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# Protectionism and rapprochement in Turkish higher music education: An analysis of the mission and vision statements of conservatoires and university music departments in the republic of Turkey

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## Abstract

Music education institutions have played a prominent role in mediating national identity in the Republic of Turkey since its founding in 1923. Initially tasked with suppressing Ottoman heritage, their nature and status changed with the ascendance of political Islam, when interest in Turkey's Ottoman past grew and the Western aesthetics of the founding elite were increasingly contested. While music education continues to be a site of national identity construction in Turkey, no studies focus on the ideological climate of music education in the era of the Justice and Development Party, who

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have heralded a ‘New Turkey’ rooted in conservative Islam. We explore the discursive terrain of Turkish music education by analysing the mission and vision statements and other website texts of 71 conservatoires and music departments. Our findings reveal protectionist attitudes towards repertoires and traditions associated with competing nationalist visions, but also an emergent, reconciliatory structure of feeling and advocacy for pluralism.

### Keywords

Music education, ideology, values, Turkey, neocolonialism, postcolonialism, structures of feeling

## Introduction

In his seminal book *Heartland Excursions: Ethnomusicological Reflections on Schools of Music*, Bruno Nettl (1995) explored how value discourses associated with the American education system, Western high culture and American society interacted within university music departments, offering a ‘microcosmic’ representation of American societal values at large. Studies in other international contexts have also highlighted the complex value systems of music departments and conservatoires that collectively define the ideological landscape of music in higher education and reflect wider social, cultural and political trends (e.g. Dyndahl and Nielsen, 2014; Parkinson, 2017; Parkinson and Smith, 2015; Smith, 2014).

Since the founding of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, music education has played a prominent role in mediating national identity and disseminating official culture. Initially tasked with suppressing Ottoman heritage, promoting secular nationalism and inculcating Western aesthetic values during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, music education institutions’ nature and status changed following the transition to democracy in the 1950s, when competing ideologies entered the political sphere (Göktürk-Cary, 2014). During the latter half of the 20th century interest in Turkey’s Ottoman past grew, and the ideology of the founding political elite, known as Kemalism, was increasingly contested (Öztürk, 2017).

While the Westernising music education reforms of the early Republican period have been discussed widely in the fields of education, sociology and ethnomusicology, studies attending to later periods are scarce by comparison. There are currently no studies that focus on values and ideology in music education in the era of the Justice and Development Party government (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, hereafter AKP) who have held power since 2002. This is surprising for several reasons. Firstly, music education has continued to play a prominent role in upholding national values in Turkey. Secondly, the current government have called for a cultural renaissance rooted in socially conservative values and Ottoman aesthetics—a vision referred to as ‘New Turkey’ (*Yeni Türkiye*)—and a

growing literature has emerged concerning their policy interventions in other domains such as theatre, museums and contemporary art (e.g. Aksoy and Şeyben, 2015; Polo, 2018). Thirdly, several government figures have in recent years asserted the importance of music in upholding national values (e.g. see Milliyet, 2019; Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2017). Finally, many new music education institutions have been established since 2015 by the Council for Higher Education, and some with the direct public endorsement of the Presidency (*Daily Sabah*, 2017).

In this article, we investigate the value discourses at play within music education in contemporary Turkey, through an analysis of the mission and vision statements of conservatoires and university music departments. We begin by setting out our conceptual framework, before offering an historical overview of music education in the Republic of Turkey. We discuss the sociological rationale underpinning the early Westernising reforms and the impact of subsequent shifts in political ideology on music education during the 20th century. We go on to chart the decline of Kemalist hegemony and the rise of Turkish political Islam during the late 20th and early 21st centuries, and unpack the discursive ambiguities surrounding the government's cultural and educational strategies. We then set out our research questions and outline our approach to analysing a corpus comprising the mission and vision statements and associated texts of 71 conservatoires and music departments. In the second half of the article we discuss our findings, highlighting themes in the data and situating them in relation to wider discourses. In the conclusion we return to our research questions and consider what our findings reveal about the attitudes, values and ideological orientations underpinning Turkish higher music education, and the extent to which they reflect and participate in the wider sociocultural climate on the eve of the centenary of the Republic in 2023, a year marked for the inauguration of 'New Turkey'.

## Theoretical framework

Our analysis makes use of the interrelated constructs of attitudes, values and ideology. Following Maio et al.'s (2006) definitions, we understand attitudes to be subjective orientations towards objects—such as, 'folk music' or 'Europe'—which reflect positive or negative evaluations. Values are abstract ideals or principles, such as 'academic freedom', or 'social justice', while ideologies are systems that comprise values and attitudes, such as 'communism' or 'Islamism'. All three are subjective constructs, existing at conscious and unconscious levels. Thus, while they can be made explicit, they can also inhere in discourse implicitly.

Maio et al. (2006) highlight bidirectional influence between attitudes, values and ideology; attitudes may influence values and in turn political ideologies, and vice versa, although they note that values and ideologies are more prescriptive than attitudes, such that 'even small changes in the most abstract ideologies and values lead to numerous changes in related, lower level attitudes' (284). This directionality is particularly pertinent to this study, given Turkey's history of radical top-down

policy reforms, shifts in political and cultural hegemony and direct intervention by successive governments in the field of music education.

