

Understanding gender roles and stereotypes through song lyrics in Kosovar society

Bahtije Gërbeshi Zylfiu

Associate. Prof. Dr., University of Prishtina, Prishtina, Kosovo.

Email: bahtije.gerbeshi@uni-pr.edu ORCID: 0000-0002-0740-808X

Armend Xhoni

Corresponding Author, Lecturer at AAB College, Kosovo.

Email: xhoni51@hotmail.com ORCID: 0000-0002-3978-6237

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Abstract

This paper, through the lyrics of the song, presents the representation of gender roles and stereotypes in Kosovar society. On the other hand, this study aims to shed light on music and the opportunities it offers for the transmission of social values that help in overcoming gender stereotypes in the cultural context of Kosovo. The importance of this study is undeniable because this study was done at a time when discussions about gender equality were at the center of attention. Therefore, the study of gender issues, not only through music but also from other perspectives, is of great importance because it affects social transformation regarding equality, as a requirement for developing a real democratic society. To realize this research, the text (content) analysis method was used, through the ethnographic research approach. Through this method, the lyrics of certain songs have been analyzed to discover how they carry or challenge gender stereotypes in our society. For analysis, we have chosen some of the most popular songs. In the analysis results, we have identified gender stereotypes expressed with a special emphasis. This includes the praise of the man as the head of the house and the one who takes care of all, including some texts that praise the son as the honor and pride of the family. On the other hand, some songs describe the man in a derogatory way, calling him stupid, owl, and using other negative insulting terms. In particular, current modern music such as rap and hip-hop, especially, tends to go even further in creating gender stereotypes, belittling women with different terms such as fraudsters, traitors, whores, etc. The results obtained from this research will serve as a basis for discussions on the improvement of the gender image in the media that offer songs, especially in the lyrics of the songs to promote positive changes in Kosovar society related to gender roles and stereotypes, as well as help to raise awareness of to the general public about the role of songs in creating and cultivating a culture in favor of improving gender equality. At this point, we recommend a deeper awareness in Kosovar society about the impact of these texts on the formation of gender perceptions. Also, artists and music creators are invited to be proactive in changing this reality, to create music that reflects a more equal perspective.

Anahtar Kelimeler

gender roles, gender stereotypes, Kosovo, lyrics, music, society

Introduction

Music, apart from entertainment, is a powerful socializing tool that conveys the values, beliefs, and social norms of a given culture. For a very long time, it has been an important component through which social and socio-economic circumstances have been manifested in different temporal and social contexts. Music also has a tremendous impact on the formation of social perceptions, including gender roles and stereotypes. It acts as a

mirror that presents how they are seen and portrayed in a certain community. The use of music as a medium of artistic expression is closely related to the interpretation and construction of shared images about gender in a society. Starting from the role that music has for society and knowing that music is an inexhaustible source of scientific studies, we focused on researching song lyrics to clearly understand the gender roles and stereotypes they display in our society. In this context, Kosovo is a country with a rich cultural and musical heritage, and of

course, studies in the field of music about gender issues are of great interest because, in the lyrics of the songs that circulate in our society, we find enough discussion material on them. So, the idea and purpose of our research started precisely based on the argument that addressing gender issues through music contributes enormously to the direction of social education towards gender equality (Lemos, 2011: 200).

Even in Kosovo, as in all the different societies and cultures of the world, music has been an important socializing tool for its people. In addition to its melody and characteristic rhythms, music has been created, preserved, and passed down through different generations. In this way, folk songs and not only, during all historical periods have followed and presented the changes and general social developments of the country. In this respect, songs have been and will remain an important source that can be researched and studied, to illuminate our culture, whether it is past or present. This is why different researchers consider music as a good opportunity to study society from different perspectives. In this context, music through song lyrics as well as melodic and harmonic nuances, among others, also reflects gender roles and stereotypes that have been created over the centuries in Kosovar society, with patriarchal tendencies. Often, through music, the figure of a woman who has experienced discrimination and is therefore the result of the division of gender roles appears (Daku & Arifi, 2021). This division has created gender stereotypes, which tend to stop progress towards gender equality. Unfortunately, until now, these stereotypes still represent a challenge for Kosovar society. It is difficult to discriminate against the man similarly, except in a few cases (Hoxha, 2020). This situation of discrimination against the man finds an exhibition, especially in the songs of today's time. In this context, to emphasize the issue of gender roles and stereotypes in Kosovar society, we are involved in a cause, "gender war", conditionally if we can say.

