



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

***A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF IRANIAN POPULAR MUSIC IN  
THE 21ST CENTURY***

***MOHAMMAD REZAZADEH SEFIDEH***

**FEM 2015 51**



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By

**MOHAMMAD REZAZADEH SEFIDEH**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia  
in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science**

**March 2015**

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science

## **A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF IRANIAN POPULAR MUSIC IN THE 21ST CENTURY**

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**March 2015**

**Chair: Gisa Jähnichen, PhD**

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The main purpose of this thesis is to give a sociological explanation on what is called “Iranian popular music in 21<sup>st</sup> century” covering a period from the year 2000 to 2014. Based on reference to the history of Iranian popular music, this research aims at analyzing the nature of Iranian popular music and to find out what are the constituent elements of such social phenomenon in order to present an analytical definition of it. The other objective of this research attempts to answer the questions of what are the social factors involved in making a piece of music that is all of a sudden massively consumed in the given place and time. This thesis also endeavours the acknowledgment of social qualifications of those consuming popular music such as age group, class, taste and cultural capital available. The grounds, forms, genres and lastly contents and musical structure of popular Iranian music are also taken into consideration.

Iranian underground music as opposed to legally performed popular music that is permitted by the government is also an important sociological issue about which informatory explanation is presented here. The thesis further examines the role of the music industry in production and distribution of popular music among the Iranian community in the above-mentioned period.

In order to construct a sociological conceptual framework, preceding a general review of the social thoughts on the subject matter, concepts presented by three prominent music sociologists are applied. Adorno’s ‘conceptualization of market theory’, Bourdieu’s ‘conceptualization of cultural commodity consumption in relation to class taste’, and Schaefer’s ‘conceptualization on the sub-culture of youngsters’ have been selected as the road map for constructing the questions and analyzing the data gathered.

Qualitative approaches for scientific investigation and semi-constructed interviews have been found most suitable as research methods for this inquiry. The tested population as the ‘focus group’ is formed by twelve [12] members of very knowledgeable and highly qualified members currently involved in the Iranian community of popular music as professors, composers, writers, critics and performers.

Each of the members of the group was interviewed individually during the researcher's fieldwork trip to Iran.

The result of this investigation indicates that pop and rap genres with very simple, easy and repeatable rhythm and musical construction are currently the most popular music in Iran, and the younger generation (14–29 year old) makes the greatest number of consumers for popular music. Popular music in Iran is consumed at certain public as well as private places, individually and collectively. It is also determined that the social factors of class and cultural capital have no meaningful role for consuming popular music. The research result shows that underground music in Iran rarely shares the common attributes globally recognized as having been a sign of protest against social and political status quo. Rather, those artists who lack financial means or certain elements to create and distribute music in order to fulfil government's provisions usually go into the underground. Some examples, however, such as few cases of politically oriented music are excluded from the general rule. In Iran, the commonly accepted definition of music industry is interpreted differently from many developed regions in the world, since some distributors ignore the law of protecting the creation of artistic works easily, duplicate and sell the products illegally in high quantities, though the main production and distribution of popular music is under the government's management and control.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Sarjana Sains

## **ANALISIS SOSIOLOGI MUZIK POPULAR IRAN PADA ABAD KE-21**

Oleh

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Matlamat utama tesis ini ialah memberi suatu penjelasan sosiologi mengenai “muzik popular Iran pada abad ke-21” yang merangkumi tempoh masa dari 2000 ke 2014. Berdasarkan rujukan kepada sejarah muzik popular Iran, penyelidikan ini bertujuan menganalisis ciri-ciri muzik popular Iran dan mengetahui unsur-unsur kandungan kepada fenomena kemasyarakatan ini supaya menyampaikan suatu definisi analisis mengenainya. Sebagai objektif lain, penyelidikan ini mencuba mencari jawapan kepada soalan mengenai faktor kemasyarakatan yang terlibat dalam karya muzik yang digunakan ramai dengan tiba-tiba pada tempat dan masa yang tertentu. Tesis ini juga mencuba mengenalpasti kelayakan sosial di golongan yang menggunakan muzik popular seperti lingkungan umur, kelas, cita rasa dan modal budaya yang sedia ada. Asas, bentuk, genre dan akhirnya kandungan dan struktur muzik dalam muzik popular Iran juga dipertimbangkan.

