Tracing musical tastes in Tehran: How urbanism selects its sound

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Abstract: Different research and theoretical approaches have been adopted in the study of music but not many have focused on the links between music and urbanism. Relying on the sociology of cultural consumption, this paper identifies different forms of urban living in Tehran by looking at the dominant Persian musical genres in urban spaces. The article categorises relationships amongst music, urban space and urbanism by employing a sociological conceptualisation at a micro level, anthropological investigations and spatial data. Generally, each major musical genre (i.e. traditional, modern/popular and fusion) mostly manifests itself in a specific urban space (i.e. teahouses, streets and coffee shops) within which a distinct form of urbanism (i.e. tea urbanism, everyday urbanism and coffee urbanism) is being practiced.

Subjects: Consumption; Social Class; Urban Cultures; Urban Sociology; Urban Sociology – Urban Studies Urban Studies

Keywords: musical genres; musical consumption; social class; cultural capital; spatial distribution; urban space; urbanism; Tehran

1. Introduction

Tracing musical trajectory in each society reveals how musical tastes have changed, and how this transformation has demonstrated itself in the social classes and spaces. Music, also, as a cultural commodity, shows social, cultural and economic dimensions of its consumers. Since sociologists investigate the reciprocal impacts of music and society, music could open up windows of opportunity for recognising different urban groups and their ways of living.

Reviewing the literature on musical sociology, however, shows that scholars have examined music from different perspectives. For example, there are deep investigations and rich literature on music...
and life course (Bennett & Taylor, 2012; Harrison & Ryan, 2010); youth and musical taste (Bennett, 1999; Bryson, 1996); music in the Internet age (Peterson & Ryan, 2004; Styvén, 2007); music and cultural capital (Gripsrud, Hovden, & Moe, 2011; Prior, 2011; Savage, 2006); and the place of music (Cohen, 1995; Hudson, 2006; Leyshon, Matless, & Revill, 1995). Thus far, very little attention has been paid to the role of music in urbanism, and few studies have attempted to answer why and how various musical genres emerge in different urban spaces; what the features of those urban spaces are that draw particular musical themes; and what the characteristics are of the audience of each urban space, which lead towards the attraction of a certain musical genre.

This paper aims to answer these questions in the context of the Persian society, as a society in transition with a high proportion of young residents as the main musical consumers and particularly in Tehran, the largest city and capital of Iran. In fact, Tehran provides a rather good opportunity for investigating different tastes and lifestyles. First, Tehran seems to be the main exporter and designer of Iran’s urbanism and urban lifestyles, serving as a role model for the rest of the country. Knowing this city better would simply lead towards the better of understanding the contemporary Persian society. Furthermore, there has been little sociological discussion about urbanism in Tehran whilst a considerable amount of literature has been published on other urban fields such as planning, design and management (Atash, 2007; Madanipour, 2006; Mazumdar, 2000). Moreover, like other cities, Tehran is a multilayered entity, occupied by different societies, some that are established and fully fledged whilst others are still growing. It seems that less attention has been paid to the growing societies, and the existing formal accounts fail to paint a clear picture of them. This paper, in this sense, could not only enrich the literature on the connections between music and urbanism but also provides an exciting opportunity to advance the understanding of Iran’s society.

This analysis, which is rooted in Bourdieusian concepts of consumption, social groups and their different types of capital (Bourdieu, 1984, 1989), will critically examine the relationships between the trajectory of Persian music (i.e. from traditional music through modern/popular towards fusion) and urban manifestation of each genre in society. The following sections include a brief methodology and literature review on urbanism and cultural consumption, followed by a discussion on the urban musical situation in Tehran. This paper additionally argues that pluralisation of life worlds (Giddens, 1991) and their associated contexts have filled important roles in the changing attitudes towards urbanism.

2. Data, methods and approach
To include only quantitative and qualitative methods falls short of the major approaches being used today in the social and human sciences (Creswell, 2003; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998, 2003) and mixed method approaches paint a clearer picture rather than either approach alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2006). Using a mixed method approach, this paper follows a research design based on the two major methods and data collection techniques: qualitative and quantitative. The aim is to attain an integrated research design and the operationalisation of key concepts in order to reflect on and analyse the links between urban manifestations of major Persian musical genres and different forms of urban living amongst music consumers.

