

## Experiencing Mediatization: The Legacy of the 1960s and 1970s

Alessandro Bratus, Università di Pavia

Massimo Locatelli, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano

Miguel Mera, City, University of London

### *Frames and Frameworks*

Pop music meets the media... The following issue is dedicated to a social and cultural phenomenon that we could call the “mediatization of pop music”.<sup>1</sup> With a particular focus on the 1960s and 1970s, it is our contention that these two decades significantly shaped our current mediatized culture both in its form and content. We hope to widen the notion of mediatization by highlighting a range of historical processes that have had phenomenological after-effects. The experiential prototypes that were developed during this pivotal period later became persistent paradigms.

Guiding much of our thinking has been the concepts of frames and frameworks. A frame delimits certain boundaries, but a framework can encompass and contain a variety of different frames. From a geographical point of view, our framework is a European one, but that is by no means a simple or consistent boundary. In the contemporary context of the European Union, for example, the language of Framework Agreements is often used to articulate social dialogue and outline general, shared principles. In essence, this is way of thinking about the preservation of individual, national, or local identities, while also recognising pan-European commonality within the shared framework. With that in mind, the question can thus become: in what ways do the various manifestations of mediatized popular music during the period speak to each other?

In the 1960s, almost all European countries both in the East and in the West (with the notable exception of the United Kingdom, and a late straggler

<sup>1</sup> ‘Mediatization theory suggests that growing media authority and the integration of media into nearly all cultural practices evoke cultural change’, and vice versa that ‘cultural practices in other domains become dependent on the media and their various affordances’. Stig Hjarvard and Line Nybro Peterson, ‘Mediatization and Cultural Change’, *MedieKultur*, 29:54 (2013), 1–7 (p. 2). Cfr. also Benjamin Krämer, ‘The Mediatization of Music as the Emergence and Transformation of Institutions: A Synthesis’, *International Journal of Communication*, 5 (2011), 471–91, and Tobias Pontara and Ulrik Volgsten, ‘Musicalization and Mediatization’, in *Dynamics of Mediatization: Institutional Change and Everyday Transformations*, ed. by Olivier Driessens, Göran Bolin, Andreas Hepp and Stig Hjarvard (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017), pp. 247–70.

in Greece) had re-structured their mediascapes around state owned television, which subsequently shaped their public spheres and political debate. At the same time, music grew to a mature, international industry through the diffusion of 45 and 33 rpm records, jukeboxes and high-fidelity technology. The diffusion of cassette which peaked at the end of the 1970s only confirmed that pop music had become a rival, dominant form of cultural consumption: often a generational one, made of garage rock, jukeboxes and milky bars, and teenagers drawing sonic boundaries around their bedrooms and their lives. Interestingly enough, public broadcasters were able to cooperate on a wider basis (*e.g.* the European Broadcasting Union and the Eurovision project) through entertainment formats, like sports, game shows, and especially music shows (the Eurovision Song Contest), shaping an inclusive European framework. At the same time, at the beginning of the 1980s, scholars in cultural studies like Phil Cohen noticed that ‘traditional forms of youth organisation, of whatever tendency’,<sup>2</sup> were no longer appropriate vehicles of political and social education. Even in the perceptions of left-leaning political spectra, in the western arena, the rise of youth movements, following the 1968 events, substituted working class consciousness as the ultimate horizon of experience. Since then, instead of political or confessional organizations, it was popular media and music that offered the contact point between public and private spheres, between the personal and the political, and this shift should be reconsidered as a focal trope in modern culture.

The two decades, indeed, are well known to be fundamental in many respects: economic growth was significantly accompanied in western countries by a lowering of the amount of weekly working hours, giving rise to the very notions of leisure time, of commodity and of disposable income.<sup>3</sup> The boost in the birth rate in the most industrialized countries until the first half of the 1960s involved a structural change in the generational composition of the population, leading to an increase in the share of young people from the end of the decade and throughout the 1970s and leading to an explosive mixture of young people and free time.<sup>4</sup> On one side, the so-called modern economic growth based on gross domestic product indexes and the marketing of goods and commodities,<sup>5</sup> constituted a common economic framework. On the other

<sup>2</sup> Phil Cohen, ‘Losing the Generation Game’, in *Rethinking the Youth Question* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), pp. 250–71 (p. 251) (first publ. in James Curran, *The Future of the Left*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984).