Turut disampaikan dalam tesis ini ialah muzik bawah tanah Iran yang bertentangan dengan muzik popular yang dipersembahkan secara sah dengan izin kerajaan tetapi ia juga menjadi isu sosiologi penting mengenai keterangan yang mana boleh diterima umum. Selain itu, tesis ini mengkaji dengan lebih lanjut peranan industri muzik dalam pengeluaran dan pengedaran muzik popular di kalangan masyarakat Iran pada tempoh masa tersebut.

Untuk membina sebuah kerangka konsep sosiologi sebelum membuat suatu tinjauan umum tentang pemikiran sosiologi terhadap perkara ini, konsep-konsep yang diperkenalkan oleh tiga tokoh penting di sosiologi muzik telah dipakai. ‘Pengkonsepan teori pasaran’ oleh Adorno, ‘pengkonsepan penggunaan komoditi budaya berhubung dengan cita rasa kelas’ oleh Bourdieu dan ‘pengkonsepan dalam sub-budaya pemuda’ oleh Schaefer telah dipilih sebagai rangka pembinaan soalan dan analisis data yang dikumpulkan.

Adalah didapati bahawa pendekatan kualitatif untuk penyelidikan sains dan temuduga separuh berstruktur merupakan kaedah penyelidikan yang paling sesuai untuk kajian ini. Populasi yang dikaji sebagai ‘kumpulan fokus’ terdiri daripada dua belas [12] orang ahli yang sangat berilmu dan berkelayakan tinggi dalam penglibatan mereka di bidang

muzik popular masyarakat Iran sebagai profesor, komposer, pengarang, pengkritik dan pelaku. Setiap ahli kumpulan telah ditemuduga secara individu semasa kerja lapangan dijalankan di Iran.

Keputusan penyelidikan ini menyatakan bahawa genre-genre pop dan rap yang mengandungi irama dan binaan muzik yang sangat ringkas, mudah dan berulang-ulang ialah muzik paling popular di Iran kini, manakala generasi yang lebih muda (14–29 tahun) telah menjadi golongan pengguna muzik popular yang terbesar. Di Iran, muzik popular digunakan di tempat-tempat umum dan swasta yang tertentu secara individu atau kolektif. Selain itu, ia boleh ditentukan bahawa factor kemasyarakatan dari segi kelas dan modal budaya tidak memainkan peranan bererti dalam penggunaan muzik popular. Hasil penyelidikan menunjukkan bahawa muzik bawah tanah di Iran jarang menonjolkan ciri-ciri umum yang mengandungi tanda bantahan terhadap status quo sosial dan politik sebagaimana yang dikenali secara global. Agaknya, artis-artis yang kekurangan upaya kewangan atau unsur-unsur khusus untuk mengubah dan mengedar muzik di bawah peruntukan kerajaan biasanya akan menceburkan diri di bawah tanah. Namun, terdapat beberapa contoh seperti kes muzik yang berorientasi politik tidak termasuk dalam peraturan umum. Di Iran, definisi mengenai industry muzik yang diterima umum mempunyai tafsiran yang berlainan berbanding dengan rantau-rantau maju di dunia, memandangkan segelintir pengedar yang selalu mengabaikan undang-undang perlindungan ciptaan karya seni menduplikasi dan menjualkannya sebagai produk haram bermutu tinggi walaupun pengeluaran dan pengedaran muzik popular yang utama adalah di bawah pengendalian and penguasaan kerajaan.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Having the opportunity to continue my academic career in one of the best universities in Asia at Universiti Putra Malaysia, under supervision of such a highly knowledgeable, thoughtful and kind professor as Prof. Gisa Jähnichen has been a great honour for me. Her guidance and directions were so accurate and inspiring and that highly motivated me for the past two tough and challenging years.

I am also grateful of having been given the chance to attend very rich and intellectual meetings and classes alongside highly educated classmates and lecturers in a very warm and friendly environment. I am also really thankful to those who were with me in my difficult times and exchanged their experience with me.

Finally, I would like to thank the Iranian Popular Music Community and those who shared their thoughts and insights with me that helped to write this thesis.





I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 9 March 2015 to conduct the final examination of Mohammad Rezazadeh Sefideh on his thesis entitled "A Sociological Structural Analysis of Iranian Popular Music in the 21st Century" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Science.

