique to our country (Erol and Işık, 2002). Socio-economic and cultural factors are effective in the first sight that arabesque is seen as unconscious and humiliated. There is a predominant concern in the society that the numerical density of the lower class may cause cultural disintegration and deterioration. The second view is that the arabesque culture constitutes the material element of the culture through symbols and signs. According to the third view, the mass migration from rural to urban in our sociology is determinative in the structural feature of arabesque.

Music is both a part of life and culture, a cultural expression, and a culture in itself. The music of a society is actually related to the social, psychological structure and aesthetic perception of that society, at the same time it reflects and symbolizes the culture of that society. Because the elements, values, behavior patterns and norms of that culture take their place in that music and find its reflection (Uzun, 2019).

ARABESQUE MUSIC

Arabesque, as a word meaning, is a music genre that resembles Arabic music and generally deals with pessimism. In architecture, arabesque is used for Arabic style

decoration (TDK-Url-1). Arabesque music is a genre unique to our society, which is shaped according to the social and cultural environment it emerged from, lacks a consistent theoretical basis, carries melodies from Arabic music in terms of melody and western music in terms of instruments, and has a widespread audience coming from all parts of the society in time (Güngör,1993). The desired results could not be achieved with the state's support of the painless arabesque against the spicy arabesque. He did not give much face to the music in the arabesque style, which does not have an element of pain in the masses (Dönmez, 2011). According to Stokes (2016), the distressed facial expressions on arabesque movie posters and cassette covers and the frequent references to tears in the lyrics, the words trouble and suffering, which are often used to express the extremes of suffering, are the result of a culture of pain embedded in arabesque indicator.

Eğribel describes the conditions that create arabesque music as lack of alternatives, external dynamics, and cultural duality (Eğribel, 1984). Arabesque music has become a sign of a cultural situation with a social reality, in which the segments who have migrated to the city, have not yet been integrated into the city, and cannot hold on, express themselves culturally (Işık and Erol, 2002). Arabesque music talks about black loves, unsmiling luck, endless suffering, love that ends before it starts, lovers to be met in the apocalypse, waiting for years with the longing of a lover; It consists of the discourse of the lover, who is caught in a distant image that can never be reached, and who is sick with the desire for that image (Gürbilek, 2004).

When we look at the chronological development process of arabesque music in Turkey; After the 1950s, the socio-economic expectations of the majority of the people who migrated from the countryside to the cities could not be met and they could not adapt to the city. This revolt started with Orhan Gencebay in the 1960s and was later voiced by popular artists such as İbrahim Tatlıses, Ferdi Tayfur and Müslüm Gürses. Until the 1980s, arabesque was ostracized by the state, the media, and the urban and educated part of society, and was accepted as the music of others, croups and maganda (Kaymal, 2017). With the introduction of private televisions in the 1990s, arabesque music and films gained the opportunity to reach wider audiences and began to take place in pop music and Turkish Folk Music until today (Soydan, 2015). Turkey bought products and services for consumption from western capitalist countries; these products and services include cultural products and values; therefore, it is seen that the process of resembling the West has had an impact on all sections of life, from consumption patterns to tastes and tastes (Kaya, 2012). In these years, arabesque began to lose its effect.

ARABESQUE RAP

It is derived from the combination of Arabesque with rap, which reflects the reactions of African Americans fighting against whites in America. Rap made by expatriate Turks in the 1990s has been a turning point for the generation in Turkey (Sagır, 2020).

Arabesque has become a rising term with the penetration of words, not music, and people and society finding themselves in these words. The arabesque, which interprets feelings and emotions and attributes intrinsic value judgments, is abundantly found in different musical styles in Turkish art. Chris Hann, who has worked on arabesque, names arabesque as "thought influenced by emotions" (Birkalan, 2003).