In this regard, the pragmatic paradigm (Creswell, 2003; Guba & Lincoln, 2000; Morgan, 2007) applies to mixed methods research in which the researcher would be free to choose multiple epistemological positions, which can be used to address research questions. Simply put, the pragmatic
paradigm is about “what works” at the time (Davies, Nutley, & Smith, 2000). Qualitative research (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 1990), in this case, revolves around addressing questions surrounding the nature of the consumption of each musical genre amongst different Persian social groups (i.e. inductive, subjective and contextual) in different urban spaces, and, through this, different practices of urbanism. Meanwhile, quantitative research is concerned with the spatiality of the social relations, the urban distribution of each musical theme amongst the population and their spatial patterns (i.e. deductive, objective and generalising). Both the aims and the outputs are of quite a different nature, and it is this that can make their combined use powerful.

Taking these considerations into account, the purpose of this research engages with the inquiry of why the manifestation of each Persian musical genre in a specific urban space represents a distinct way of urban living. Consequently, supported by the pragmatic paradigm, the paper employs a sequential research design (Cameron, 2009; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2006). However, it is neither merely an exploratory design nor an explanatory one, and is in fact inclined to combine these two sequential orders. In other words, based on the “what works” narrative (Creswell, 2003; Davies et al., 2000), research sometimes is started with the quantitative approach and supports the empirical findings (explanatory sequential design) and sometimes vice versa (exploratory sequential approach). In this sense, the research will be conducted along the lines of an exploratory scope, but at the same time aims to provide explanations.

By the same token, an anthropological approach provides a more detailed understanding of the social significance of the contemporary musical consumption practices. In this respect, the qualitative data-set includes 90 hours of observation as well as 24 semi-structured, in-depth interviews conducted in traditional teahouses, in modern coffee shops and on streets in Tehran in July and August 2015. Moreover, in order to make an exhaustive data collection, the study has been pursued in different urban areas of the city (gradually shifting from the very northern parts to the very southern parts) to include a wide range of diversity in terms of social, cultural, but mostly economic types of capital amongst interviewees. The researcher has relied on both narrative accounts of respondents and his direct observations of their practices.

Furthermore, the quantitative data have been gathered from two sources. A set of secondary data, based on some sociocultural works on musical themes and social classes in Tehran conducted by some Persian sociologists, has been used to prove the empirical observations on urban manifestation of musical tastes in Tehran. In addition, as spatial patterns reflect social relations (Haining, 2003), the urban location of the registered teahouses and coffee shops has been extracted from the Tehran Municipality database. The speciality and concentration of consumption spaces significantly support the empirics. Together with other quantitative and qualitative data, the study follows a sociospatial approach in order to strengthen the presented arguments.

Using a combination of visual, verbal, spatial and textual semiotics, this paper leans on the two-level theorisation. This approach simply suggests the possible linkages amongst concepts that are related to each other at two levels of analysis (Goertz & Mahoney, 2005; Mahoney, 2012). Whilst the first level focuses on the central relations between concepts, the second level offers the relationships that would lead towards key result under study, but their impacts cannot be determined separately from their connection with the factors at the first level. In this light, at the basic level, the study sociologically analyses why and how each musical genre (i.e. traditional, modern/popular and fusion) mostly manifests in a specific urban space (i.e. teahouses, streets and coffee shops) which leads towards the secondary level and the identification of different ways of urban living (i.e. tea urbanism, everyday urbanism and coffee urbanism) and their major characteristics (Figure 1).

3. From musical consumption to ways of urban living

Urbanism is commonly defined as the study of cities; however, different disciplines focus on different urban dimensions. For instance, urban planners, designers and architects investigate forms and structures of cities. Historians may study historical patterns of urban changes. Sociologists also look
at urbanism from different angles. For them, urbanism may be about social interaction within the context of cities. In the heyday of the Chicago School, for example, Wirth (1938) writes that urbanism is a set of attitudes and ideas, and a constellation of personalities engaging in typical forms of collective behaviour. The emphasis on urban attitude is also visible in the works of other scholars such as Park, Burgess, and McKenzie (1968), for whom urbanism is also a state of mind, a body of customs, traditions, attitudes and sentiments, specifically linked to city dwelling.