Also, based on the fact that music has an important role in the field of education, the contents of the song lyrics should convey messages through which, especially the young, should be educated in the direction of gender equality. It should be noted that in addition to songs, the video clips that appear on television, various online platforms, and social networks also have a great impact on the cultural context. Television as a mass media continues to have a wide audience, among whom, unfortunately, a large number of teenagers are included, who watch video clips of songs and music shows. At this point, focusing on the reality of Kosovo, this study aims at some of the challenges and opportunities for the advancement of gender equality in this cultural context, therefore, research of this nature is of great interest for the Kosovar context for the reason that the division of gender roles as well as gender stereotypes, which are a consequence of these divisions, continue to remain a challenge for our society (lajmi.net, 2022).

Literature Review

Music throughout its existence has been used to reflect norms and behaviors in various cultural and social contexts. Many researchers have focused on studies of different disciplines to illuminate different social issues, making efforts to understand the ways and nuances of the influences that music has on human life. Scientifically, it has been established that music is a universal language that attracts artists, composers as well and the general audience causing strong feelings (Hunter & Schellenberg, 2010), (Cooke, 1989), therefore, its importance for society is very great and multidimensional. Regarding this, the researcher Spahiu, in her book, claims the song, with its expressive power, does not play its function only in the musical-educational plane, but the song also affects general education (Spahiu, 2012). According to researcher Howell, through the analysis of historical songs, students can build a deeper understanding of the past, examining truth claims and adding deep context to enhance their critique of

historical events (Howell & Callahan, 2016: 86). Another author goes even further with his ideas saying that to be human is to be musical” (Mithen, 2009: 3), therefore, such thoughts strengthen even more the importance of music for human life.

Well-known music researchers and theorists such as Adorno and Attali argued that music reflects (Adorno, 1976), the society in which it exists (Attali, 1985). Also, according to the sociological point of view, music is produced and affects the daily life of man. At this point, researcher Petrušić asserts that music is a social phenomenon that is present everywhere and, as a medium with which we shape our environment, it has a great impact on society (Petrušić, 2021: 138). People use music as a symbol and label of their values, attitudes, and self-perceptions influenced by the psychological functions of music such as emotional expression, aesthetic pleasure, entertainment, communication, physiological response to music, and symbolic representation (Hargreaves & North, 1997). According to such a theory, music has the power in the sense that it affects and conveys social changes, that is, to affect the general mass emotionally. It is known that music is a social phenomenon and that musical meanings are socially and culturally constructed (Olsson, 2007: 989). The influence of music is so strong, especially for the younger generations, and it has become an essential socializing and educational component. In this context, some authors have expressed their convictions saying that today’s struggle among young people for the creation of personal identity and their worldviews is too complex to be resolved within the boundaries of a family unit (Musai, Godole, & Abdurrahmani, 2011). Therefore, instead of this, other additional factors should be taken into account, such as the media, part of which is also music, where through songs it conveys messages that affect the lives of every listener, and that often they become a model for young people.

Song lyrics are important socializing materials that can influence the context of changing social mentality. They include certain ideas, meanings, values, and functions related to society. Since young people listen to music of different genres, it offers them opportunities to change their beliefs and attitudes through the content of the lyrics. According to some researchers, the main reasons why teenagers in America listen to music are to reduce stress, divert attention from various problems, spend free time, and relieve boredom or various concerns (Grantz, Gartenberg, & Pearson, 2008). In addition, as some researchers claim, music is a component of connection that can then materialize into positive actions and behaviors (Gonzalez, 2021: 2), and at this point, young people listening to the messages of their songs favorite, also create their gender identity. In this aspect, the removal of pronounced gender stereotypes affects the fading or even the elimination of gender barriers. For a long time, underprivileged communities have used music as a powerful instrument to advocate for social change and express their distinct identities. From the early 20th century movements of the blues and jazz genres, continuing through the punk, new wave scenes of the 1960s-1990s, and then rap, hip-hop, and beyond, musicians have used music as a platform to question social conventions, thus creating texts with different social themes. Diverse musical expressions should be welcomed and valued to promote an inclusive society that respects and values individual and group identity.