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## Declaration by Members of Supervisory Committee

This is to confirm that:

- the research conducted and the writing of this thesis was under our supervision;
- supervision responsibilities as stated in the Universiti Putra Malaysia (Graduate Studies) Rules 2003 (Revision 2012-2013) are adhered to.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

Whether intentionally or unintentionally, people are subjected to music in almost any space, any time for any occasion. Music in reality has transformed into a necessary background for individual and social actions and interactions.

The relationship between man and music is dialectical, as he creates music; he is also recreated by music. Although with respect to creation and production, music may be viewed as an act of individualistic activity, but in fact, such creation occurs within a spectrum that might be called socio-cultural field. Social phenomenon and social changes have crucial impact on orientation and formation of different styles of music, since the musician is a member of the society. Fifty years ago, Riedel emphasized the immense influence of the music on identity formation, group membership integration, maintenance of social solidarity and presentation of the interest groups (Riedel, 1964: 149–158).

Fox and William, studying the relation between music and politics, found that conservatives see music as way through which existing social order is questioned and objectives against status quo and the authorities defending it are expressed by music language. On the other hand, they continue, the followers of critical sociology view music as a means for assisting capitalists to maintain their influence on the consumption of masses and encouraging the use of “opium” to gain more profit (Fox and William, 1974: 351–371). However, the relation of music with society now is independent from the mere ethnographical point of view. Sociological researches show that the younger population of a country is, the greater is the tendency for musical innovations and styles seen as modern in its respective time frame. On the other hand the more considerable number of elder people, the more public reception for traditional and old styles of music is wanted. Among others, the sociology of music aims at studying the natures of audience, music market, styles of music from a socio-cultural point of view, productions, consumptions, social groups and interests involved in music making and consuming are scientifically studied (Alikhan and Khani, 2004).

Music in Iran has traditionally been viewed as a branch of human artistic activity that should be viewed limited into an individualistic emotionally motivated framework. So, having been considered as merely a manifestation of personal perception of life and a creative reproduction of men’s interpretation of his surroundings, music has probably been seen as socially unimportant (Ibid). Being limited to individual personal life of musician and thus socially ineffective in addition to the orthodox Islamic jurisprudence, according to which most kinds of music are basically sinful and religiously prohibited (Jafari, 2007). In particular, just recently some handful sociological examinations of Iranian popular music have become available. Therefore, the present research is carried out hoping to shed some light onto the question as what would be an entity called popular music in Iran, and what are the determining social factors and aspects relating to it. This research also might be useful for focusing on a relatively new phenomenon

in Iran with an age of approximately 50 years that is named “popular music”, about which very rarely are academic researches being done.

Other reason that might contribute to the freshness of this study is its inquiry on the popular music in the post-revolutionary era, particularly from a socio-cultural angle. The present investigation contains descriptive data along with analytical explanatory information. This attempt is achieved through direct observation through a field study with a qualitative approach using the technique of interviewing professionally skilful persons in the field of the case being studied.

In general, investigating the relationship between music and society is a relatively new subject of sociological studies. It has been only a few decades that music as a socio-cultural activity of members of society has come to the attention of scholars in sociology. Particularly in Iran, popular music has rarely been examined from a sociological point of view, since it had mostly been seen as an artistic act of individuals (Kousari, 1999: 5).

Such negligence has led to a series of scientifically unfounded judgments and governmental policies following them. However, we should not underestimate some serious attempts of Iranian sociologists who identified the importance of this social phenomenon and tried to conduct some field researches and studies. Thus, besides a few university theses and some few scientific articles, many of which will be discussed in the following chapters; there is a lack of thoroughly written and satisfying literature on the sociology of music in Iran. This deficiency and shortage of information particularly is important because music production and distribution in Iran is under governmental control and direction. The Islamic government is legally obliged to ban music that may represent western standards and values. For that reason, a phenomenon called “underground music” is studied and discussed in the following chapters as a music which is banned by the law, yet performed and distributed beyond the scene that can be reached by the government’s eyes. Thus such lack of data on the nature and characteristics of Iranian popular music, whether over ground and legal or underground and illegal, has been encouraging the further investigation. This research can be considered as original and pioneering since even in Persian language exist very few documents related to the subject mentioned.

