

## POLITICAL HISTORY AND STYLISTIC TRANSFORMATION OF MUSICAL CULTURE: MECHANISMS OF INFLUENCE AND MEDIATION

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### Summary

This article examines political history as a formative factor in the stylistic transformation of musical culture, emphasizing mechanisms of influence and mediation rather than direct political determination. Musical style is approached as a culturally embedded and historically situated phenomenon shaped by political regimes, ideological configurations, and institutional frameworks. Drawing on cultural theory and interdisciplinary analysis, the study challenges the notion of stylistic autonomy by demonstrating how political processes restructure cultural fields, redefine aesthetic priorities, and influence the conditions of stylistic legitimacy.

The research adopts a cultural-analytical methodology integrating concepts of mediation, cultural hegemony, symbolic power, and institutional regulation. Political history is interpreted not as a causal force acting upon music but as a structured environment within which stylistic norms are produced, stabilized, and transformed. Particular attention is paid to the role of institutions, education, cultural policy, and critical discourse as mediating structures translating political configurations into aesthetic conventions.

The article argues that stylistic transformation in musical culture represents an adaptive cultural process responding to historical ruptures and shifts in power relations. This perspective allows for a more nuanced understanding of musical style as a dynamic cultural formation and outlines directions for further research into comparative historical and cross-cultural contexts.

**Key words:** musical style; cultural mediation; political regimes; ideological context; cultural institutions; historical transformation; power relations.

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### 1. Introduction

The relationship between political history and the stylistic evolution of musical culture has long been acknowledged, yet it is still frequently treated in a fragmented or illustrative manner. Musical styles are often described as autonomous aesthetic phenomena, while political processes are relegated to the role of an external background. Such an approach obscures the mechanisms through which historical ruptures, political regimes, and ideological transformations actively participate in the formation, modification, or disappearance of stylistic paradigms.

As a result, the complex interdependence between musical culture and political history remains theoretically underexplored.

Recent developments in cultural theory have challenged the notion of artistic autonomy by emphasizing mediation, institutional frameworks, and power relations as constitutive factors of cultural forms. From this perspective, style emerges not as an internally self-sufficient category but as a historically situated mode of cultural expression shaped by social, ideological, and political conditions (*Williams, 1977; Eagleton, 2000*). Political history, therefore, should not be understood as a direct causal force acting upon music, but rather as a structured environment that defines the limits of stylistic intelligibility, legitimacy, and symbolic value.

The relevance of this problem becomes particularly evident in periods of radical historical transformation. Revolutions, regime changes, ideological reorientations, and processes of decolonization or centralization alter not only political institutions but also cultural hierarchies, systems of patronage, and modes of artistic production. These shifts affect the cultural field within which musical styles are produced, circulated, and evaluated (*Bourdieu, 1993*). Consequently, stylistic change may be interpreted as a response to transformations in cultural power relations rather than as a purely immanent artistic development.

This article aims to conceptualize political history as a formative factor in the stylistic transformation of musical culture by identifying the mechanisms of influence and mediation through which political processes interact with musical forms. The objective is to demonstrate the inseparability and reciprocal interaction of political history and musical style, avoiding both deterministic reductionism and purely descriptive parallels. The study focuses on how political regimes and ideological configurations shape cultural norms, redefine aesthetic priorities, and restructure the symbolic functions of musical style.

Methodologically, the research is grounded in an interdisciplinary cultural-analytical approach that integrates concepts from cultural theory, political history, and musicology. The analysis draws on the notions of mediation and cultural hegemony (*Williams, 1977; Gramsci, 1971*), the theory of cultural fields and symbolic power (*Bourdieu, 1993*), and the understanding of power as a productive and discursive force (*Foucault, 1980*). Historical interpretation is employed not to reconstruct political events as such, but to examine their cultural implications for stylistic norms and transformations within musical practice.