<sup>3</sup> The standard reference in economic literature is to: Gary S. Becker, ‘A Theory of the Allocation of Time’, in *Economic Journal*, 75.299 (1965), 493–517. Countries like Germany did not significantly add spare time in the following decades (340 min. per working day in 1964, 449 in 1980, 470 in 2000, while media consumption has contextually doubled, from 116 min. a day in 1964 to 220 in 2000, at the dawn of the digital era). Cfr. Wolfgang Mühl-Benninghaus and Mike Friedrichsen, *Geschichte der Medienökonomie* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2012), p. 192.

<sup>4</sup> The share collapsed at the beginning of the 1980s. See, for instance, the data analysis of the Italian Institute of Statistics: Istat, ‘Sessant’anni di Europa’, <<https://www.istat.it/60annidieuropa/popolazione.html>> [accessed 28 December 2018].

<sup>5</sup> Gianni Toniolo, *L’Italia e l’economia mondiale. Dall’Unità a oggi* (Venice: Marsilio, 2013), p.

side, the mediatization process progressed across Europe at different speeds. As countries with low industrialization rates were involved, in the long term, in a more or less successful catch-up process with the major economies (communist countries, for instance, moved towards a wannabe competitive state economy, until they ran into bankruptcy in the 1980s), we can assume that the global and the local developed intertwined relationships.

Nevertheless, the national dimensions of the process of mediatization cannot be underestimated. The analytic frames of local public discourses, in television and the press, require a political evaluation with different, interacting perspectives: 1) a classical dialectical level, in which totalitarian regimes are not alone in revealing areas of conflicts between dominant institutions (*e.g.* censorship in broadcasting) and popular or youth sub- or counter-cultures (*e.g.* rock music in eastern countries); 2) a tactical level, where media institutions negotiate with pop cultural instances, using the freshness, or we should say, the naiveté of youth icons and sounds as communication or marketing work tools (that is the case of many popular film and television genres, where the rebellious youth narrative, through happy endings or romantic plot-points, became a conservative star vehicle propagating intergenerational dialogue); 3) an institutional level, which channels pop music in specific formats and genres, mostly festivals and pop music magazines, with the Eurovision Song Contest at the “highest” level; 4) a cultural-political sphere, where popular culture, music and media are finally involved, or even interfere, in the shaping of national or local identities, or any other imagined community. Miguel Mera, in his contribution, follows this trajectory right to its political consequences in the present time: he explores varied interrelationships in the British film productions of the 1960s and 1970s through three general attitudes — ‘Discovering Europe’, ‘Defeating Europe’, and ‘Reappraising Home’ — in order to demonstrate that the decision to leave the EU in 2016 ‘was not a flash in the pan’, but rather a journey reflecting conflicted notions of freedom and accountability.

### *Negotiating Identities*

Mediatization is, of course, a heavily contested term. Couldry and Hepp argue that it has emerged as ‘the most likely “winner” in a race between many terms, all cumbersome or ambiguous to varying degrees’.<sup>6</sup> They also highlight the difference between “mediation” and “mediatization”. The latter is a concept

8. The standard reference in economic history is to: Simon Kuznets, *Modern Economic Growth. Rate, Structure and Spread* (New Haven and London: Yale Press, 1966). It needs to be said that the 1973 global economic crisis changed the social and demographic trends, but not the processes of increasing mediatization of our habits.