On the other hand, through the lyrics of the songs, the music tells the stories of people. It is used to convey the most intense feelings, to explain interpersonal relationships, and to narrate historical and social phenomena, part of which are issues of fertility or gender inequality. On the social level, music is an essential component of national identity and culture (Subotnik, 1995). Among other things, music has historically fueled many discussions about feminist movements and

gender equality. Thus, using their platforms, celebrities such as Beyoncé, Lady Gaga, and Alicia Keys have presented the issues of women's rights and sexual assault. The Riot Girl movement of the 1990s, led by groups like Bikini Kill, used music as a weapon against patriarchy and misogyny (Lamodi, 2020).

Since the beginning of the new century, efforts have been made to address various issues related to the improvement of gender equality, and laws have been created that ensure equal opportunities and full equality between men and women, at this point, a more serious commitment is still needed. Thus, music can be a powerful voice to express dilemmas and demands for a fairer and more equal society.

At the national level, in the field of social science research, an essential component has been the examination of gender roles and stereotypes through a variety of cultural media, which have provided insights into social norms and attitudes. Examining gender roles through the prism of music is an intriguing research option in the context of Kosovo. Kosovar music has explored many dimensions of life, including gender relations in the historical and cultural context of the country. In some cases, it has reflected traditional male and female roles, while in others it has shown a strong awareness of the need for change and gender equality. In this context, we can see how music creators in Kosovo have used their art to express visions and attitudes about gender issues. Through the analysis of the lyrics and melodies of the songs, deep reflections on the role of women and men in Kosovar society can be identified. Regarding this, researcher Nettl claims that music is a powerful communication tool that offers opportunities to understand how gender roles and stereotypes appear in this specific socio-cultural environment since music is a global language that reflects and influences narratives culturally (Nettl, 2014). These reflections can range from the idealization of a strong and independent

woman to the emergence of various challenges and pressures that accompany traditional gender roles.

Reinforcing Traditional Gender Roles and Stereotypes Through Songs

Music in the Albanian years evolved and expanded over the centuries, decades, and years in different genres, although traditional folk music continues to have importance and maintain its primacy. Albanian folk music currently serves as the most qualitative indicator of musical folklore and as the greatest wealth of the cultural heritage of our people (Tusha, 2021). Traditional Kosovar music has a history of reflecting patriarchal standards through melodies and lyrics that depict stereotypical gender roles. These traditional songs usually extolled gender values, portraying women as caring servants and men as masterful and powerful. Despite having a strong cultural heritage, these representations have also helped to limit society's expectations and perpetuate gender stereotypes. So, in other words, musical creativity as a culture in our society, through song lyrics, has imposed gender stereotyping and this is in full accordance with the study of the authors Unger and Crawford, where in their book they claim that gender and gender stereotyping are imposed by cultural forces (Crawford & Unger, 1992).

In our Kosovar society, many songs present clear elements of gender stereotypes, which give a certain picture of the roles of men and women. In some lyrics, women are often portrayed as weak and unimportant in many areas of life, while men are presented as the dominant force of society. On the other hand, some songs favor women. Meanwhile, some of the contemporary song lyrics contain harsh language and negative expressions to characterize men. At this point, to see the clear elements of gender stereotypes as we have mentioned above, we have brought some examples from the popular melos, created since time immemorial, but which continue to be preferred and performed in different manifestations, even very popular,

while others are from different genres, recent creations.