Music education is a field of education centred on an art form (music), and aesthetics feature prominently in its value systems. Eagleton's (1988) work is helpful here for highlighting how aesthetics participate in upholding ideology and achieving hegemony. Eagleton describes aesthetics as the interface 'between things and thoughts, sensations and ideas' (327), which draws rationality 'beyond its own mental enclave' (328) and tethers it to visceral experiences of affection and aversion. Aesthetics therefore enables a ruling class to encode moral values as matters of taste within our 'political unconscious', to the end that structures of power become unchallenged 'structures of feeling' (330). This term, coined by Raymond Williams, highlights how ways of thinking are first *felt* before they are articulated as complete thoughts, and therefore need to be inferred from 'pattern[s] of impulses, restraints [and] tones' (Williams, 1979: 159) in texts. As is discussed later in our methodology, this required us to pay attention not only to what was articulated but to *how*, and to what was *not* written.

### **Music education, nationalism and cultural change in Turkey**

The Republic of Turkey was established in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who sought to break from the Ottoman past and position Turkey among what he considered to be 'the civilised nations of the world' (Atatürk, 1933). During the first half of the twentieth century Atatürk and his successor İsmet İnönü implemented Westernising reforms across all aspects of law and civil society, borrowing from various European models in order to 'reach the level of contemporary civilisation' (quoted in Erol, 2012: 38). Their Eurocentric worldview was heavily influenced by the sociologist Ziya Gökalp, whose concept of Turkism (*Türkçülük*) offered an alternative identity concept with which to unify society in the wake of the Ottoman Empire's collapse. In his *Principles of Turkism (Türkçülüğün Esasları)* (1923/1968), Gökalp argued that Turkey's authentic culture—its 'Turkishness'—had been suppressed for centuries under the Byzantine and Ottoman civilizations but could still be found in Anatolian folk traditions. In order to flourish, the Turkish nation needed to shed its Ottoman civilisation and give its authentic culture full expression through the modern civilisation of the European nations. Discussing music specifically, Gökalp called for a national, polyphonic repertoire in the Western art music tradition using Anatolian folk melodies as source material.

Gökalp proposed that through 'a sharing of education and culture' Turkey's multi-ethnic population could be united in their common Turkishness (1923/1968: 15). Sitting at the confluence of educational and cultural reform, music education featured prominently in the state's efforts to effect Gökalp's synthesis of Turkishness and European civilization. Despite Atatürk's well-known personal fondness for Turkish classical music (Ayas, 2014), he believed it was too 'unsophisticated' to 'feed the needs of the creative Turkish soul' (quoted in Oransay

1985, cited in Erol, 2012, p. 45). He was also wary of its potential to impede the Westernisation project, and because it was taught in Sufi lodges (*tekkeler*), stimulate an Islamist revival (Signell, 1976). Atatürk abolished the *tekkeler* in 1926 and banned Turkish classical music from educational institutions in 1927 (Tekelioğlu, 2001).

Throughout the 1930s Western educationalists, musicians and composers were invited as consultants to Turkey to participate in the reform project. Notably, Paul Hindemith oversaw the foundation of the first State Conservatory in Ankara in 1935, tasked with producing and teaching a new repertoire that was ‘both national and European’ (Gökalp, 1923/1968: 99). Further state conservatories were established under President İnönü and ‘operated as both discursive and practical mechanisms for Republican control’ (Gill-Gürtan, 2010: 624), curating and disseminating the official Kemalist aesthetics and suppressing Ottoman heritage. During this same period, community education centres (*halkevleri*) were instructed to promote ‘modern international music and folk songs<sup>1</sup>’ and curtail ‘the style we call *alaturka*’ (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People’s Party), 1939). Traditional Turkish instruments did not feature in statutory and higher education until the late 1970s.

Kemalist dominance diminished following the transition to democracy in 1950. Throughout the second half of the twentieth century cultural hegemony was fought over by the Kemalists and an emerging Islamist political class who sought to reinvigorate interest in the Ottoman past (Göktürk-Cary, 2014). Developments in music and education continued to reflect the wider ideological climate during this period. Göktürk-Cary (2014) notes that under the influence of the National Salvation Party (*Millî Selâmet Partisi*) in the 1970s, religious content was written into educational textbooks. Turkish (Ottoman) classical music was taught in a State conservatory—the new *Türk Musikisi Devlet Konservatuvarı* (Turkish Music State Conservatory)—for the first time in 1976 (Gill-Gürtan, 2010).

## Culture and higher education in ‘New Turkey’

The dominant ideology in Turkey today has been described as a synthesis of Islamism, nationalism and neoliberal capitalism (Coşar and Ergül, 2015). Considered the signature ideology of the current government, this ‘Turkish-Islamic synthesis’ (Coşar and Ergül, 2015) in fact began in the aftermath of the 1980 coup, a critical juncture that stimulated public criticism of Kemalist ideology (Öztürk, 2017). The *Anavatan Partisi* (Motherland Party) government led by Turgut Özal oversaw Turkey’s integration into the global free market during the 1980s and evoked the Ottoman past to garner public enthusiasm for its ambitious global outlook. Ottoman classical music was popularised during this period using education and broadcasting (Çolak, 2006: 592).