Especially since the beginning of the 1990s, it is seen that young people are exposed to different communication and information technologies. The form that the arabesque music style took in the postmodern period, arabesque rap-hiphop, has transformed into a way of expressing themselves, especially for adolescents and young people with rebellious attitudes, with the basic processes reflected with visuals (Sagir, 2020). Social change differentiates material and spiritual cultural elements in traditional, modern, and postmodern periods.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Tylor (1871), many cultural elements, especially art, knowledge, morality, belief, customs, and traditions, have functions such as meeting people's psycho-social needs and creating a spiritual environment. Customs and customs specific to societies, religious and moral norms, value judgments, language and literature, music and other aesthetic values are among the elements of spiritual culture that cannot be seen with the naked eye, and can be affected by many factors, but the rate of change may be slower than material cultural elements.

In the production of popular music, the textual form and listener response are standardized and reveal a similar core structure. Industrial production in capitalist societies produces standardized products (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1977). In today's capitalist societies, culture is produced to be bought and sold in the market, to bring in more money. According to the authors of the Frankfurt School, such commodification has permeated all aspects of cultural production and social life and has become increasingly widespread (Kuyucu, 2016). According to Adorno and Horkheimer, art becomes a means of raising false consciousness of

the masses by being commodified through the culture industry, mostly by putting it in the content of entertainment (Arık, 2004).

Culture is not a fixed field that never changes; on the contrary, it is a process in which new structures emerge as a result of the constant change of values. Popular culture, on the other hand, is a tool of mass consumption. Popular music, like popular culture, is a whole with positive and negative elements, full of ambiguity and contradictions. It carries deep traces of resistance and being dominated. In this context, the position of rock music in modern societies reflects this uncertainty and contradiction (Arık, 2004). With the accelerated urbanization process in the 1950s, arabesque music, which is one of the popular music genres, arose with the clash of values and lifestyles specific to the village and the city, and a cosmopolitan structure called "arabesque" emerged (Güngör, 1993). In the same way that mass production was realized in the first period of industrialization in societies, the culture industry also commodified art by standardizing it with mass production and spread it by affecting the lives of individuals in a wide way.

The acceleration of urbanization in Turkey, the migration from the village to the city, the blending of rural and urban values, and the duality experienced have also spread to art and music, which are among the spiritual cultural elements. According to the profile of the heterogeneous population living in the city, Turkish Pop, Rock-Pop, Arabesque, Arabesque Rap etc. have been diversified. Stokes also defined arabesque as the result of a highly organized industry that serves the business interests of its employees through very similar musical works (Stokes, 2016).

Music, as a phenomenon, exists in the life of every society, or more closely, in the life of every individual, but it can be understood and evaluated in the cultural context of the society (Kaplan, 2008). According to Erol, music is a learned behavior that exists through social interaction and is made by people for people (Erol, 2002). Arabesque music, which is one of the elements of popular culture, has emerged with periodic effects and interactions, and has semiotic reflections on individual and social life.

SOCIAL CHANGE AND CULTURE

People take their behaviors and attitudes from the environment they were born and grew up in and become more active by adapting to this environment. In this sense, culture fulfills the function of adapting to the individual in social life. If the changes in the society are sudden and varied, the desire to change and renew

in the individuals can often be faced with sticking to their habits and adaptation difficulties may be experienced. Changes and innovations are found psycho-socially strange at the first stage, they are examined and reflected to life through a logical filter. Arabesque culture emerges as a cultural change in society, since rapid social change has a great impact on the people who migrated to the city and the people who lived in the city before but were shaken by this change (Uğur, 2009).

Although culture has a historical structure that continues from the past to the present, it is not a static but always a renewed process. Changes in society are not total; it is subject to the process of change by adding something to the existing culture. In the movement created by change and innovation, it is a situation where individuals live together with the community and consist of the purposes of adapting to each other.