Gender Stereotypes in Kosovo Songs

One of the most popular songs in our society, which favors men, is the song “My son was born and I am very happy”. The first part of the text “My son was born and I am very happy”, “My heart is alive”, and “Mountains and fields have bloomed”, basically talks about the joy and happiness of the parents and the great importance of the birth of a son for the family. At this point, referring also to the traditions and culture of our society, from the text it can be seen that the boy was more important than the woman and unfortunately, still in a large part of society it continues to be like this, the boy symbolizes power and pride. In the second part, “Oh I wish you a happy birthday”, “I wish you to grow up respected”, “I wish you to become famous in the world”, and “Be the first for Kosovo”. This fragment talks about the two wishes of Kosovar’s parents. First, this is a desire that has been in almost all our families, because being always under the rule of different occupiers throughout history, the idea has been for women to give birth to as many sons as possible and to have the power to become the god of the homeland and second, to know the world through boys, because according to the logic of our society, only men are the ones who fight, ensure survival and knowledge of the world.

Another example is the song “There’s nothing like the boy “. The text of this song clarifies some aspects regarding gender roles and stereotypes in Kosovar society. The verses “Oh, if you give me a son, Oh for father and mother”, suggest a special expectation or appreciation for a son, highlighting him as a precious asset to parents. Also the following verses “Boy boy boy come on dance Lum lum lum (the expression “lum” in the Albanian language expresses joy for his existence), mother thanks God for having him” “, transmit an exalted image of the son, connecting him with the happiness and

pride of the mother. Another line “everyone should know that there is nothing like a boy, a boy is like gold”, is seen as an expression of gender discrimination, implying that the boy is much more precious compared to a girl, so he is like gold.

Another text of the folk song where some elements that can be related to gender stereotypes can be observed is also in the song “God of the House is honored”. The text speaks of a festive atmosphere (wedding), where men play a key role, they are the masters of the house and only they are thanked for the hospitality and arrangements. The fragment “Long conversations in this oda (the men’s room)”, shows an environment of discussions and conversations between men. This environment, the “oda”, according to Kosovar tradition, is a place for men only, and in this place, women have been strictly forbidden to enter, let alone be part of the conversation about organizations or decision-making. Unfortunately, men even today in a part of society symbolize an authoritarian, patriarchal figure. At this point, this can be interpreted as a classic behavior where the man is the active and key part of every event.

In current creations, especially in the genres of rap, hip-hop, and various commercial and mixed mutations, we have a mountain of creations with insults and degradations directed at the female gender. Let’s take as an example the singer Getinjo in the fragment “You know that I love you, why are you being a bitch”, the song “bitch”, or even Gjiko with the fragment “Whenever you cry, I’ll buy you a bag”, the song “Ana”, “If you don’t like Abeja (Abeja is a male name, here the author says with irony that it means if you like this boy then you like his car), you will like BMW (Abeja-Bemveja), If you don’t like Avnija (the same meaning, only a different male name), you will like Audi (Avnija-Audija)”, the song “X5”. Some other degrading titles for women that have millions of views on social networks are Yll Limani & Loredana “Criminal”, Don Xhoni “Murderer”, Yll Limani “Liar” etc...

An interesting fact that can be discussed in some current songs whose lyrics reflect negative images of women is that surprisingly the same ones are sung and created by women. About these songs, we have the example of the song “Single Girls”, by Shyhrete Behluli and Engjëllusha Salihu. In the song’s first verses, an interweaving of the traditional role of women is presented. Shyhretja addresses her daughter saying “Ah, my daughter, we have taught you badly”, “You wake up when you want to”, and “You will not find it like with your mother”. These expressions represent a social expectation that women should be subservient to men and have lives dependent on their marital role. In the second verse, Angel replies to her mother saying that “You, my mother, don’t be upset”, “I’ve been single for days”, and “The time will soon come to marry me”. These verses present a traditional perception that one of the main goals of a woman is to marry and take care of her family, but in the meantime, she must also have other responsibilities, including work. In the last verses, Shyhretja shows that “at the other door it is a law that they ask for service from the bride”. This expression refers to societal expectations of brides that involve a servile and submissive role, requiring service.