In addition, urbanism as “the practical knowledge for urban living” (Glennie & Thrift, 1992, p. 427) mostly manifests itself in consumption skills. Castells (1977) also approaches urbanism in terms of collective consumption. It seems that the urban life and consumption have been folded together. Consumption, however, as a multifaceted concept which plays political, economic, social and cultural roles is mostly explicit in cities. As Jayne (2006) claims, cities, and places and spaces within them, are the sites in which consumerism has been spectacularly observed. It is in cities that such change has taken place in its most concentrated form. Consumption, in this regard, has almost always been part of urbanism.

Furthermore, according to Bourdieu (1984), consumption is not limited by the economy, but also by social and cultural types of capital. As a result, the concept of class habitus (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Warde, Martens, & Olsen, 1999), which is a combination of these kinds of capital, in the long term leads towards a particular taste and forms a distinctive pattern of consumption (Figure 2). Some scholars argue that once cultural capital is conceptualised as a chain of schemes that can be used to bargain social situations and interpersonal exchanges, tastes become an element of an individual's relational toolkit (DiMaggio, 1987; Fiske, 1987; Swidler, 1986). Therefore, tastes fill roles as both portable knowledge and a signifier of a person’s cultural preferences and allow individuals to distinguish themselves symbolically (Dijk, 2011) and to align with selected others (Fiske, 1987; Peterson, 2005).

A wide range of researchers, additionally, have considered musical taste as a type of cultural capital. Following Bourdieu, the two principles are that: (1) musical taste is the result of an individual’s location in the stratified social system and (2) that musical taste reinforces that position (Harrison & Ryan, 2010). Based on the first principle, tastes have roots in family socialisation, neighbourhood effect (Atkinson & Kintrea, 2001; Galster, 2012), friendship network contacts and educational experiences. The second premise is that taste manifests one's social position by representing whether they fit in with particular groups and social settings. In other words, musical taste helps display a way of signalling identity (Côté, 1996; Escalas, 2013; Featherstone, 1991, 2007; Giddens, 1991; Howard, 2000; Shields, 1992; Warde, 1994, 2002, 2005, 2014), group boundary (Clarke, Doel, & Housiaux, 2003; Lamont & Molnár, 2002; McCracken, 1988) and social network formation (Corrigan, 1997; Evans, Foxall, & Jamal, 2009; Lizardo, 2006; Peter & Olson, 2009).

In this sense, musical tastes as a distinct type of cultural capital (Savage, 2006) are indicators of different forms of mentality, lifestyle, identity and social groups. Consequently, it can be argued that urban social groups possessing similar tastes and lifestyles, and, in general, common habituses and consumption patterns would be frequenting similar urban spaces, practicing analogous social activities, and, through this, would be following corresponding ways of urban living.
Nonetheless, this study suggests that different forms of urbanism are highly visible in certain urban spaces. Accordingly, in this paper, “urban space” is conceptualised as a combination of three P’s: place, people and practice (Figure 3). Each urban space needs a publically accessible place within which people can practice some activities. Taking these P’s and the functions of urban space into consideration, it can be claimed that each of these elements has specific features and when these characteristics overlay and match, a dynamic urban space would be generated; conversely, if these elements mismatch, the generated space would probably be a problematic one.

Therefore, investigating and tracing musical tastes within urban spaces would be conducted within this definition framework and would lead towards identifying different social groups and different forms of urbanism. In the following sections, the author examines urban manifestations of non-live musical genres in Tehran in an attempt to demonstrate that three major forms of urban living, each with distinctive characteristics, can be recognised in Iran’s capital city.

4. Urban manifestation of Persian musical genres in Tehran

As Walks (2006) argues, the primary function of culture provided by Bourdieu is the creation of distinctions amongst social groups and classes. This is even true for consuming music as cultural consumption. In this regard, music is not just for leisure time and entertainment, but it is a means for showing lifestyle and (re)forming identity. In fact, individuals and groups reflect their distinction, identity and even social class by their musical consumption. In a narrower perspective, it can be claimed that the cultural capital of each social group directs them towards listening to particular musical genres; additionally, each musical theme, through its audiences, lands in a specific urban space.