<sup>6</sup> Nick Couldry and Andreas Hepp, ‘Conceptualizing Mediatization: Contexts, Traditions, Arguments’, *Communication Theory*, 23.3 (2013), 191–202 (p. 191).

used to understand the changes in media and communications as well as changes in culture and society, and this differs from “mediation” which refers to the process of communication in general, that is, how meaning is constructed. “Mediatization”, then, is explicitly about change and focuses on the role of particular media in the processes of sociocultural evolution. Couldry and Hepp also point to two main research streams that have shaped the development of mediatization as an analytical term: the institutionalist and the socially constructivist. The first tradition places the media and social institutions at a macro level, governed by their own rules. Here, mediatization emphasizes an adaptation to institutionalized rules. The second strand refers to the process of a negotiated construction of sociocultural reality and analyses media at various levels within that process. Significantly, what this body of research points to is an understanding of media “consequences” beyond simple media “effects”. There is a subtle interplay that works across frames and within frameworks.

As we have already suggested, these concepts are inextricably linked to the challenging question of identity. There is very little research on European identity that does not emphasize the vagueness of the term and its problematic uses. However, the negotiation of a plurality of identities is witnessed throughout the 1960s and 1970s as popular culture becomes increasingly compartmentalized according to genre, age, or social status. In terms of media aggregation, the identification of communities, especially among the young, became based increasingly on public participation (whether political or cultural) which served as concrete manifestation of lifestyles that moved gradually away from traditional cultural affiliations towards a broader, more transnational context. The more overtly political dimensions of the media output of the period appeared, with a particular emphasis on the modes of popularization of the countercultural and avant-garde trends typical of the era, foreshadowing their entry into the cultural mainstream. The search for and assertion of a number of different forms of identity through popular music and the media can, therefore, highlight local, countercultural, political, and generational issues within national contexts and can provide new ways to read the European space within those decades. The comparison between national perspectives can also usefully signal how the construction of a mainstream language is not simply a matter of “cultural imperialism”, nor is local identity simply an opposition to a dominant, mainstream other. Indeed, there are often subtle identity shifts between artists, styles, and mediatized musical approaches. Spanish musical cinema in these decades could serve well as a case in point. Its history highlights the inevitable mediatized consequences of living under a dictatorship, in particular the notion of *desarrollismo* (developmentalism) which promoted a specific form of “modernity” through the mass media. Spanish music was transformed to serve Francoist political interests with popular songs and the images of pop bands used as symbols of national modernity. But foreign modern musical influences too, mostly from Italy and France, came into play and challenge the assumption that the Franco regime censored Anglo-American popular music genres. In fact,

the presence of numerous foreign singers, genres, and fashion was continuous during the late 1950s and 1960s.

An idea that travels across different countries and cultural contexts in these decades is the frame of opposition, that can be seen replicated to an unprecedented extent in the realm of popular culture, taking different shapes and forms. Such an oppositional, confrontational attitude went hand in hand with a relativization, in practice if not in principle, of the boundaries between “high” and “low” culture. The increasing commercial potential of the latter helped to change the balance of power between industrial apparatuses devoted to their production and public recognition: ‘Comparative and historical definitions of high culture lead us toward situations in which, by recognizing the existence of many centres of meaning and value, and by further recognizing the dynamic processes of selection, formation and interaction we can envisage precise kinds of study and work.’<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, the relative positioning of what are identified as high- or low-brow cultural objects and practices reveals that the cultural discourses from different social groups may vary, according to the need of each cultural context in reply to the nascent paradigm of globalization, as an ‘on-going process of the formation of worldwide social relations’.<sup>8</sup> The conscience of a wider environment in which local and national politics and culture are situated created sets of tensions that required the negotiation of the most urgent issues at the local level. At the same time, the contrast between opposed social or cultural stances served to arrange such issues within the polarization of endogen and hexogen forces that emerged in public discourses and confrontations during the 1960s and the 1970s.