On the other hand, as we mentioned above, in the songs that live in our society, we also come across texts that tell us the opposite. At this point, we can also take the lyrics of the song “Whoever has a daughter, has the world”. This song’s lyrics favor girls, appreciating them as sources of pleasure and happiness in life. However, some elements can be analyzed about gender stereotypes and how girls and boys are presented in this context. The use of the phrase “Whoever has a daughter, has the world”, conveys a positive assessment of girls, presenting them as an important asset and resource for society. However, there is a danger that this expression conveys the idea that girls are valued only for their role potential as future parents or for their family ties, in other words, here the girl is described as the

most sensitive and loved in the middle of the family breast. Further, the fragment “Oh they are for sister, they are for brother, oh they are for mother and father”, shows a high appreciation for girls by associating them with different family roles. As well as having a positive aspect, it can be argued that this can also reinforce traditional stereotypes about the role of girls and certain social expectations. “Children are the joy of the house, when they are the fruit of love” This passage fits into a positive concept of family and love, but at the same time, it can create pressure on girls to be seen mainly as parents and as a gift of love in the family.

Among the new creations, some texts severely ridicule and humiliate the male gender. One of the typical examples is Gil’s song “Oh You are a Fool”, the lyrics of which show negativity toward a man, characterizing him as a fool. So it is a negative label and conveys a poor perception of the male figure. This type of language can reinforce negative stereotypes and create an unbalanced image of men in society. The text focuses on love relationships and accuses the man of unsatisfying actions. Using expressions like “she’s provoking you” and “she’s making you nervous”, can reinforce the idea that women manipulate or control men in their relationships. In another case, we can also take Dafina Zeqiri’s song, which song published now in 2024, which is titled “Owl”. The use of terms such as “owl” and “stupid” to describe the male can be interpreted as a form of content of negative stereotypes towards the male gender. One of the most banal examples can be found in the song “Sinner” by Melinda Ademi. The artist, in addition to the curses she directs at the man through the text, uses insulting expressions without censorship.

The further depiction of the male as someone who has no regard for a love affair is problematic, so this idea should be removed as it may reflect a generally negative view of them. The combination of these elements can form a negative perception towards

men, reflecting them in a disadvantageous light compared to women. The use of these negative expressions can influence public opinion. In general, the song in our Kosovar society, as we have said, includes examples that promote negative stereotypes, not only for women but also for men.

Striving for Gender Equality Through Music

The music includes a wide variety of musical styles and genres. As a subgenre of the broader feminist movement, music of this type, commonly referred to as women's music or music with feminist themes, first emerged in the 1970s (Lont, 1992: 242). It contains messages that focus on women's empowerment, gender equality, questioning gender roles, and addressing social and political concerns that affect women. In the case of Kosovo, modern Kosovar musicians have used music to express doubts about conventional gender roles as a result of globalization and the influence of Western music. Kosovo's music scene has changed, just like in many other regions of the world. In the field of music, especially women are focused on the lyrics of songs which are characteristic of feminist music. The lyrics of the songs are used as tools for sensitizing the general public to improve the social position of women in Kosovar society. They have spoken about topics such as women's empowerment, gender equality, and escape from backward and patriarchal social norms. The successes and achievements of Kosovar performers such as Rita Ora, Dua Lipa and Era Istrefi, who have received numerous international awards, are important examples that motivate the public to support gender equality policies. At this point, the artists in question, through their creativity, promote the empowerment of women, contributing to the advancement of gender equality. These and many other musicians have challenged gender norms through their music, drawing courage, support, and strength from within. The new generation and aspiring artists are inspired by their success in pursuing their talents

regardless of gender and fighting prejudice, signifying a change in the perception of gender roles in Kosovo. In addition, male and female musicians have collaborated in Kosovo's music scene, thus encouraging inclusivity and dismantling limitations based on gender or social norms. Musical collaborations have demonstrated equality and togetherness, highlighting the fact that creativity transcends gender boundaries.

However, despite these positive developments, difficulties remain. It takes time for cultural norms and social attitudes deeply rooted in society to change. While attitudes are changing in the music domain of Kosovo, many aspects of society continue to adhere to conventional gender stereotypes. Beyond the music industry, activists and lawmakers must also continue their efforts to support gender equality. It is important that music in Kosovo, with its lasting influence, signals social change by encouraging dialogue and opening the door to a future that is more inclusive and that offers equality and equal opportunities for all.