For the purpose of the analysis, the study examines three major Persian musical genres: traditional, modern/popular and fusion. Needless to say, each genre has its own subdivisions; however, the focus here is on the major themes. Traditional genre as a long-established music has its own roots in history. Some researchers believe that this music dates even back to the pre-Islamic period (Akbari, 2011). Notwithstanding, musicologists generally agree that its prominent feature is spirituality, which makes it moral, local and conservative (Mirmontahaei, 2002), mostly in a plaintive tune for providing a mystic, nostalgic sense (Zonis, 1973), and plays by traditional musical instruments such as tar, daf, santur, kamancheh and ney (During, 2005).

Bashir and Sarvi Zargar (2008), conversely, state that modern/popular music, which was influenced by the West and appeared after the inauguration of the national radio in Tehran in 1939, has started to find its way into Persians’ everyday lives. Nettl (1972) and Samim, Ghasemi, and Fatemi (2012) also declare that Persian popular music is influenced by Western culture. The characteristics of this genre may be similar to its Western counterpart: global and dealing with everyday aspects of
life. It goes without saying that its instruments include modern/western ones such as piano, guitar, drum and violin. On the other hand, there is a new wave, young, eclectic, “glocal” musical type, which is known as fusion. This theme, as a combination of traditional and modern musical cultures, creates fresh sounds (Maghazei, 2014) for the Persian ears, which seems to have found specific audience.

It can be also argued that these major sounds have shaped a dialogue. From the Hegelian dialectic (Mueller, 1958), these musical types can be characterised into a three-step process of thesis, antithesis and synthesis, namely: a “thesis” (i.e. traditional music) would cause the creation of its “antithesis” (i.e. modern genre), and would eventually result in a “synthesis” (i.e. fusion theme) (Kaufmann, 1988). From this perspective, it can be interpreted that Iran as a transitional society in some abstract subjects such as music, but not in every dimension of the society, has been able to form a synthesis, escape from the tradition/modernity dichotomy and find its addressees amongst different social classes. But the question is who the audiences might be.

Some cultural sociologists such as Shakoori and Gholamzadeh Natanzi (2010) and Agha Ahmadi, Gholizadeh, and Mirmohammadi (2013) in their studies on musical habitus and consumption patterns in Tehran state that there are meaningful correlations between the place of residence, socio-economic capital, educational level and gender and musical genres. They claim that residents who are living in distinct parts of Tehran (Figure 4) have various socio-economic statuses, access varied facilities and amenities and possess different musical habitus and consumption patterns. For instance, their findings illustrate that people who live in the northern parts (i.e. elite/wealthy urbanites) tend to listen to Persian traditional and Western classical music (i.e. authentic/highbrow music); established middle classes (i.e. those who mostly live in the middle parts of the city) consume mostly rap and pop (i.e. genres that deal with and reflect societal problems), whilst the musical habitus of the working/lower classes who live in the southern districts is pop and Persian traditional music. Furthermore, they explain that women would be mostly interested in pop, rap and Western classical music, whilst men tend to be supporters of traditional and Western musical genres.

In another research, Razavi Tusi and Yahak's (2014) findings clarify that young people (between 20 and 35) in Tehran tend to listen to music more than other age groups. They also elucidate that there is a correlation between the educational level and the amount of time that Tehranians spend on music. The higher the educational level, the more hours the audience would listen to music.
These findings seem to be in harmony with Bourdieu’s concept of cultural capital, embodied dispositions, cultural goods and educational qualifications.