The frame of opposition acquires a central relevance in Ewa Mazierska’s essay on Polish rock, seen through the lens of the cinematic appearances of a prominent popular music performer, Czesław Niemen. In these films the association — typical of most western national cultures — of genres of youth music with countercultural and generational conflict is jeopardized by the connection with an idea of authenticity rooted in traditional, folk culture, as well as by the link to the Romantic legacy of Polish art music heritage. This has the effect of “neutering” — as the author termed the process — the most dangerous and potentially disruptive aspects of the oppositional cultures revolving around popular music of the time. Here the gap between “high” and “low” culture, though not resolved, is embedded in a larger-than-life media character capable of connecting different aspects of the national culture, and it bridges the gap between the past and the present by positing an uninterrupted continuity.

The role of folk culture in these contexts can be read in terms that have been recently characterized by Jean Hogarty as a ‘structure of feeling’ that is manifested

<sup>7</sup> Raymond Williams, ‘On High and Popular Culture’, *The New Republic*, 22 November 1974. Available online at <<https://newrepublic.com/article/79269/high-and-popular-culture>> [accessed 2 January 2019].

<sup>8</sup> Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *Globalization and Culture: Global Mélange* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), p. 71.

in a 'retro culture', where people are 'defined by their disillusionment with contemporary popular music and their sense of being haunted by popular music(s) past'.<sup>9</sup> In her book such a quality is presented as typical of the digital era thanks to the connection younger fans have with the music of the previous generation, whereas for the latter the music of preceding decades was the music of their time and youth. However, the widespread discourse on rock's authenticity inherited from the folk community,<sup>10</sup> as well as the opposition between commercial pop music and the "truthful" rock practice of music making, indicates the continuing presence of an oppositional frame in the process of "othering" the popular music of the Anglophone mainstream in respect to the national production of Continental European countries. Another similarity emerges when considering the different modes in which the live show is presented in each media and national context: the divide between the mediated and the un-mediated not only insists on different conceptual coordinates, but also varies according to the media on which it is presented, depending on the different degrees of cultural and economic capital that their modes of production imply. Despite their differences, what is consistent across all these case studies is a frame of opposition that does not only affect the narrative or the underlying values of popular culture but is also reflected in the modes in which the musical or audiovisual products organize their content in terms of visual and aural perception. If the case of Mazierska's "neutering" of Polish rock emphasizes the institutionalist view of mediatization processes, other essays in this issue bring in the constructionist perspective to define the cultural agenda of the media relationship with pop.

### *Connecting Experiences*

As mentioned earlier, it is important to understand the process of mediatization not only as described in communication theories, but also as a cultural practice related to changing personal experiential spaces and their representation in popular media. A phenomenology of contemporary, mediatized experience involving audiovisual media and the interrelationship between sound and the image, music and film, popular productions, reproduction technologies and the spaces we live in have by now only scarcely and tentatively been examined.<sup>11</sup>

In the same decades we refer to, in fact, new experiential models were elaborated and proposed to audiences, which would later be developed into recurring models of production, distribution and consumption. In particular,

<sup>9</sup> Jean Hogarty, *Popular Music and Retro Culture in the Digital Era* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), Kindle, ch. 5.

<sup>10</sup> Simon Frith, "The Magic That Can Set You Free": The Ideology of Folk and the Myth of the Rock Community', *Popular Music*, 1 (1981), 159–68.

<sup>11</sup> E.g. Vivian Sobchack, 'When the Ear Dreams: Dolby Digital and the Imagination of Sound', *Film Quarterly*, 58.4 (2005), 2–15.