Improving the aspect of gender equality in music lyrics can be a complex process, but there are certainly some possible steps that can help in this direction. Our efforts in this study address the challenges and opportunities that lyrics present regarding how they can help overcome stereotypes and promote values that encourage a more equal and just society. First of all, it brings awareness and education. In this regard, lyricists can engage in recognizing the impact of their words and messages on society. Educating and raising their awareness about the importance of gender equality can also bring about positive changes. In this respect, musical texts should use language that respects both genders. Of course, using conscious language can help avoid gender stereotypes and discrimination. Also, including different perspectives and multiple stories in music lyrics can help create a richer and more equal cultural landscape.

Another very important thing to discuss is not only the lyrics but also the role of the music. In this regard, some researchers claim that listening to music is an emotional and educational experience that potentially shapes an individual's values, actions, and worldview (Levy & Byrd, 2012: 64). Since music is an accepted and accepted phenomenon in society, it often reflects cultural values and norms, but it can also be used to influence social change by challenging or changing stereotypes. The music has reinforced the discrimination made in the lyrics. Starting from the power of music, the use of song as a melody from folk melodic, or even from pop and other modern mutations, to emphasize a special value for a gender, can be seen, we say, as an additional element that has been used against the female gender, but also vice versa. This element, through discussions, can be addressed from the side of social transformation towards a fairer and more equal society.

In other words, building a gender-equal culture in song lyrics is a long-term process and requires extensive collaboration from artists, songwriters, creators, and listeners. However, this is an important and possible effort to contribute to the change and improvement of the aspect of gender equality in our Kosovar culture.

Research Problem

Music, as a powerful socializing tool for all ages, within the complex cultural structure of Kosovo, in general, affects the creation and preservation of cultural, national, and gender identity, etc. Also, music reflects social norms and how it reflects and perpetuates gender prejudices and stereotypes in the mosaic of Kosovar culture. As gender roles and stereotypes continue to remain an integral part of this mosaic of cultures, we encounter them everywhere. Texts, performance techniques, artists' identities, and audience views all reflect these roles, which can either challenge or reinforce gender biases. Deciphering

the complex framework of social ideas and expectations in Kosovo requires an understanding of the music in which gender norms are represented, supported, or subverted.

The research problem related to the highlighting of gender stereotypes from song lyrics in Kosovar society may include certain challenges and aspects. The first is the general representation of many song lyrics from a wide range of genres and artists to reflect the cultural and musical reality in Kosovo as accurately as possible. The second is contextual analysis, which implies that in some cases, a song's lyrics can be understood differently by listeners, so a careful analysis of the context and interpretation of the lyrics is needed. The third is related to the relationship with the culture and social context, which means that the researcher must deeply understand Kosovo's social, cultural, and historical context to get the best out of the lyrics of the songs about the creation of gender stereotypes. Fourth, is the use of adapted methodology, which means the state of an adapted methodology that can cope with the complexity of the analysis of song lyrics and the identification of gender stereotypes. The fifth and last one is research ethics, which means respect for ethical standards and the involvement of researchers in an appropriate manner in contact and analysis with research subjects.

Method

Research Model

The research was conducted through a combination of methods, including document analysis and an ethnographic research approach. The methodology has resulted in the identification and presentation of gender roles and stereotypes displayed in a wide range of musical texts in the context of Kosovar society. First, the use of content analysis has allowed for an in-depth examination of song lyrics, identifying and documenting deeply embedded gender views in the populace. This method has enabled a deep understanding of how song

lyrics reflect and influence gender norms and perceptions in Kosovar society. Second, the research included an ethnographic research approach, focusing attention on the social environment where this phenomenon takes place. This approach has played a key role in improving the full understanding of the representation of gender roles in the cultural context of Kosovo. Thus, by integrating ourselves into the social environment, we have been offered the opportunity to better understand the norms and patterns of behavior in this society.

The combination of these two methods has enabled a rich and in-depth analysis of

gender roles, aiming to decipher the complex dynamics of their creation and continuity within the unique cultural context of Kosovo through the analysis of the lyrics of the songs.

Songs examined within the scope of the research

As we have emphasized above, to analyze the gender stereotypes in Kosovar society as clearly as possible, we have chosen the lyrics of some well-known songs of the Albanian folk music repertoire, as well as songs of modern music, including the genres of hip-hop and rap.