### **1.1.1 Mass Music**

An investigation of popular music should include the perspective of its meaning in society. Although such intertwined and dialectical relationship between music and society always existed, only in recent decades people are encountering a phenomenon that can be called “mass music”. Among other factors, the development of technology and easy accessibility of the mass media, computers, internet, or compact discs are responsible for the massive reception for music. This applies also on music which once belonged mainly to some distinct classes of the society, mainly nobility, that were never a “mass” in terms of quantity. Now, with cheap and easy to access and far reaching means such as radios, TVs, mobile phones and other electronic devices) music is provided for everyone, any time desired.

This massive production and consumption of music has gone beyond the borders of nations or countries. It is now global and an international trend for assimilation of tastes among the young generations in the “world village”. Regardless of nationality,

gender, religion, ethnicity, social status, race and other background options, we witness a “global taste” that has attracted youth of the world that seems seeking for an assumed common life style and subsequently a commonly based on constructed similar identity (De Nora, 2004). With all these similarities however a national sense of mass music is still observable, since the general population (youth in particular) of every country has its own cultural characteristics. So it is important to investigate the role of cultural identity to find out the constituent elements of mass music in a given country in a particular time. In other words, since music is a social phenomenon, it would be sensible to acknowledge the significant types of mass music in a nation with its significant cultural characteristic’s based on its history and cultural particularities which are still preserving grown authenticities and can be identified as national mass music.

### **1.1.2 Popular Music**

Popular music as a symbolic manifestation of artistic mass selection and a conventional way of expressing a social group’s cultural tendency is fundamentally a social phenomenon. The study of the sociology of popular music is necessary because it simultaneously contains and reflects a people's language, values, feelings, concerns, moods, emotions, reactions, cultures and goals, despite being an economic phenomenon.

Sociologically speaking, popular music is a dependent factor by which other social norms, including traditions, customs, mores, fashions, as well as historical and political grounds would be influenced and materialized.

Popular music can be defined globally as "commercially mass produced music for a mass market" (Shuker, R. 2001), and the most recent styles of popular music come from the musical appearances, which were popular in the past. However, this definition does not address the part that popular music is responsible for creating and affecting the popular culture, and also it does not affect its socioeconomic role. It cannot easily be defined in mere musical terms, as it is composed in such a wide range of rhythms, instruments, effects, vocal and recording styles.

There is an economic view at popular music that is related to the sale of sheet music or recordings. The more is bought the more it is popular. Which in fact is almost true, but there are several sociological reasons behind it that contribute to the investigation of why and how something became popular in the first place.

Popular music, unlike art music is made for mass distribution to large and often socio-culturally different groups of audiences, to whom it should ideally sell as much as possible and as many as possible (Tagg, 1982). “Thus the reification of music, which can be realised through any kind of music notation for reproduction, audio-visual recordings on a carrier, or a long-term contract with an orchestra or a soloist, is an essential precondition of creating popular music. The society, therefore, must be in a state, in which the reification of music is technically possible and, more importantly, economically necessary.” (Jähnichen 2012: 75).

### **1.1.3 Youth in Iran**

It is not very easy to put all the Iranian youth into one category in the past 13 years of 21<sup>st</sup> century, as there are diverse groups between them in the Iranian society. However, they have much in common seen from a sociological and psychological viewpoint, especially in behaviours such as their attitudes towards living and how they think and where they are in the world as well as the effect of media and technologies on their lives that are very much the same. In most cases, the life plans and concerns of the young generation in Iran for future is almost the same as the youth in other countries, at least the most common dreams such as finding a job, having security and finding a life partner. It also does not differ much from past life plans. However, the phenomenon of globalization is very much affective in the current Iranian society. Most of Iranian youth are mainly focusing on their education and finding a job in the future (Debeljak, 2013).

Investigating the variety of taste and life plans of the Iranian youth is very important for those who are interested in examining sociological aspects of the communication and engagement of them with music.

Special focus is given on the relationship between the youth and television, radio and internet, which are the main sources of information, news, music, socializing and entertainment (Ibid).

### **1.2 Statement of Problem and Research Questions**

Doing popular music as an artistic method to convey the appealing message to a large audience is basically a socio-cultural matter. As Tagg has rightly mentioned, studying popular music is an interdisciplinary subject matter toward which many fields of studies are accumulating (Tagg, 1982). The term stands in contrast with traditional or art music that usually has more specialized and less populated audiences. The question here is what makes music popular in a specific time and place? Why all of sudden among so many productions of the music industry one becomes appealing to a large number of the members of a certain society and not the others? This question is not originally and exclusively related to the aesthetics or the cosmetology of arts. Rather, it requires a sociological response. The question further becomes tenser and upholding where it is targeted to a sensitive and socially constructed group such as the young generation of a specific country in a specific time.