Özalian Ottomanism emphasised Islam as a unifying national identity concept at a time of increasing ethnic division. This strategy continued under the Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi*) and AKP, both of whom were openly critical of Western

globalisation. The AKP in particular have sought to distinguish Turkish culture and identity from Western-centric values and promote a revival of traditional Islamic aesthetics (Aksoy and Şeyben, 2015) for a ‘New Turkey’. In their rhetorical interventions into the cultural space, they ‘promote Ottoman heritage and the values system imputed to it’ (93), while simultaneously warning against universalism as a euphemism for Western cultural products (Kalin, 2017) or ‘imperialism through a universal perspective’ (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2017). Paradoxically however, a ‘pluralistic stance’ (Erol, 2012: 50) has also been inferred from the AKP’s cultural policies, particularly in their first decade in power. Güray (2015) attributes gestures of pluralism in cultural policy to Turkey’s ongoing accession bid to the European Union (EU), for whom pluralism is a foundational value.

Alignment with EU values is also evident in the discourses of the HE sector, where espousals of universalism have been attributed both to Turkey’s EU accession bid and its integration into the European education space in the context of the Bologna Process, which requires Turkish universities to align with European norms and values. Coşar and Ergül (2015) and Onursal-Beşgül (2016) observe repeated emphasis in Turkish HE discourse on value concepts associated with the Bologna Process such as ‘knowledge society’ and ‘global competitiveness’.

However, both Onursal-Beşgül (2016) and Kaya (2015) also detect a discursive *anti*-Europeanisation in Turkish higher education, which they see as reflecting growing resentment of the EU. They point to policymakers increasingly refraining from explicitly referring to the EU or Europe, in favour of vaguer references to ‘internationalisation’. Coşar and Ergül (2015) and Kaya (2015) identify negative perceptions among HE professionals of the Bologna Process as a form of neo-liberalisation. Coşar and Ergül (2015) suggest that the Council of Higher Education, originally charged with de-politicising HE after the 1980 coup, now oversees the embedding of free market values in universities within a conservative nationalist discourse. Thus, a ‘contradictory juxtaposition of core values of the modern university and [...] nationalist motifs’ (Coşar and Ergül, 2015: 107) can be discerned within the same discourse. Discursive ambiguities of this kind are common in Turkey, and present analytical challenges in terms of identifying values or predicting discursive trends (Coşar and Ergül, 2015; Parkinson and Muslu Gardner, 2021; Polo, 2018). Nonetheless, the literature presented here gives some indication of the range of often contradictory values—whether espoused, implicit, or inferred—that characterise cultural and educational discourse in contemporary Turkey. However, empirical studies are scarce, and no existing empirical studies consider values in the context of contemporary music education specifically.

## Methodology

This study generates new empirical insight into the values underpinning contemporary higher music education in Turkey and their relationship to the wider ideological climate. It sits within a larger, ongoing project comprising documentary

analysis, interviews and ethnographic field work, in which we seek to answer the following overarching research questions:

- *What attitudes, values and ideologies characterise higher music education in the Republic of Turkey in the 21st century?*
- *(How) do these attitudes, values and ideologies correspond to wider cultural, social and political climates?*

In the present study we sought to garner a holistic impression of the values that characterise Turkish higher music education by analysing the mission and vision statements of conservatoires and university music departments. Seeber et al. (2019) conceptualise university mission statements as ‘prototypical identity narrative[s]’ (231) that entail two main challenges; firstly, they must balance diverse and often contradictory values espoused by different stakeholders. Secondly, they must balance similarity and distinctiveness, asserting an institution’s legitimacy within their field by meeting normative expectations but also, paradoxically, distinguishing it from competitors. Morphew and Hartley (2006) suggest this can lead to ‘collection [s] of stock phrases that are either excessively vague or unrealistically aspirational, or both’ (457). In contexts where the publication of mission and vision statements can be legal requirement, statements often include vague and incontestable goals that protect institutions against accusations of failure (Delucchi, 1997).

Mission and vision statements seldom name their authors, and do not therefore offer insight into the values held by individuals within institutional communities. Notwithstanding these limitations however, as public-facing texts mission and vision statements offer the most explicit outward declarations of institutional values and constitute a preliminary point of socialisation into an academic cultural ideal. Moreover, they ‘derive discursive power and importance from how they draw on broader social contexts’ (Pettinger et al., 2018: 471), and thus help to reveal how institutional values correspond to wider cultural, social and political climates.