4.1. Traditional music, teahouse and tea urbanism

Anchored in the findings of the cultural sociologists’ works mentioned above as well as the empirical investigations, it can be interpreted that Tehranians belonging to the working/lower classes, with low economic capital, tend to be conservative and may be inclined to listen to traditional music. However, back to the definition of urban space, these social classes, with religious, conservative attitude, who live in the southern parts of the city with low cultural capital (people and place) and involved in the bazaar economy, or as Scott (2012) declares workshop economy, (practice) spend time in traditional, nostalgic consumption spaces to practice their lifestyles and reproduce their identity, shape their groups (Corrigan, 1997; McCracken, 1988; Warde, 1994, 2002), as well as to deliver their long-established culture (beliefs, morals and oral history) to the next generations. Backed up by the qualitative data gathered in the field, these well-matched P’s create an urban space known as a teahouse, which is highly attractive for the religious, conservative, working classes. This urban space also has its own specific sound, a religious, conservative, nostalgic sound: traditional music (Shaker Ardekani, 2015a, 2015b).

It has been claimed that the first teahouses appeared in Tehran approximately four centuries ago (Jackson & Lockhart, 1986); it has almost always been a place to serve bazaar (i.e. as a traditional urban trading complex) and provided a space for those who work in the bazaar. Since in the contemporary Tehran the majority of the citizens appear to be living in the southern half, teahouses are spatially located in the south (Figure 5), where the majority of customers belong to bazaar and working class. Almost every neighbourhood has its own teahouse as a gathering, third place (Oldenburg, 1999 [1989]) where local people can socialise (Shaker Ardekani, 2015a).

This place has its own culture, which is traditionally related to generosity, benevolence, charity and helping people in need. In this regard, a teahouse plays a role as a meeting place for perpetuating conventional and dominant social values. However, as Iran over a long course of time has always been a patriarchal society, teahouses were, and still are, male-dominated spaces. With their traditional architecture, traditional music, traditional painting, traditional cuisine, traditional smoke (hookah), tea as the only beverage and men as the only customers (Figure 6), teahouses...
characterise a traditional society. In fact, teahouses act as a magnet for almost everything that has something to do with history and tradition. Surprisingly, they serve as a school of thought which has deep, strong roots and conservatively tries to strengthen the societal values. In this light, traditional music with its specific characteristics fits in well with this consumption space. Simply put, the space and sound simply complement each other.

It can also be claimed that teahouses represent a specific way of living in the city, a subtle but distinct state of mind, customs, traditions, attitudes and sentiments (Park et al., 1968). In other words, tea urbanism like its urban manifestation space embraces a local, conservative, rooted-in-history mentality, ideology, lifestyle and identity (Shaker Ardekani, 2015a). Teahouse-goers through their particular styles of consumption, social behaviours, wearing style, speech and/or vocabulary repertoire, commitment to religion, and even their body (Turner, 2008) demonstrate a conservative society, and through this, a conservative urbanism (Shaker Ardekani, 2015b). For instance, a 55-year-old man says:

I always come here. I can see almost all of my friends here … my friends are also kinda like me; either retired like me or still working in their shops in the bazaar … they’ve been here for ages, local people know ‘em, respect ‘em, they’ve got good names, you know … they’re also devoted to the religion, they’re really really good guys … young people are also coming a lot, they’re the new generation [with laughter] and a little bit different from old folks like us; but they’re also good guys … as far as I know, they’ve got good, respectable, hardworking families … they’re working in bazaar, selling, buying, and stuff like that …

4.2. Modern music, street and everyday urbanism

In a recent research study focused on the popular music in Tehran, Samim (2013) declares that this musical genre in Iran has been heavily influenced by its Western counterpart and the growth of the modern/popular music in Iran follows the West. The high proportion of young people, the expansion of market economy and the growth of the media, the Internet and new forms of communication are some of the reasons (like in Western countries) for providing a social context for the acceptance, production, as well as the consumption of modern/popular music (Samim et al., 2012). Nevertheless, as Strinati (2004) argues, industrialisation and urbanisation are salient features of mass society and mass culture. Mass culture performs a popular culture, which is produced by the industrial techniques of mass production and marketed for profit to a mass public of consumers. In other words, it is a commercial culture, mass produced for a mass market that needs a mass space to be consumed. Source: Statistical Centre of Iran (2011).