The aim of this research is to recognize whether there exists such a thing as Iranian popular music with specific characteristics and indexes exclusively attributed to the Iranian society, and if there is then what are its specifications and characteristics.

The detailed questions that this research seeks to answer are as follows:

1. What factors are involved to make a piece of music popular in Iran. which emphasizes the technical point of view;
2. What explains Iranian new generation's massive approach to consume music, as this explores the sub cultural point of view;
3. What people engaged in popular music have a say about Iranian popular music;

4. What is the identity of Iranian underground music, its roots and its public representation and the public response to it;
5. What are the sociological theories supported by the outcomes of this research.

The order of these questions does not imply a methodological approach. It is rather an order leading from practical to theoretical sub-subjects of this thesis.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The specific aim of this research is to discover and explain what the Iranian new generation knows, thinks and selects as popular music and what are the social mediators leading them towards such orientation.

The objectives of the present study are as follows:

1. To apply the definitions and the conceptual elements of what is globally titled “popular music” on the Iranian context in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This study provides an accessible and comprehensive introduction to the production, distribution, consumption and meaning of popular music and examines the difficulties and debates, which surround the analysis of popular culture and popular music in the given context.
2. Investigating the general conceptual relationship between popular music and society by referring to the theoretical literature available exclusively related to popular music and setting it into relationship to the conditions in present Iran. In this step we look upon the most recent socio-cultural thoughts experimenting with the nature of popular music and social consequences following these constituent propositions.
3. To draw a general picture of popular music in Iran as opposed to traditional or art music, which includes:
  - Presenting a very brief history of modern Iranian popular music, the socio-historical events that help developing this kind of music, the role of governmental control herein and the declining until now, and to what extent it plays a role in social coexistence and correlation among the people.
  - Identifying specific features and elements in conformity with Iranian popular music to find out whether there is a general congruency to global popular music streams or not.
  - Acknowledging the kinds of Iranian popular music, its genres, and types, with special reference to underground music.

This project is conducted partially by referring to the fields of sociology of the youth, art and music and based on qualitative exploration of literature as well as on primary observation in the field.

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

This study is pioneering in investigating and discovering the characteristics and nature of the phenomenon called Iranian popular music. The shortage and deficiency of information and researches about Iranian popular music makes this topic important. However, a very little number of sociologists and researchers attempted to study this phenomenon by conducting researches and field studies. But as most of the production and distribution Iranian popular music is under the governments control and Iranian government is under the Islamic jurisdiction, it will encourage further and more investigations that what are the determining factors and variables of Iranian popular music particularly from a socio-cultural angle.

Moreover, the recent tremendous increase of production and consumption of popular music in Iran and massive attraction of people specially youth towards it, encourages sociologists to investigate more on this entity as every culture has its own characteristics. Therefore it would be sensible to acknowledge the significance of Iranian popular music with its significant cultural characteristic's based on its history and cultural particularities.

Furthermore The study of Iranian popular music is necessary because it reflects peoples values, feelings, concerns, emotions, reactions, goals and culture, and the recent contradiction between specially Iranian new generation and the governments values towards popular music that has an effect on the Iranian society today has made studies such this that are rare and limited very important and significant.

#### **1.5 Limitation of the Study**

This study is aimed primarily to introduce and define the constituent conceptions of popular music and attributive characteristics of Iranian popular music in particular form a sociological platform, in the time between 2012 and 2014.

This endeavour will be implemented by adopting qualitative methods. Some information is gained through documented materials available. This research will also achieve its goals by observational field studies. The investigation applies qualitative approach and selects semi constructed interview technique. The people interviewed are among those directly involved in the field of inquiry, by presently teaching, writing compositions, singing, playing, performing and studying popular music in Iran. Thus their knowledge is based on live experience and academic education. This research is done with the hope that a true portrait of actual status of Iranian popular music may become available to a broader academic readership and other interested people. The research however faces some difficulties in providing completely satisfying quantitative information. The sources accessible to the researcher were in fact limited. The subject matter in question is very new even in Iran and thus documents were made primarily available. Therefore, there is a lack of information that can be exploited quantitatively, especially in terms of available descriptive material. Therefore, the starting point had to be chosen from a qualitative discovering through a descriptive approach. On the ground of very few articles exclusively on Iranian popular music, all of which are listed in chapter six; the structure of the present thesis was established.