Table 1. Songs selected for analysis

Song	Artist	Release Year	Genre
"My son was born and I am very happy"	Many folk music artists sing it	Unknown	Folk song
"There's nothing like the boy"	Many folk music artists sing it	Unknown	Folk song
"God of the House"	Many folk music artists sing it	Unknown	Folk song
"Whoever has a daughter, has the world"	Many folk music artists sing it	Unknown	Folk song
"Single Girls"	Shyhrete Behluli and Engjëllusha Salihu	2020	These songs in our society are known as "wedding songs" (mixed folk and modern)
"Oh You are a Fool"	Gili	2013	Mixed "folk-funk"
"Owl"	Dafina Zeqiri	2024	Mixed "pop-Latin reggae"
"Sinner"	Melinda Ademi	2021	Hip-Hop
"Bitch"	Getinjo	2015	Rap
"Ana"	Nora Istrefi ft Gjiko	2019	Pop
"X5"	Gjiko x Melinda	2020	Hip-Hop
"Criminal"	Yll Limani & Loredana	2022	Pop
"Murderer"	Don Xhoni	2022	Hip-Hop
"Liar"	Yll Limani	2021	Flamenco

At this point, we have chosen the lyrics of popular songs such as “My son was born and I am very happy”, “There’s nothing like the Boy”, “God of the House”, “Whoever Has a Daughter, has the world”, because these represent a part of the cultural and social heritage of Kosovar society. These songs have a great impact and are popular with the public, and they clearly express gender stereotypes. Through them, we have perpetuated traditional representations and certain gender traits, which affect our perception of gender roles and identity.

On the other hand, modern music songs such as “Single Girls”, “Oh You Are a Fool”, “Bitch”, “Owl”, “Sinner”, “Cheater”, “Criminal”, “Ana”, “X5”, “Murderer”, “Liar”, express similar stereotypes, but through them also show changes in the way today’s society experiences and expresses the role of gender. The lyrics of these songs often use ugly terms to describe women and men, bringing attention to the contradictions and gender tensions of modern Kosovar society. These songs try to reflect the reality of today’s society and bring attention to the gender stereotypes and divisions that still exist.

For this reason, the selection of these songs for analysis is important, as they provide a complete overview of gender perceptions and concepts in Kosovar society, allowing us to better understand and analyze changes and continuity in this area.

Method of study analysis

The analytical method we used to explain the formation of gender stereotypes in the lyrics of the songs of Kosovar society is a structured process of examining the content of the lyrics to identify and interpret the elements that contribute to the formation and spread of gender stereotypes. This method uses a systematic and objective approach to analyze the content of texts, including the analysis of words, themes, images, and the social and cultural context in which these texts operate. In the beginning,

as we have mentioned above, selecting texts for analysis is an important step, where different folkloric and modern songs have been chosen to reflect the extent of gender stereotypes through time and in different ways. After selecting the texts, the content analysis has begun, which is an important part of this analysis. This section includes identifying the use of language, symbols, and images that reinforce traditional gender stereotypes and evaluating how female and male characters are presented and treated in these texts.

In addition to identifying stereotypes, the content analysis is also focused on identifying alternative representations of gender roles and progressive messages in song lyrics. This includes assessing how certain texts may challenge or change traditional gender stereotypes.

The use of this method has allowed for a holistic approach to understanding how song lyrics in Kosovar society reflect and influence the formation of gender stereotypes. At this point, through content analysis, it has been possible to identify the complex social and cultural dynamics that shape and change gender stereotypes in this specific context.

Findings

In the following, we have brought some fragments from the selected songs where we have focused on the use of language and the semantic structure of the text.

The Song “God of The House”

The melody of the song is based on the Albanian folkloric melody. The excerpt is taken from the beginning of the song. In the text, the term “master of the house” is used, this term describes a dominant and authoritative role for the man, reducing the role of the woman in the home. This reinforces traditional gender stereotypes. The prayer to have an open door always describes a total commitment to the husband as the head of the household.