However, because under a consumer culture, consumption becomes the main form of self-expression and the chief source of identity, this music can be called as a vehicle of cultural globalisation (Nijman, 1999). In this respect and in the Persian urban context, modern/popular music which deals with everyday life of mass culture, for manifestation in urban space, needs a shared, everyday, vast area (place) to be heard by individuals who are doing their everyday living (people and practice). In
In this sense, based on the three P’s, it seems that the proper urban public space for this musical genre is on the streets, a shared, public space where urbanites would be able to show themselves through their global tastes.

In another study, Samim and Ghasemi (2010) have claimed that there is a correlation between consuming modern/popular music and individuals’ aggressive behaviours. It can be interpreted, likewise, that urban aggressive behaviours are typically reflected on the streets—a mismatch of people, place and practice forms a challenging urban space. In this respect, one of these sociocultural phenomena, categorised as an urban aggressive behaviour, is the loud car subwoofering (Figure 7) committed mostly by young people while manoeuvring on the streets. However, these actions can be viewed differently; modern/popular musical genres have given young people an opportunity and the city has provided them a space to show their power (Foucault, 1980), even symbolically for a short period of time, to be seen by society, although this behaviour is labelled as social order disturbance, for the distinction process. In this respect, streets suddenly become a Foucauldian heterotopia and act as a space with several layers of meaning (Foucault, 1984).

Nevertheless, people’s everyday interpretations of this social phenomenon also reveal some illuminating points. They have accepted these sounds as part and parcel of urbanism. For example, a young girl on the street says:

This is not a new thing in Tehran [while laughing], these young guys and girls are almost everywhere, with loud music and manoeuvring on the streets ... from the northern parts of the city to the very south ... sometimes police comes and get ‘em but [with laughter] sometimes they’re lucky and can escape ... but these sounds are a part of the city life, just like the sound of police siren or ambulances ... honestly, if you want my opinion, I’d like ‘em, you know, they give a vibe and diversity to the city and streets. They’re young and full of energy and as long as they don’t hurt anyone I’m ok with it. But I, personally, like ‘em a lot.

Accordingly, it can be argued that the consumption of the popular music as an example of a mundane practice and streets as an everyday urban space open a window for observing an everyday urbanism. In this sense, as Featherstone (2007) suggests, people via their everyday urban practices such as the selection of clothes, speech, music, leisure, eating and drinking are indicating their taste and sense of style. But it also provides an informal, elusive, ephemeral situation for presenting a non-utopian, non-structuralist and a vibrant, authentic public realm (Chase, Crawford, & Kaliski, 2008; Kelbaugh, 2000, 2007). In other words, everyday urbanism seems to be an urban dialogue that shows how ordinary people and social groups informally respond to their everyday life. It is a set of common, momentary but repetitive urban actions which creates a lively urban setting.

4.3. Fusion music, coffee shop and coffee urbanism

It has been stated that elite and well-educated classes are interested in authentic music (Azad Armaki & Shalchi, 2005; Shakoori & Gholamzadeh Natanzi, 2010); furthermore, their tastes would lead them towards listening to Persian traditional as well as Western classical music. On the other hand, middle classes with high investment in their cultural capital, concerned with socio-economic
problems such as corruption, unemployment, poverty, crime, single-parent families, housing, homelessness, high inflation rate, prostitution and lack of personal freedoms listen to those types of music that reveal societal issues (rap and pop). Additionally, women suppressed by the long-established patriarchal society listen to rap (revealing social problems), pop (idealistic/romantic love) and Western classical music (relaxing genres). This new middle, creative class (people and practice), living in urban environments (place) which through the slight waves of globalisation and network society narrative, has, to some extent, experienced some characteristics of postmodernity (Castells, 1989; Florida, 2002; Harvey, 1990; Sassen, 1991; Scott, 2008, 2012), similar to its counterpart in the southern parts of Tehran, needs its idiosyncratic urban space.

Besides, as Lefebvre (1991) has already argued, groups and classes cannot constitute themselves, or recognise one another, as subjects unless they generate their own space. This class, the first urban generation after Iran’s 1979 revolution, less than two decades ago shaped its own space, namely coffee shops as the third place (Bookman, 2014; Oldenburg, 1999 [1989]) to practice their own values, to meet people with similar tastes (Lizardo, 2006), for identity maintenance, sustaining friendship networks, creating new networks and, moreover, to legitimise their interpretation of the world, life, leisure and social values (Shaker Ardekani, 2015a, 2015b). As a result, they require their own musical genre to fit in with their space, an elite/highbrow musical culture (Frank, 1998; Payne & Rae Barbera, 2013) as progressive as themselves and their claimed urban space.