REFLECTIONS OF CULTURE ON SOCIAL LIFE

Culture is an element that brings societies together, brings them closer and enables communication. In addition to the unique traditional cultural values of societies, it is influenced by the cultural elements of other societies that spread through communication and interaction processes. As a result of cultural spread that feeds each other through cultural interaction, societies recognize each other's cultural elements, and when they adapt in line with their social beliefs, values, attitudes and attitudes, a new element is added to their culture. The fact that culture consists of material and spiritual elements increases diversity. While the material elements are tangible representations that can change faster, the spiritual elements are language, religion, customs, traditions, morals, etc. are elements that are abstract but effective in all areas of social life. Material and spiritual factors are also effective in cultural diffusion and interaction, but the speed of cultural change of societies is different from each other.

Since language, which is one of the spiritual cultural elements, is the main element of communication, the size of the geography where it is spoken can be determinant in inter-communal interactions depending on the area of influence. Religion and beliefs, lifestyle, perception, attitude, consumption, etc. It is present in almost all daily life. While tradition and customs are the body of unwritten rules, norms and values play a role in the creation of written rules with their regulatory functions. Since the closeness and similarities of religion, language, belief increase the frequency of interaction, it accelerates the processes of cultural adaptation and diffusion for individuals, while the fact that there are many differences can cause individuals to experience depression and incompatibility, that is, cultural shock.

Culture has functions such as socialization, sense of us and identity formation in society. Individuals become a member of the society they live in through the socialization process and gain the culture in this process. It is affected by the culture in every aspect from the way of perceiving the events to the way of dressing, from the way of thinking to the way of behavior. Society, on the other hand, consists of people who share a common culture and interact with each other. Culture makes society unique and different from others in terms of belief, thought, attitude and perception of events, and creates a sense of solidarity and unity with us consciousness and gives identity.

While it is the general (upper) culture that is known and adopted by every segment of the society, the culture of the communities that have their own characteristics in terms of religion, language, morals, and ethnic origin is also a subculture. The sub-cultural diversity that emerges as a result of the division of culture into sub-units and showing regional differences creates a cultural mosaic.

CONCLUSION

The customs and traditions of the society, religious and moral norms, language and literature, music and other aesthetic values constitute spiritual cultural elements that cannot be seen with the naked eye. Elements of spiritual culture are functional because they are a set of social rules aimed at meeting the psycho-social needs of societies, regulating the relations of individuals with other people and society, and ensuring their adaptation to society. Other people benefit the most from the attitudes and actions of people who interact with the elements of spiritual culture.

In Turkey, arabesque music is a type of music that is sad, fatalistic, and carries an expression of pain, sadness, and sometimes rebelliousness against life. The fact that arabesque, which is heavily associated with immigration, is the music of those with low socio-economic and socio-cultural levels in the city, it contains rebellion, pain, poverty, living conditions and the way this life is read by the cultural segment in question. Due to desperation in the face of problems, the current situation is surrendered with different abstract concepts such as fate and luck, and the hope that needs to be sustained in this world is transferred to the other world. Culturally, symbols and discourses can also be created and manipulated in some cases. Arabesque music, one of the elements of popular culture, has been involved in the change and historical process of culture. In this way, cultural systems can reflect social and material interests.

The most important feature that allows us to evaluate culture in the perspective of social change and culture is the production of culture. In the production of culture, cultural and theoretical elements that affect the creation of the audience are discussed, not how the audience is perceived. Especially today, in cities with heterogeneous population density, production diversity is experienced depending on the profile diversity. Arabesque continues in the industrial context with form updates appropriate to the diversified profile while preserving its existing structural features.

REFERENCES

Acar, M. & Demir, Ö. (2005). *Sosyal bilimler sözlüğü.* Ankara: Adres Yayınları.

Adorno, T. & M. Horkheimer (1977). *The culture industry: enlightenmentas mass deception, mass communication and society* (Ed. J. Curran, M. Gurevitch). Londra: Critical Essays on Consumer Culture, Westport, CT: Praeger.

Aman, F. (2012). Bronislaw Malinowski'nin kültür teorisi. *Uludağ Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi,* 21(1), 142-143.

Arık, B. M. (2004). Popüler müzik ve ideoloji olgusuna iki farklı yaklaşım. *Selçuk İletişim Dergisi,* 3(3), 85-91.