what was later labelled “liveness” in the performance and media studies of the early 2000s in fact acquired a central relevance around these years. The term eventually became a common trope in academic literature after the foundational text by Philip Auslander,<sup>12</sup> stressing the relevance of the bodily presence of the popular music stars and the crucial reference to the moment of the live event in the aesthetics of popular music. Under the umbrella-term “authenticity”, value judgements strongly rely on the crucial position acquired by the ‘corporeal liveness’ of the performer,<sup>13</sup> thanks to the advancement in recording sound and audiovisual technology, together with the widespread opportunities for musicians, directors and producers to experiment with these new stylistic and technical devices. Even though the concept of liveness was first recognized and described as late as the end of the 1990s, the ideology of authenticity — which puts at the core of media consumption the mutual connection and the feedback loop between the performance and the record — was part and parcel of the incorporation of these values in the writings of former underground press, self-appointed journalists and critics within the institutional framework of so-called “rock culture” in Anglophone countries.<sup>14</sup> As Allan Moore has convincingly argued, authenticity is ascribed as a consequence of the negotiation between the characteristics of media texts and the expectations of the audience related to specific styles and genres;<sup>15</sup> the experiential and experimental communicative models popular culture proposed in these years were instrumental in the expression of the newness of modern, contemporary trends.

In the wake of the 1968 political and aesthetical turmoil, popular culture across Europe helped affirm the ‘very idea that popular music cannot be mere entertainment, and could involve the entertaining of potential societies [...]. The political effects of 1968 may have been ephemeral, but the cultural effects were anything but’.<sup>16</sup> As demonstrated from various standpoints in this issue, the same long-term effect can be found not only in the British popular music Allan Moore had in mind. The moment of the live show in cinema and on record in Italy, the topic of the essay by Alessandro Bratus and Maurizio Corbella, is similarly concerned with the consideration of the profound effect the cultural change elaborated in the course of 1968, with contrasting ways to present a media culture either centred on “live-ness” or “live-less” aesthetics. The different ways in which the performance is portrayed highlight cultural tropes that belong

<sup>12</sup> Philip Auslander, *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999).

<sup>13</sup> Paul Sanden, *Liveness in Modern Music: Musicians, Technology, and the Perception of Performance* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 38.

<sup>14</sup> Steve Jones, *Pop Music and the Press* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002); Alessandro Bratus, ‘Scene through the Press: Rock Music and Underground Papers in London, 1966–73’, *Twentieth-Century Music*, 8. 2 (2011), 227–52.

<sup>15</sup> Allan F. Moore, ‘Authenticity as Authentication’, *Popular Music*, 21.2 (2002), 209–23.

<sup>16</sup> Id., ‘British Rock: The Short “1968”, and the Long’, in *Music and Protest in 1968*, ed. by Beate Kutschke and Barley Norton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 170.

to the individual media and very specific temporal contexts, demonstrating a fundamental disparity in the degree of trustworthiness and credibility assigned to them within the national media culture. At large, cinema provided an earlier critical look at the construction of liveness in record production, which professed a more naïve and transparent relationship with the event as if it was captured by the microphones in a studio environment. In the same vein, the seriousness of purposes associated with rock music is presented in Anja Lindelof's account of the presence of popular music performance on Danish television, presented in ways that were meant to escape the standard narrative related to rock culture in Anglophone countries and to describe the inner complexities of contemporary trends. The formal choices employed in these cases promoted the televisual frame as a faithful witness of the event, relying on the widespread trope of the capturing devices as objective and direct forms of restitution for the live event.<sup>17</sup> Television here performs a witnessing task similar to that of the production of live albums in Italy, but within a different communicative frame that encourages producers to take chances with an experimental language in which extreme close-up and reaction shots are key — as in the cases pertaining to Italian cinema after 1968 and some Spanish television programmes. Again, the idea of migration of expressive tropes across countries and media can be proposed as one of the common trends connecting the articles of this issue, and it foreshadows a number of paths that can lead to future comparative and interdisciplinary research endeavours.