Mission and vision statements were not always named *as such* by the institutions in our sample and were sometimes conveyed within associated texts such as ‘welcome’ and ‘about us’ statements. We opted therefore to include all such texts in our corpus and to treat them as integrated components of institutions’ ‘symbolic management’ (Seeber et al., 2019). Our analysis was guided by the subsidiary research question: *What attitudes, values and ideologies can be inferred from the website texts of Turkish conservatoires and university music departments?*

### **Data collection**

We began by compiling a database of all higher education institutions offering undergraduate programmes in music. This was challenging, as no centralised, publicly accessible database exists, and there were inconsistencies across the various sources available to us (Müzik Eğitmcileri Sitesi, 2019; YÖK/ÖSYM, 2018;



colleagues' personal records). We accounted for discrepancies and are confident that our database comprises all institutions offering music ( $n = 71$ ) as of November 2019.

We excluded music teacher training programmes delivered within education faculties as these arguably fall within different disciplinary milieu (see Göksel, 2018, for a recent study of music education programmes). We collated the institutions into three categories depending on the genre of music taught: Turkish music institutions (TMIs), Western music institutions (WMIs) and mixed music institutions (MMIs). This was a relatively straightforward task, since institutions teaching Turkish music use the adjective *Türk* ('Turkish') in their nomenclature, and institutions offering both Western and Turkish music typically distinguish between their departments in the same way.<sup>2</sup> We then extracted institutional descriptions and mission and vision statements from their websites to form a corpus text.

### Analysis

We analysed the corpus using a hybrid approach comprising thematic analysis and critical and historical discourse analysis. Thematic analysis is a 'foundational method' of qualitative analysis that entails identifying, describing and analysing patterns—themes—in the data, and is noted for its compatibility with discourse analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006: 78). Critical discourse analysis might be summarised as the empirical analysis of discourse with the explicit aim of understanding how it enables power structures (Martínez-Alemán, 2015), while historical discourse analysis considers how discourse participates in 'social epistemological change' (Jóhannesson, 2010: 254) across the past, present and future. Our awareness of structures of feeling prompted us to examine 'the very edge of semantic availability' (Lingard and Gale, 2007: 11), paying attention to tone and atmosphere as well as lexis and syntax.

Data were analysed in the original Turkish but are presented below in translation. We used NVivo 12 to code the corpus data into 'discursive themes' and identify data for finer-grained discourse analysis. This process was both deductive and inductive, in that some themes derived from literature review while others arose unexpectedly from the data during analysis. Critical and historical discourse analysis continued throughout the write-up of findings, as we paid particular attention to 'patterns in the discourse [...] shaped in the social and political atmosphere of the past and present' (Jóhannesson, 2010: 252). Since critical discourse analysis requires the application of theory during the analysis of data (Martínez-Alemán, 2015), synthesis with literature is incorporated into the following section rather than a discrete discussion section.

### Findings

#### *Academic values, civic values and graduate attributes*

The most common explicitly stated values in the corpus were those relating to academic and artistic practice, alongside civic values idealised as graduate

attributes or behaviours. Explicit academic or artistic values included ‘collaboration’, ‘sharing’, ‘creativity’, ‘productivity’, ‘artistic originality’, ‘innovation’, ‘quality’ and ‘inquiry’. Explicit civic values included ‘leadership’, ‘social responsibility, respect’, ‘brotherhood’ (*kardeşlik*) and ‘unity’. Values idealised as graduate attributes included ‘intellectual’, ‘cultured’, ‘creative’, ‘constructive’, ‘talented’, ‘[knowing their] rights and responsibilities’, ‘open minded’, ‘caring about moral cultural and social perspectives’, ‘forward looking’ and ‘being able to create their own artistic vision’.

Such values are examples of positive ideals associated with *valence issues*, a concept first introduced by Stokes (D.E., 1963) to refer to issues on which there is near unanimous social consensus, in contrast to *positional issues* which yield contrasting preferences within society.

While the pervasiveness of explicit valence values across the corpus might, *prima facie*, imply ideological consistency, they also typify the vague language used in mission statements in order to deflect scrutiny and accountability, as identified by Morphew and Hartley (2006), Delucchi (1997) and others, discussed earlier. As we explore further below, the discursive framing of explicit values was more revealing.

Values associated with *positional* issues were occasionally espoused. For example, one WMI listed ‘secularist’ and ‘Atatürkist’ (*Atatürkçü*) as graduate attributes (I48). While both secularism and Atatürk’s principles are enshrined in Turkey’s constitution, both have arguably become positional issues when expressed in the current political climate in which government representatives have called for the notion of secularism in Turkey to be reinterpreted (Habertürk, 2010), and in which the symbolic power of Atatürk’s persona is invoked in opposition to the government (Christofis, 2018; Öztürk, 2017). Thus, while referencing ‘Atatürk’s principles’ (as eleven institutions, across all genre types, did) might simply indicate normative alignment, referring to students as *Atatürkist* employs the vocabulary of ‘a [...] manner of discourse which challenges Islamist restoration’ (Öztürk, 2017: 87).

Similarly, the noun *çağdaşlık* (meaning ‘modernity’ or ‘contemporaneity’), used ‘synonymous[ly]’ with ‘secularism’ and ‘Westernism’ within Kemalist discourse (Sevinç et al., 2017: 167), was listed among the ‘fundamental values’ of another WMI (I10), grouped alongside ‘science’ and ‘universalism’ (*bilimsellik, çağdaşlık ve evrensellik*). Thus, a constellation of values emerges whose collective resonance is greater than that of its individual constituents.