Coffee shops are rather new urban spaces and less than two decades ago, they steadily emerged in Tehran. Since they are predominantly situated in the upper half of the city, the spatial distribution of coffee shops seems to be meaningful (Figure 8). Simply put, it could be interpreted that customers of coffee shops would likely have rather high economic capital. Although this claim holds a reasonable argument, and the qualitative investigations have also proven that the upper middle class frequents coffee shops more than other social classes, however, coffee shop-goers are of a particular type of urbanites: students, university staff, knowledge workers, urban professionals, yuppies, cool creative types and hipsters. They tend to be mostly young, well educated, with high investment in their sociocultural capital. Moreover, due to their progressive mentality, lifestyle, identify and/or ideology, they visibly differentiate themselves from others, especially tea society. For example, a young man defines his avant-garde culture:
Of course I don’t go to teahouses. I mean, why should I go there? There’s no place for me there. You know, people there are very different from me; they’re old, traditional. I can’t even go there with these clothes; I won’t go there with my girlfriend … if I go, people will look at me heavily. No, not at all, that’s not my place there … instead I’m really happy and comfortable here … of course it is more expensive but it’s worth it … I’d come here alone, by myself or with my friends, sitting, talking, smoking a cigarette or two, and we discuss about almost everything … from politics, philosophy, religion, mysticism, and theology to war in Middle East, grassroots movements, and personal freedoms … lots of people like me come here, you know. Honestly, I don’t think people like me could stand teahouses at all. I mean, the way of thinking and almost everything in teahouses are completely different from coffee shops. I’d prefer here …

They seem to clearly prefer new urban spaces to separate them from the conservative outside and monitoring eyes. For them, drinking coffee and frequenting coffee shops is a way for practicing new social behaviours. This urban category which shapes the majority of coffee consumers seems to be investing in their cultural capital. As young urbanites who are struggling to experience the world and to form a distinct self, lifestyle and identity, coffee shop youth prefer to try different social practices. The cherry-picked characteristics of coffee Tehranians as well as their searches for something new to satisfy their voracious cultural appetite have given them a particular lifestyle, a combination of local and global narratives, which has guided them towards an eclectic, “glocal” taste. Furthermore, the growth of the aesthetic reflexivity has also had important effects on the practices of aesthetic consumption amongst them (Charters, 2006).

Coffee shops, with their long lists of caffeinated beverages, (post)modern interior design, fusion and Western classical music, modern paintings and the presence of both genders (Figure 9), have been representing a new urban living—coffee urbanism—which stands, to some extent, against teahouses and represents a distinction between tradition/modernity, East/West and old/new. In other words, coffee shop-goers (i.e. the young, intellectual generation), who have the ability and courage to question the long-established sociocultural values, think and act differently from, and sometimes against, the mainstream beliefs of the society, have built a semi-public/semi-private space for themselves to practice and experience their own values, to change society with their critical, creative ideas as well as practical logic (Bourdieu, 1977), whilst their counterparts, teahouse-goers, effort to conservatively preserve it.

While a small fraction of this group would be working and has a rather established economic situation, the rest seems to be unemployed and getting money from their parents (as their allowance). Although they may have low investment in their economic capital, coffee shop people are accumulating cultural capital (Azad Armaki & Chavooshian, 2002; Jacobus, Keller, & Shuttleworth, 2013), and are building new urban selves, bodies (Evans & Lee, 2002; Featherstone, 1987, 1991, 2006, 2010; Featherstone, Hepworth, & Turner, 1991; Shilling, 2003, 2007; Turner, 2008), identities and new ways of urban living. They also, via their liberal, democratic thoughts, seem to be challenging long-established societal values (Bayat, 2013; Fazeli, 2011; Gramsci, 1971; Hall & Jefferson, 1993; Moaveni,
2007; Shaker Ardekani, 2015a, 2015b) and are pushing them towards a new direction. By and large, coffee shop people via a “stance of openness towards divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrasts rather than uniformity” (Hannerz, 1996, p. 103) not only illustrate a cosmopolitan lifestyle (Bookman, 2013; Nava, 2002; Nowicka & Rovisco, 2009) but also through their cultural omnivorosity (Peterson, 1992, 2005) are forming a new urban lifestyle (Binnie, Holloway, Millington, & Young, 2006).