#### **1.6 Organization of Thesis**

In this research, first a general introduction is given to the background, statement of problem and the nature of the inquiry and objectives. The significance, importance and the scientific contributions that are hoped to be made on the research subject matter are presented in the first chapter. The introductory chapter will be finalized with the conceptual definition of the terms.

In Chapter 2, literature concerning general approach to popular music, previous studies conducted on the subject, both by foreign investigators and scholars as well as Iranians are reviewed. There is made an inquiry on the sociological music theories where the prominent sociologists made their attempts to explain sociological thoughts on the relation between music and society. In this step we identify four schools to be considered as helpful in this study:

1. Frankfurt based on class orientation and Marxist conflict approach of which Adorno is the representative.
2. Consumption of cultural products theory offered by Bourdieu.
3. Schaefer's theory of sub-culture illustrated by the term "diffusion", in which a piece of music as a massive production of commodity is consumed by a massive number of young members of society.

The second chapter proceeds according to the applied method with the aim of constructing a combined theory system where the technique of deep semi directed interview is used.

In chapter 3, primarily a brief history of Iranian popular music will be presented. Following, documented information and related data available will be given in order to establish a common ground for the later discussions.

In chapter 4, the data gathered will be presented analyzing the main information acquired from the respondents through interviews. The emphasis of this chapter will be on constructing a theory concerning the characteristics of Iranian underground music and its role on determining the unique nature of Iranian popular music, in which - under certain circumstances- government policies are involved.

In chapter 5 structure, composition and production of Iranian popular music genre of pop will be investigated and analyzed, and by examining three selected music tracks from Mohsen Yeganeh (Sokoot), Emad Talebzadeh (Asheghet Shodam) and Babak Jahanbakhsh (Dooset daram) this chapter will be followed. The selected songs will be investigated in terms of musical structure, elements of the track, instruments, lyrical contents and its translation into English, pitch, correlation metering and equalizer metering.

In conclusion, chapter 6 will provide an overview on the previous chapters, while summarizing the main points, giving suggestions for future inquiries and studies.

The chapters are followed by the bibliography and references.

## **1.7 General Methodology**

This study is based on qualitative research methods in which the phenomenon under examination is scrutinized to a deeper layer of observation to provide a more precise

portrait of it. With regards to sociological studies of the inter-relational aspect of society and the music genres and the options influencing the taste of and selection by the younger generation towards certain types of music, sociological theories on art, the youth and music have to be considered. As Strasburg (2005: 10) indicates, the data gathered from a qualitative research are not acquired merely from statistical or mathematical inquiries, rather it is produced from the researchers direct observation of peoples' lives and lived experience and expressed responses of their emotional impressions to the forms of social behaviour. The qualitative approach is also appropriate where some explanation of institutionalized group behaviour, organizational functions, social movements and cultural phenomena is sought (Strasburg, 2005). Thus in a qualitative research the researcher does not rely upon numbers and percentages, he rather looks for more pro-founded information on life styles of people in analysing why certain cultural goods are consumed by certain members of different sub-cultures belonging to various layers of social stratifications. (Safiri, 2008, Marshal, 1998). In a qualitative research the formulation of a hypothesis is done in a deductive manner. Hence, in qualitative research one final conclusion is gradually archived through observation with no necessarily any specific hypothesis set prior to it (Farahani and Oreizy, 2004: 215–216).

The selection of informants and fields of observation are of greatest importance in a qualitative research. The informants are selected among those who are most eligible to give average accurate answers to the questions. Therefore, the researcher must decide about a certain level of knowledge wished as well as the experience and skilfulness concerning the subject of inquiry to gain reliable data. This is called "criterion based" sampling, which should be abided in a qualitative research (Ibid).

Interviews are one of the most frequently used tools in social scientific investigations. The advantage of this technique is mainly related to its higher validity and reliability (Rafipour, 2006).