While there were only three usages of the noun *çağdaşlık* in the corpus (I10; I25; I48), the adjective *çağdaş*, strongly associated with Atatürkism (Efe and Ozer, 2015), was frequently espoused as a graduate attribute by WMIs, or used to describe institutions’ aesthetic orientation. For example, one institution idealised ‘young people [...] who adopt the modern world’s understanding of art and aesthetics’ (I50). Exactly what is meant by ‘the modern world’s understanding of art and aesthetics’ is not made explicit; rather, *çağdaş* is left to function ideographically, relying on readers’ tacit understanding and invoking a structure of feeling through its positioning in relation to aesthetics.

Although there were occasional uses of *çağdaş* among TMIs, this was usually in the sense of “up-to-date” when describing infrastructure or pedagogic approaches, rather than in relation to core values or aesthetics. Uses of *çağdaş* by MMIs were in some instances paired with *geleneksel*, meaning ‘traditional’. For example, two institutions (using the same exact wording) wrote of ‘handling [their] traditional [music] department according to a contemporary, universal sensibility’ (I13; I48), and another of training their students ‘according to the balanced concepts of tradition and modernity in musical art’ (I25). Notwithstanding their vagueness, such statements strike a reconciliatory tone by implying the compatibility of dichotomous values often considered to be the crux of Turkey’s social and cultural tensions (see discussion of temporal liminality below).

### *Protectionist attitudes towards tradition as (ethno-)national cultural authenticity*

Almost all TMIs, and Turkish music departments of MMIs, portrayed themselves as tradition bearers. Tradition was equated variously to national ‘character’, ‘identity’, ‘inheritance’, ‘personality’, ‘civilization’ and, most frequently, with ‘our culture’ and ‘our values’, and was in most instances discussed in terms of a preservationist ‘duty’:

‘[Our duty is] to transfer the values of traditional music culture [...] to future generations’ (I35)

In other instances, however, the preservation of tradition was framed more defensively, with oblique allusions to ‘erasure’ (*silinme*), ‘neglect’ (*ihmal*) or ‘corruption’ (*yozaşma*). Some institutions attributed the threat of corruption and erasure to forces of ‘globalisation’, ‘imperialism’ or forms of commercialisation. The following example displays an anxiety concerning ‘popularisation’:

‘The foremost duty of the Turkish music department is to protect *makam* music, one of the most important elements of civilization in the history of the Turkish people, to ensure it is transferred to the future properly and authentically [and] prevent its popularisation and loss of blood in the field of urban entertainment music.’ (I19)

An understanding of musical authenticity as an ethnocultural property is also arguably implied in the reference to ‘blood’ in the above example, and elsewhere (I21) to ‘fortunate genes’ (I21). Such an understanding was particularly pronounced on another TMI’s webpages, which featured an epic narrative beginning in the 5th Century BC in Uluğ Türkistan (Central Asia) with ‘Turkish music masters’ who later brought their music and culture to Anatolia. We are told that alongside ‘heroism, generosity, goodness and honesty’ the Turks displayed ‘sensitivity towards, and dependence on, art and aesthetics’, and upon adopting Islam ‘integrated these values with those of the Islamic faith’. This narrative thus

depicts ‘Turkish’ music as the aesthetic inheritance of Turks as an ethnoreligious group.

The text then names canonical Western composers to exemplify the Eurocentric aesthetic hierarchy imposed by the early republican reforms, which led to the ‘rejection’ of, and loss of literacy in, Turkish music:

‘In order to listen to and love Chopin, Mozart or Bach, there is no sense in rejecting Hâfız Post, İtrî, or Dede Efendi. To understand polyphony does not mean to neglect “kâr”, “kârçe”, “beste”, “hoyrat” or a “bozlak”. Our nation is aware of this mistake’. (I24)

These musicological considerations are equated with Turkish identity on the basis that ‘we will never know who we really are if we ignore our own values’. The passage ends with a couplet from the poem ‘Our Old Music’ (*Eski Mûsikîmiz*) by the poet (and later politician) Yahya Kemal Beyatlı:

‘Many people understand nothing of our old music

And, thus, understand nothing of us’ (I24)

This couplet is also part of the government’s discursive repertoire and was quoted by the president at a Ministry of Culture and Tourism awards ceremony in 2018, where he described Turkish music as ‘a jewel among our values, in need of protection’, which ‘like many legacies from our ancestors, was labelled as the product of an outmoded mindset and at risk of being destroyed’ (Milliyet, 2019).