The logic of the presentation proceeds from a general theoretical framework toward the analysis of political and ideological mechanisms that condition stylistic change. Rather than proposing universal stylistic laws, the article emphasizes historically contingent configurations in which musical styles function as adaptive cultural systems. Such an approach allows musical culture to be viewed as a dynamic space where political history is refracted, negotiated, and symbolically articulated, thereby revealing the deeper cultural logic underlying stylistic transformation.

## 2. Political Regimes and Stylistic Transformation

Political regimes influence musical culture not through direct prescriptions alone, but through the reconfiguration of cultural environments in which stylistic norms are formed and stabilized. Changes in political power alter institutional structures, systems of patronage, educational models, and symbolic hierarchies, thereby reshaping the conditions under which musical styles emerge and function. In this sense, political history operates as a structuring force that redefines the cultural field rather than as an external determinant imposed upon artistic practice.

Periods of political consolidation or ideological mobilization tend to promote stylistic coherence and normative aesthetics. Centralized regimes often favor styles that embody clarity, stability, and symbolic legibility, as such qualities facilitate cultural communication and ideological representation. Conversely, moments of political crisis or transition frequently coincide with stylistic fragmentation, hybridity, and experimentation. These stylistic shifts should not be interpreted as spontaneous artistic reactions but as culturally mediated responses to altered power relations and expectations within the cultural field (*Bourdieu, 1993*).

The role of ideology is particularly significant in shaping stylistic orientations. Ideological frameworks function as interpretative matrices that assign value to certain aesthetic forms while marginalizing others. Through education, criticism, and institutional endorsement, ideologies contribute to the normalization of specific stylistic models and to the exclusion of alternative expressive strategies. Cultural hegemony, in this context, is maintained not through overt coercion but through the internalization of stylistic norms that appear natural or historically inevitable (*Gramsci, 1971*).

Historical examples demonstrate that stylistic transformation often follows shifts in political legitimacy rather than changes in artistic technique alone. The emergence or decline of certain musical styles frequently corresponds to redefinitions of cultural authority and social identity. As political narratives evolve, musical styles are reinterpreted, recontextualized, or symbolically reassigned to new ideological functions. This process underscores the mediated nature of stylistic change, where political meanings are translated into cultural forms rather than directly encoded within them (*Williams, 1977*).

Importantly, political influence on musical style is rarely uniform or monolithic. Different segments of the cultural field may respond divergently to the same political conditions, producing parallel or competing stylistic tendencies. Such plurality reflects the internal dynamics of cultural production, where artists negotiate institutional constraints, audience expectations, and symbolic capital. Political history thus provides a framework of possibilities and limitations within which stylistic choices acquire meaning and social relevance.

By situating musical style within the broader context of political regimes and ideological configurations, it becomes possible to move beyond simplistic oppositions between artistic autonomy and political control. Style appears instead as a historically contingent cultural formation, shaped by ongoing interactions between power structures, institutional practices, and creative agency. This perspective allows for a more nuanced understanding of stylistic transformation as a process of cultural adaptation and symbolic mediation rather than as a linear or deterministic outcome of political change.

### 3. Mediation, Institutions, and Cultural Policy

The influence of political history on musical style becomes most evident through mechanisms of mediation rather than through direct intervention. Mediation operates at the level of cultural institutions, educational systems, aesthetic discourses, and practices of legitimation that translate political priorities into stylistic norms. Through these mechanisms, political power is refracted into cultural forms, shaping stylistic tendencies without prescribing them explicitly (*Williams, 1977*).

Cultural institutions play a central role in this process by regulating access to resources, visibility, and symbolic recognition. Conservatories, academies, concert organizations, and publishing structures function as intermediaries between political authority and artistic practice. By establishing curricula, repertory canons, and evaluative criteria, these institutions contribute

to the stabilization of particular stylistic models while marginalizing others. Such institutional mediation reinforces the perception of stylistic norms as professionally necessary rather than ideologically conditioned (*Bourdieu, 1993*).