Interviews are conducted to learn how the opinions of individual members of a community are formed, and to identify the process of which this formation takes place. By interviews information about an event or a situation would be also gathered to provide a ground for an analytical frame work as how the common perception of people involved is originated and developed, and perhaps how can be predicted future changes. (Quivy, 2009: 252)

Since one of the most recommended techniques for qualitative approach is an interview, the semi-structured interview is adopted for the applied operational section of this research. The questions have been designed in a flexible manner in which each individual respondent is given a chance to add personal information and interpretation of the inquiry to the data being gathered for further clarification.

The questions are mainly arranged on the ground of sociological theories on music. The interviewees were well informed about the nature of research and collaborated freely. They will be quoted directly as sources of information. Some questions however, have a more discovering nature and provide material for an explanatory analysis in order to understand the present status of popular music in Iran thus fulfilling the purpose of the thesis. The informants or the 'focus group' is selected among those individuals who are currently involved professionally and/or academically in popular music in Iran and have personal working experience in this field for several years.



## 1.8 Definition of Terms

**Culture:** The concept of culture, ascribed to society, is one notion most applied in sociology. Culture is described as a general phenomenon consisting of values shared by a group, norms that its members observe and material goods they produced (Schaefer, 1989: 63). Culture is developed to meet the group's needs, by joint activities known as "cultural universals". Among the items of these universal listed by anthropologist George Murdock, music is one human cultural activity that is practiced in almost all cultures (Ibid: 64).

**Popular Music:** Popular music is any kind of music that is within the reach of large group of people and is produced in commercial form (Vedadheer, 2011: 168). Popular music is also termed in opposition to classical and folklore music's to which the number of audience is much smaller, as the first is usually is produced for minority of elites and noble class and letter is mostly presented to a certain ethnic group, region and other small portion of society who follows their own folk ways, customs and mores (Ibid). Popular music, as music sociologist Simon Frith signifies is produced in commercial manner for the aim of market targeting and is more industry than art, has no place of origin with no goal of meeting any spiritual aesthetical desires (Schaefer, 2004: 53).

**Mass Tendency towards Music Consumption:** It is defined as the degree of desire, readiness, acknowledging, passion and action for listening or buying a musical product (Vedadheer, 2011: 181). Public tendency toward a piece of music comprises of three dimensions:

1. Cognical
2. Emotional
3. Actional

**Cognical** means the degree of knowledge of an individual concerning the kinds and styles of popular music, the land that it is produced (domestic and non-domestic), singer, lyrics and genre.

**Emotional** refers to the degree of an individual who has interest, anxiety and emotional desire for consuming a music commodity. The term is also contains the individual's positive evaluation and favouring the degree of enjoyment, psychological relaxation that he/she might receive by the music and family the readiness for spending money to consume the product.

**Actional** is termed to measure the time a consumer might spend, the number of his/her attendances to the places in which the product is sold (concerts, music shops, cables and many other places). In other words the degree of habit that a consumer has for the consumption of the goods for example purchasing CDs, tapes and music private cables (Vedadheer, 2011).

It is important to mention here that, some sub-cultures or social groups might have greater tendency towards consumption of certain cultural products. Some socio culture researches conducted by music sociologists indicate that tendency of younger generation for popular music is greater than older generation in Iran (Mirzaei et al, 2010: 141–158; Ghasemi and Mirzaei, 2006: 98–122).

**Cultural Capital:** Is defined as centralized accumulated of all cultural goods. It is also referred to the ability and capacity of an individual to gain such goods. The term is also applied to signify the consciousness of an individual of the existence and availability of these goods (Bourdieu, 2001: 139). Such commodities are in the form of material objects that are transferable (Sharepour, 2002: 137). According to Bourdieu the influencing factors for determining higher and lower cultural capital in a society are family, formal education and occupational status (Rouh al-Amini, 2004: 38, 101).

**Socio-economic status (SES):** Is defined as the economic condition of one individual in his/her group or the economic condition of one group in comparison to other groups in the society (Moghaddas, 1995: 67).

**Attitude:** Is a consistent system of thought containing one cognitive element, one emotional element and one action tendency element (Freedman, 1970, Karimi, 2005: 295).

**Taste:** In sociological meaning is referred to a type of capacity for a series of objects and activities to them, weather in the form of material of symbolic. It is also defined as a collection of differentiating preferences (Bourdieu, 1984: 173).

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