### *Spatial and temporal liminality*

Turkey’s cultural identity is often portrayed in terms of perennial liminality (Çapan and Zarakol, 2017; Rumelili, 2012; Yalkin and Yanık, 2020; Yanık, 2009). This comprises both a temporal dimension related to Turkey’s passage from tradition to modernity, and a spatial dimension relating to its existing *between* East and West and thus implicitly never fully of either, or both (Çapan and Zarakol, 2019). While some have argued that such portrayals have been used internationally to “other” Turkey (Yanık, 2009), others have highlighted how successive Turkish governments have actively embraced a liminal self-image in foreign and domestic policy and in the construction of ‘Brand Turkey’ (Rumelili and Suleymanoglu-Kurum, 2017). According to Rumelili and Suleymanoglu-Kurum (2017), however, this has been constrained by ‘domestic concerns for representativeness’ in national identity debates, and a discursive backdrop in which East and West are positioned as ‘mutually exclusive and binary opposite identity markers’ (p.564).

The adjective ‘Western’ (*Bati*) was not used once by WMIs, despite their genre emphasis being consistent with Western art music. This offers insight into the

discursive precariousness and shifting ideological status of the terms East and West in Turkey. Within an official discourse that has been described as ‘vehement anti-Westernism’ (Kaliber and Kaliber, 2019: 2), in which criticism of Western norms is routine (Çapan and Zarakol, 2017), Western-ness has arguably become a wholly pejorative concept. However, other spatial categories might, in certain discursive formations and contexts, be used to positively evoke a pro-Western structure of feeling and aesthetic ideal. Most of society in the Kemalist era ‘accepted the ‘norms’ produced by the West as being *universal*’ (Çapan and Zarakol, 2017: 196, our emphasis). Although the noun ‘*universalism*’ was espoused as a core value by only two WMIs, the adjective ‘universal’ was widely used among WMIs to describe institutions’ musical emphases, ‘artistic field’ or ‘cultural and artistic values’. Here then, WMIs appeared to use the term ‘universal’ to signal a Western aesthetic and worldview.

It should be noted however that recently the notion of universalism has itself been explicitly contested in Turkish cultural policy discourse. Çapan and Zarakol (2017) note that the current government increasingly apply postcolonial theory<sup>3</sup> and terminology to depict Kemalist cultural residues as colonial. Postcolonial theorists argue that the notion of universalism constitutes ‘a hegemonic view of existence by which the experiences, values and expectations of a dominant culture are held to be true for all humanity’, and that the assumption that human experience is ‘irreducible’ to local culture ‘underlies the promulgation of imperial discourse for the ‘advancement’ or ‘improvement’ of the colonized’ (Ashcroft et al., 1998: 235). High profile references to universalism in the policy realm, such as Presidential Press Secretary (now Chief Adviser) Ibrahim Kalın’s dismissal of ‘much of what goes around as “universal culture” [as] Western cultural products’ (Kalın, 2017: np), imbue them with resonances that could impact on the perceived meaning of other usages.

In instances where the adjective ‘universal’ was used by TMIs, it was either in a quantitative sense such as ‘universal scale’, as a quality of graduate ‘individuals’, or as a dualistic counterpart to the ‘national’, the ‘Turkish’, or ‘our civilisation’. For example:

‘To evaluate individual-regional-national and universal cultures’ (I39)

The spatial terms ‘international’, ‘global’ and the ‘world’ were also used. In many instances however this was within stock phrases such as ‘at national and international levels’ (15 institutions), used by institutions of all types when setting out aspirations in terms of quality and profile, highlighting a theme of ‘world-classness’: Elsewhere, phrases such as ‘world-leadership’ (I14), ‘world-class’ (I3, I49) and ‘world-preferred’ (8 institutions) were deployed in similarly perfunctory ways. Beyond such stock phrases, however, WMIs commonly displayed their internationalist credentials with specific examples such as ‘foreign artist-lecturers’ (I49), participation in programmes such as Erasmus or Leonardo, adherence to the Bologna Process, membership of the Association of European Conservatoires, and student and staff exchanges with Europe. Two MMIs also made reference to international exchange programmes, though not specifically with Europe; one

instead emphasised ‘building an artistic bridge’ between the countries of the Caucasus region (I20). References to internationalisation by TMIs were far fewer, and none made reference to any specific activities or programmes or to Bologna. Instead, emphasis was placed on the institutions’ role as *national (milli)* cultural ambassadors.

The most commonly used spatial category across the whole corpus was ‘national’ (*milli*, or *ulusal*). The adjective *milli* and noun *millet* (nation) were used widely by TMIs and MMIs when setting out ‘our national culture’ (I24), ‘our national music culture’ (I9), or ‘our greatest cultural riches as a nation’ (I36), or when linking their institutional vision and mission to national ‘identity’ and ‘character’, ‘‘the indivisible integrity of the homeland, [...] spiritual values [and] the elements that make up a nation’. The second-person possessive morpheme (*-imiz*, *-ümüz*) was often used to claim culture, music or values as ‘ours’, and appeared to be used as an implicit proxy for ‘national’. One TMI argued that different nations possessed a ‘national music’ enshrining their ‘traditions, customs, temperament and emotions’ and ‘national identity’, and stressed the value of highlighting nations’ ‘own’ historical and cultural heritage in an age of ‘theories of globalisation founded on imperialist aims’ (I24).