Aydar, D. (2014). Popüler kültür ve müzik üzerine. *Uluslararası Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi,* 7(33), 804.

Birkalan, H. (2003). Arabesk'te politika ve poetika. *Folklor-Edebiyat Dergisi,* 4(36), 105.

Dönmez, M. B. (2011). Katharsis fenomeninin arabesk özelindeki görünümü. *Uluslararası İnsan Bilimleri Dergisi*, 8(2), 237.

Dönmez, E.Y. & İmik, Ü. (2020). Ferdi Tayfur örnekleminde Türk sinemasında arabesk müzik. *İnönü Üniversitesi Kültür ve Sanat Dergisi,* 6(2), 136.

Duran, S. (2012). Türkiye'de âşıklık geleneğinin popüler müziklere etkisi. *Doğu Batı Dergisi,* 62, 247.

Eğribel E. (1984). *Neden arabesk değil.* İstanbul: Süreç Yayınları.

Erdoğan, İ. (2001). Popüler kültürde gasp ve popülerin gayri meşruluğu. *Doğu ve Batı Düşünce Dergisi,* 15(2), 66-73.

Erol, A. (2002). Türkiye'nin sosyo-kültürel ve müziksel değişim atmosferinde bir aşık: Mahzuni. *Folklor Edebiyat Dergisi,* 4, 32.

Güngör, N. (1993). *Arabesk, sosyo-kültürel açıdan arabesk müzik.* Ankara: Bilgi Yayınları.

Gürbilek, N. (2004). *Kötü çocuk Türk.* İstanbul: Metis Yayınları.

Işık, C. ve Erol, N. (2002). *Arabeskin anlam dünyası: Müslüm Gürses örneği.* İstanbul: Bağlam Yayıncılık.

Kaplan, A. (2008). *Kültürel müzikoloji.* İstanbul: Bağlam Yayınları.

Kaya, S. (2012). 1970–2000 *Yılları Arası Türk Sinemasında Arabesk Kültür Üzerine Bir İnceleme.* Anadolu Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü. Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Eskişehir.

Kaymal, C. (2017). Kırdan kente göçün sosyokültürel sonuçları: gecekondulaşma ve arabesk. *Ulakbilge.* 5 (15),1508-1517.

Kongar, E. (2006). *21. yüzyılda Türkiye.* İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi.

Kuyucu, M. (2016). Theodor W. Adorno'nun perspektifinden popüler Türk müziğinde standartlaşma sorunsalı. *TRT Akademi Eğlence Endüstrisi* Sayısı. 1(1), 191.

Özbek, M. (1991). *Popüler kültür ve Orhan Gencebay arabeski.* İstanbul: İletişim Yay.

Schroeder, R. (1996). *Max Weber ve kültür sosyolojisi.* (Çev. Mehmet Küçük). Ankara: Bilim ve Sanat Yayınları.

Soydan, E. (2015). Televizyonun arabesk müziğin soylulaşmasındaki rolü. *Marmara İletişim Dergisi,* 23:67.

Stokes, M. (2016). *Türkiye'de arabesk olayı.* İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.

Tan, M. (2021). Kültür endüstrisi bağlamında popüler türk müziği. *Avrasya Sosyal ve Ekonomi Araştırmaları Dergisi (ASEAD),* 8(2), 149-150.

Tylor, E. B. (1871). *Primitive culture: researches into the development of mythology, philosophy, religion, language, art, and custom.* London.

Uğur, P. (2019). *Modernleşme ve arabesk kültür* (Sosyoloji Notları İçinde). Ankara: İdeal Copy.

Uzun, B. N. (2009). Müzik ve kültür arasındaki ilişki bağlamında arabesk. *Sanat ve İnsan Dergisi,* 3(2), 1.

Web Sources:

TDK, *Arabesk* (15/06/2023 tarihinde https://sozluk.gov.tr/=Arabesk adresinden ulaşılmıştır).