Otherwise, it is possible to work in the light of the information that has emerged in the recent inter-disciplinary debate surrounding the detailed, chronological redefinition of the relationship between the different threads in the production chain of the audiovisual media industry and the audience. The field of popular music production for the record industry and the media may be understood as the entry step in the mediatization of cultural practices, which meant above all a new type of audience experience that was made possible through the development of new technological environments for sound and audiovisual media (noise-reduction, stereophony etc.), leading to different experiences of spatiality. Massimo Locatelli goes back to the sensuous turn in public debates and the social sciences of the time, connecting it precisely to these social technological improvements. Following Frances Dyson's approach to contemporary new media as accumulation of auditive technologies of the past, Locatelli shows how the 1970s transformed film sounds into 'almost palpable envelopments' that were ready to be embraced by later, immersive and virtual, technological experiences.<sup>18</sup> The late work of Rainer Werner Fassbinder offers an exemplary case study of the tension between, on the one hand, the radical political instances of the author and the critical tradition in the use of music score in German films, and on the other, a desperate need for a lively, bodily

<sup>17</sup> John D. Peters, 'Witnessing', *Media, Culture & Society*, 23.6 (2001), 716–23.

<sup>18</sup> Frances Dyson, *Sounding New Media: Immersion and Embodiment in the Arts and Culture* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2009), p. 3.



communication and a vibrating, passionate use of audio tracks. This ultimately reached a balance in popular productions like the BRD-trilogy and the television series *Berlin-Alexanderplatz* (WDR, 1980), which helped to move the wider audience of popular media into the future world of intensive and emotionalized media spatialities.

In conclusion, we were in search of a common way to define and compare the notion of “pop” in European countries. This goal is far from being achieved. National identity stands in all case studies as the projection horizon of cultural instances and industries. Americanism or Anglophilia, as well as pro- or anti-Europeanism, emerge as the result of different and localized forms of negotiation, and bi-lateral exchanges are revealed to be significant too. Many countries also rely on regional folkloric traditions. Germany had notably defined a national way to “sound” culture (technological and avant-gardist), communist countries added Cold War dilemmas to the already complex practices of cultural production and evaluation. Smaller countries like Denmark needed to import lots of cultural goods like music and TV shows from the English-speaking world, and thus became a sort of laboratory for the present, globalized world. Greece and Albania remained isolated and self-sufficient. Western Mediterranean countries — the area that in this issue has been less fully considered — seem, moreover, to have trusted more deeply in their own melodic traditions, counter-balancing English-language imports with the production of export goods, creating a Southern- or Romance European network which could be a next step for future research.

The following contributions address, nonetheless, a general, methodological instance: exploring different case studies, they show how the two poles of the mediatization process have been strongly tied together from the 1960s onwards. On one side the mediatization of politics, information, science, and of any field of knowledge had a great impact on cultural production in terms of content, forms, genres, styles and theoretical approaches. On the other side, cultural production has been in turn mediatized through a new technological network centred on television. This network or mediascape reflects and reshapes individual experience, influencing decisions and actions. We could schematically sketch out this overlapping in terms of a binary logic contrasting frameworks (institution, politics, media production and distribution) with frames (the different cultural practices of, say, counter-cultural music making, identity building, participation to or withdrawal from the European dream, liveness and authenticity, tourism as appropriation and tourism as encounter and discovery, immersive media design, the domestication of technologies and the mediatization of emotion). With that in mind, it is possible to approach some of the hard-to-handle categories to which we need to refer. In the last twenty years, for example, young people, who were recognized as social actors in the 1960s, have been revealed to be a more fluid and contradictory collective formation, demanding further attention towards generational, gendered, national, class, cultural, and life-style divisions. Such a nuanced notion of youth requires a depth that only case studies can address in their specificities. The same thing happened with the definition of

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“pop”: what was “popular music” (and film, or television) after the two decades we delve into? The conventional narrative tells us that the difference between high- and low-culture became blurred. The papers collected in this issue remind us that any blurring probably happened because of mediatization processes, that altered the frames and the frameworks of mainstream production. Every kind of sound (even avant-garde music or films) could then be re-used in film and television, and become popular. Popular film and television, at the other end of the spectrum, could become explicitly political, appearing counter-cultural, or targeting intellectual audiences using Top 40 music. Media experience began at that time to be defined much more by cross-media relationships and the usability of the piece of music, genre, style, and form, than by any textual content or structure. And this is how these two decades paved the way for the mediatized world we still live in.