With the exception of one reference to ‘Turkish National Education Aims and Guidelines’ (I53), the adjective *milli* was not otherwise used by WMIs. However, several WMIs used the synonym *ulusal* (also meaning ‘national’). Instances included declarations of commitment to ‘protecting our national identity’ (I50) or ‘the universal dimension of Turkish national culture’ (I53), or when describing their musical emphases. In all instances of the latter a further qualifying adjective was used, such as ‘polyphonic’ or ‘chamber’. Such uses implicitly assert the legitimacy of Western art music within the ambit of national culture and identity, and the presence of a polyphonic repertoire that is at once universal, national and Turkish.

It is striking that the use of the synonyms *milli* and *ulusal* corresponded to differences in institutional type. This may relate to semantic nuances and connotations accrued through usages of *milli* within official discourse, and in particular through the slogan *yerli ve milli*—meaning ‘local and national’—associated with the ongoing New Turkey project.

Some MMIs emphasised equilibrium across spatial categories such as local, global and universal, national and international, and East and West. While as already discussed this often took the form of dualistic stock phrases, elsewhere statements carried more conviction, such as one institution’s describing ideal graduates as being ‘aware of the history and culture of Western and extra-Western music’ and able to ‘combin[e] global and local tones’, or another institution’s commitment to ‘understand[ing] universal knowledge on one hand, while observing geographical culture and civilisation on the other, [...] summed up as “from local to universal”’ (I3). It is perhaps significant that, in these expressions of balance across dualisms that have historically been antagonistic, MMIs made explicit reference to ‘East’ and ‘West’, terms avoided by TMIs and WMIs. Such instances

hint at reconciliatory attitudes and pluralistic values, which we explore further below.

### *Reconciliation and pluralism*

Several institutions (predominantly MMIs) emphasised the value of musical pluralism. This was framed in terms of diversity, such as in references to ‘different styles and colours of music’ (I63), holism, such as in ‘all aspects of our musical past’ (I3), or cultural equality, particularly between spatial or temporal categories:

‘Turkish and Western music will be given equally’ (I16)

And:

‘We stand at equal distance from every field of music’ (I62)

One MMI invoked the notion of universalism not as a proxy for ‘Western’, but rather to propose ‘a universal music education [comprising] Turkish, Western and World music culture’ (I5), thus moving beyond the Turkish-Western binary. Elsewhere espousals of pluralism extended beyond musical genre and emphasised respect for different ‘cultures’ at large, such as acknowledging ‘different beliefs and cultures’ (I3) within Turkish society, ‘approach[ing] all cultures equally by respecting difference’ (I7), ‘hosting East and West under the same roof’ (I8) or ‘recognis[ing] and protect[ing] Western and our own culture’ (I20). In perhaps the most direct statements of the whole corpus, one institution explicitly addressed the ‘climate of vicious conflict, opposition and prejudice that we have fallen into for hundreds of years’, and dismissed the antagonistic ‘East-West, modern-outdated, progressive-regressive binaries holding back artistic development in our country’. Acknowledging both ‘positive and negative consequences’ of cultural reform during the Republican era, it called for ‘sincere unity’ to ‘realise our country’s potential’ (I3).

### **Conclusion**

Despite a large literature focusing on the music education’s ideological role in earlier eras of the Republic of Turkey, there are no comparative studies of music education in the current era, despite the government’s ‘ambitious cultural change programme’ and a shifting ideological climate (Göksel, 2018: 64). Moreover, few empirical studies focus on values and ideology in higher education at large in the 21st century. This study therefore offers unique insight into the values climate of higher music education in Turkey, and to the wider structures of feeling within Turkish higher education as a field of culture and society.

In this phase of research, we sought to answer our first research question—‘*what attitudes, values and ideologies characterise higher music education in the Republic of*

*Turkey in the 21st century?*—via the subsidiary question ‘*what attitudes, values and ideologies can be inferred from the website texts of Turkish conservatoires and university music departments?*’ Although many value concepts featured explicitly in the corpus, these related predominantly to valence issues and often carried an impression of perfunctoriness. Explicit use of value terms may signal alignment with a number of discourses, including those associated with constitutional articles, ‘New Turkey’, the European Union, the Bologna Process, or Western high culture, but may also exemplify the mirage-like platitudes identified by Delucchi (1997) and others, designed to present the institution as values-driven while being incontestable. Widespread use of the same value terms, and in some instances verbatim phrasing, suggests efforts to assert institutions’ legitimacy through normativity (Seeber et al., 2019). Notwithstanding some strident statements that explicitly emphasised national and even ethnic values, a lack of detail in references to aesthetic or cultural values suggests a strong reliance on readers’ tacit beliefs and the historical associations of terminology to signal ideological affinity and evoke structures of feeling.

Discourse analysis revealed protectionist attitudes towards tradition and heritage among TMIs, and towards modernity, internationalism and universalism among WMIs. In terms of aesthetic values, the corpus data suggested a largely binary musical terrain, with only a few references to musical cultures beyond ‘Turkish’ or ‘Western’ categories. However, MMIs, and some TMIs, emphasised pluralism, often in reconciliatory language. As such, we propose a discursive continuum between protectionist particularism and reconciliatory pluralism as a heuristic framework for analysing the values and structures of feeling in music education in Turkey, and, as we discuss below, beyond.