Cultural policy further amplifies this mediating function by framing artistic production within broader narratives of national identity, historical continuity, or ideological renewal. Policies of support, funding, and recognition do not simply encourage artistic activity but implicitly define the stylistic forms deemed culturally valuable or socially relevant. In this context, musical styles acquire political significance not through explicit messaging but through their alignment with dominant cultural narratives and symbolic expectations (*Assmann, 2011*).

Educational systems constitute another crucial site of stylistic mediation. Pedagogical models transmit not only technical skills but also aesthetic hierarchies and interpretative frameworks that shape stylistic perception. Through education, stylistic preferences become embedded in professional habitus, guiding creative choices and evaluative judgments. This process illustrates how political and ideological priorities are internalized at the level of artistic consciousness, transforming external power structures into seemingly autonomous stylistic conventions (*Gramsci, 1971; Foucault, 1980*).

Mediation also operates through critical discourse and historiography, which retrospectively organize stylistic developments into coherent narratives. By privileging certain styles as representative of historical progress or cultural authenticity, scholarly and critical discourses reinforce established hierarchies and legitimize specific stylistic trajectories. These narratives often reflect broader political imaginaries that structure collective memory and cultural identity (*Assmann, 2011; Said, 1993*).

Understanding stylistic transformation as a mediated process allows for a more precise articulation of the relationship between political history and musical culture. Rather than reducing style to a passive reflection of political events, this perspective emphasizes the active role of institutions and discourses in shaping stylistic meaning. Musical styles thus emerge as adaptive cultural formations, continuously negotiated within a network of mediating structures that connect political history with artistic practice.

#### 4. Conclusions

The analysis conducted in this article allows political history to be reconsidered as a formative and mediating factor in the stylistic transformation of musical culture. Rather than functioning as an external or deterministic force, political processes shape the cultural conditions within which musical styles acquire meaning, legitimacy, and social relevance. Stylistic change thus appears not as an autonomous artistic evolution but as a culturally embedded process conditioned by historical ruptures, ideological reconfigurations, and institutional frameworks.

One of the key conclusions of the study is that musical style operates as an adaptive cultural system. Political regimes and historical transformations redefine symbolic priorities, cultural hierarchies, and modes of artistic evaluation, thereby influencing stylistic orientations indirectly. These influences are mediated through institutions, education, cultural policy, and critical discourse, which translate political configurations into aesthetic norms and professional standards. As a result, stylistic coherence or fragmentation often reflects broader shifts in cultural power relations rather than purely internal musical developments.

The concept of mediation proves essential for understanding the relationship between political history and musical style. Mediation explains how political meanings are refracted

into cultural forms without being directly inscribed in artistic material. Through this lens, style emerges as a site of negotiation where creative agency interacts with institutional constraints and ideological expectations. This perspective avoids reductive interpretations that either overstate political control or insist on complete artistic autonomy.

Another important finding concerns the role of institutions and education in stabilizing stylistic paradigms. By shaping professional habitus and aesthetic hierarchies, institutional structures contribute to the naturalization of historically contingent stylistic norms. These norms often persist beyond the political regimes that initially supported them, becoming part of long-term cultural memory and stylistic tradition. Such continuity underscores the delayed and cumulative nature of political influence on musical culture.

The study also demonstrates that stylistic transformation is rarely uniform. Within the same political context, multiple stylistic tendencies may coexist, reflecting internal dynamics of the cultural field and divergent strategies of symbolic positioning. This plurality highlights the importance of examining stylistic change as a relational process rather than as a linear response to political events. Musical styles should therefore be analyzed in terms of their cultural functions and mediating roles within specific historical configurations.

In conclusion, viewing political history as a structuring environment for stylistic transformation enables a more nuanced and culturally grounded understanding of musical change. This approach opens perspectives for further research into comparative historical contexts, cross-cultural stylistic interactions, and the role of contemporary cultural policy in shaping emerging musical styles. Future studies may extend this framework by exploring how global political processes and transnational cultural networks reconfigure the mechanisms of stylistic mediation in modern musical culture.

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