5. Conclusion
This paper has argued that musical tastes depending on the cultural capital of the individuals are important for identity maintenance, self-expression, sustaining friendship networks, creating new networks and encouraging physical and social activity levels. It has also tried to explain that investigating the manifestation of different musical genres in the urban spaces would shed a distinct light on exploring different ways of urban living and societal changes as well. Furthermore, the literature review has indicated that there is a minor gap in urban cultural sociology and there are unanswered questions related to how different urban spaces attract different musical themes. In this respect, through shuttling back and forth amongst visual, verbal, spatial and textual data-sets, it has been discussed that in the urban context of Tehran, each type of the major musical themes has its specific features and each type of musical consumers has specific characteristics, the combination of which these two would lead towards the manifestation and representation of each musical genre in particular urban spaces, and, through that, illustrate an explicit urbanism (Table 1).

Conventional, traditional genre as a local, spiritual, religious and moral theme refers to the nostalgic, traditional, conservative urban spaces which in the case of Tehran have been exemplified as teahouses. Teahouse-goers, via their particular urban living, conservatively preserve the long-established, mainstream beliefs of the society; moreover, as Bourdieu conceptualises taste as cultural capital, they strive to reproduce their class-based identity by listening to this music and patronising teahouses.

Streets are not only a mass urban space for observing mass consumption, but also an arena for hearing modern/popular music as well as observing everyday urbanism. This type of music has global, mundane, everyday and non-religious content and acts as the antithesis of traditional music. In addition, this music is not just related to mass consumption; from a Foucauldian perspective, consumers of this music via loud car subwoofering are trying to symbolically show their power and distinguish themselves from others. From the perspective of the people on the streets, as the main interpreters of the urban scenes, subwoofering can be quite creative, which generates an elusive, ephemeral, spontaneous, vibrant and authentic everyday urbanism.

Finally, fusion as a new wave, young, eclectic, cherry-picked, “glocal” musical type has found its urban space. Coffee shops, as young, intellectual spaces within Tehran where their regulars are mostly university students, well educated, with high cultural capital as well as an eclectic, aesthetic lifestyle, demonstrate an elite culture. Fusion listeners, as the first generations after Iran’s revolution, who are trying to differentiate themselves morally, socio-economically and culturally from the

| Musical genre | Narrative scale | Urban space of manifestation | Urbanism | Hegelian dialectic | Corresponding society |
|---------------|----------------|-----------------------------|----------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Traditional   | Local           | Teahouse                    | Tea urbanism | Thesis            | Conservative society |
| Modern        | Global          | Street                      | Everyday urbanism | Antithesis | Mass society        |
| Fusion        | Glocal          | Coffee shop                 | Coffee urbanism | Synthesis          | Liberal/elite society |
rest of the society, especially tea society, are searching for a synthesis, an identity somewhere between tradition and modernity, a dialogue between the East and West; they have created their own urban space to distinguish themselves from society and by frequenting coffee shops have shaped their idiosyncratic lifestyle, self, identity and way of urbanism.

Altogether and as discussed above, tracing musical patterns in the urban spaces could provide an appropriate method for understanding societal changes and discovering different forms of urban living. For instance, through analysing the musical situations in Tehran, it can be seen that this city has been faced with a pluralised life world and different social groups would be using different urban spaces and have marked their urban living by different tools such as music, drink, painting and architecture. Although this method might not be able to paint a vivid picture of the characteristics of individuals and social groups, by presenting a broad knowledge and identifying key urban spaces and forms of the collective expressions of self, lifestyle, identity, as well as urbanism paves the way for further detailed social, cultural and even anthropological investigations on the collective behaviours of urbanites.

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