Our second research question asked (*how*) *do these attitudes, values and ideologies correspond to wider cultural, social and political climates?* Previous research has examined how different political discourses have engaged with Turkey’s spatial and temporal liminalities (e.g. Çapan and Zarakol, 2019, 2017); how these manifest in contemporary higher education discourses (e.g. Kaya, 2015; Onursal-Beşgöl, 2016); and how, at certain historical junctures, music education has not only reflected but has *been a key site* of national identity formation (e.g. Erol, 2012; Göktürk-Cary, 2014). However, very few studies have touched upon music education’s relationship to wider identity debates in the twenty-first century, and to our knowledge none have done so empirically. Our study reveals value discourses in higher music education that reflect Turkey’s spatial and temporal liminalities and depict alternative national cultural identities. These were communicated via recognisable discursive repertoires and value terms, and espousals of national, Turkish and ‘our’ values that, by corollary, implicitly disaggregated values considered *other*.

Yet, while we inferred protectionist attitudes from the frequent emphasis on protecting cultural values from corruption, strongly reconciliatory attitudes were also portrayed in frank acknowledgements of Turkey’s past cultural and social



trauma, and proposals for a new cultural future rooted in pluralism and rapprochement.

Attitudes, values and ideology are subjective constructs, and any attempt to identify and understand them requires active interpretation (Maio et al., 2006). We therefore emphasise here that the findings presented above are not objective facts retrieved from the data but, as in all qualitative research, are an inevitably subjective account of an interpretivist analysis relying heavily on inference, including from ineffable qualities such as tone that manifest in the gaps of language. However, to borrow a phrase from Bruno Nettle, researchers must be wary of ‘constructing the dinosaur from one tail bone’ (1995: 18) and acknowledge the limits of extrapolating from written texts. Although institutional texts can certainly offer insight into the desired impression of an institution, they are arguably an exercise in window dressing and cannot reveal the full reality of institutional culture and practice, or indeed any counterculture or heterogeneity therein. Moreover, the authorship of such texts is unclear, even where nominally attributed to a rector or head of department. We cannot therefore attribute attitudes, values or ideological orientations to specific institutions or their populations based on their websites alone. However, as a comprehensive corpus, our data offered significant insight into the competing attitudes, values, ideologies and structures of feeling characterising Turkish higher music education *as a field*, and the extent to which they reflect those of society at large. While it is more difficult to infer the extent to which music education still participates in wider ideological struggle, the increase in number of Turkish music institutions and departments since 2015 under the direction of the Council for Higher Education might be interpreted as an aesthetic intervention to align music education with the vision of the New Turkey project.

The Republic of Turkey is a unique case given its rapid, modernist establishment and the state interventions into culture and education, and music education specifically, that have helped define the country’s ideological landscape. Yet for this reason, the Turkish example acutely reveals how aesthetic education can absorb and reflect wider social values and ideology and may also participate in sustaining or challenging them.

Moreover, notwithstanding Turkish music education’s unique historical contingencies, this study reveals the enmeshed and contradictory nature of ideological discourses which has equivalents elsewhere (see e.g. Parkinson, 2017 and Parkinson and Smith, 2015 for an analysis of neoliberal ideology and music education in the context of UK Higher education; Hebert (2015) for a discussion of militarism in US music education, and for Schmidt and Colwell (eds) 2017 for various international perspectives on music education and policy). In particular, the discursive dynamics depicted here may resonate with those of postcolonial contexts where indigenous cultural traditions have been suppressed in favour of Western high art traditions. While Turkey is not a postcolonial context in the fullest sense, its early cultural policies pursued a Western civilisational ideal, and postcolonial theory has subsequently been leveraged in calls for a reemphasis on

indigenous cultural values (Çapan and Zarakol, 2017). This study reveals structures of feeling that map against Williams' (1979) categories of residual, dominant, and emergent: a residual Eurocentric-universalist structure of feeling, a now dominant localist-traditionalist structure of feeling, and an emergent, pluralistic structure of feeling that acknowledges but outsteps both. Such a framework may help to reveal and elucidate the affective structures that characterise and define aesthetic education elsewhere.

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### Notes

1. We do not have space here to account for the subsequent standardisation of folk (*halk*) and Turkish classical repertoires, and the legitimacy debates surrounding these genres. See Öztürk (2017) and Parkinson and Muslu Gardner (2021).
2. Although widely used in nomenclature, it should be noted that 'Turkish music' is an unstable concept and the field of Turkish classical music education is subject to its own internal debates concerning the authenticity of repertoire, performance and pedagogy.
3. Turkey occupies 'an ambivalent space between postcolonial and colonial agency' (Çapan and Zarakol, 2017: 195), being the successor state to the Ottoman empire and having never been colonised, but also having undergone a 'civilising process' in the image of Western powers, albeit at the hands of an indigenous political elite. This conforms to Altbach's (1971) description of *neo-colonial* education systems that exert the cultural dominance of global powers even where those powers have no direct involvement.

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