Zoti i shtëpisë [God of the House]

[Fragment from the Albanian folk song]

Transcribed by: Armend Xhoni

Oh— zo - ti shpisë tu rrit ne- ra, gjith' me
 Oh— god(of)- house more honoru you, [I hope that the

3
 gzi- me o tu qelt de ra.
 door of your house will open with joy]

Figure 1. Fragment from the song “God of the House”

The Song “There’s Nothing Like The Boy”

The melody of the song is also created by Albanian folkloric melodrama centered on the musical style of Central Albania. The text praises the son. At this point, the text expresses positive terms to reinforce the

son’s role as the leader of the family and as a model of success and love. The use of “MaeshAllah” reinforces the idea of blessed happiness and blessing from god for the son’s presence in their lives.

Folk song - Ska si cuni [There's nothing like the boy]

Fragment from the song's chorus

Transcribed by: Armend Xhoni

Cun çun çun, haj - de mea - sh - Allah,
 Boy boy boy come as God willed

5
 lum lum lum no - na që të ka.
 [we are full of love with you] [mother is very happy to have you.]

Figure 2. Fragment from the song “There’s nothing like the Boy”

The Song “Oh You Are a Fool”

The melody of the song combines the folk music of southern Albania with the funk genre. The excerpt is taken from the chorus of the song. The use of the expression “Oh you are a Fool”, describes the man as a person of limited intelligence and naive. As the song continues, “She makes a fairy tale through the city”, here men are described as easy-cheating and without control over relationships.

Gili - Oh sa budalle [Oh You are a Fool]

Fragment from the song's chorus

Transcribed by: Armend Xhoni

Oh sa bu-dall bu - dall bu-dall, me mu -aje tall e un;tkam dasht vertet.
 Oh you are a fool fool fool, you made fun of me, I was really love with you

5
 Oh sa bu-dall' bu - dall' bu-dall', ajo pot ban' prall', prall' në për qy- tet.
 Oh you are a fool fool fool, she make you a fairy tale throught the city.

Figure 3. Fragment from the song “Oh you are a Fool”

The Song “Owl”

The melodic type of the song is created in the spirit of modern pop music. The excerpt is taken from the chorus of the song. Initially, the title “Owl” describes the

male as inappropriate and evil. The lyrics in the chorus reinforce the idea of the man’s indifference and idiocy, presenting him as an uninteresting and inadequate person.

Dafina Zaqiri - Huti [Owl]

Fragment from the song's chorus

Transcribed by: Armend Xhoni

Ku ku çfar' hu - ti sdi çka ke me - nu ti,
 Oh what an owl, I don't know what you were thinking

5
 për mu mos u nal ti jo ma mir' pa mu.
 don't stop for me, no it's better without me.

Figure 4. Fragment from the song “Owl”

Conclusion and Discussion

In recent times, researchers of musicology and sociology have increasingly focused on the close connection between music and its influence on the formation of gender stereotypes in society. The contribution of music to the creation of concepts of gender and sexuality is evident, and for this matter, a concrete researcher has pointed out that music can be analyzed and criticized as a form of gender discourse (Werner, 2019: 3). In this context, our study, as its main goal,

has focused on the role of music in Kosovar society and the impact of song lyrics on the formation and expression of the combination of roles and gender stereotypes.

On the other hand, the role of the media, especially television and video clips on social networks, has a significant impact on the formation of public perceptions and beliefs. A study states that “social media does not reflect the wide diversity of genders at all, but mainly conveys traditional images of men and women. Existing gender stereotypes are

even reinforced (ISS, 2022: 1). This non-reflection of diversity in social media may express a concentration of certain gender standards, conveying a conservative and traditional image of the role of men and women. Meanwhile, the expression “existing gender stereotypes are even reinforced” emphasizes that social media not only does not challenge existing stereotypes but also contributes to maintaining and reinforcing them. This may include presenting men and women in a limited way, relegating them to traditional roles, and not reflecting their true diversity and variability in society.

Furthermore, the analysis of song lyrics in Kosovar society has revealed a wide range of deep gender stereotypes embedded in their lyrics. Songs such as “My son was born” and “There is nothing like a son”, have conveyed a traditional image and have reinforced the stereotypes created about the role of men and women. Despite some attempts by new songs, especially in the hip-hop and rap genres, to challenge these prejudices and express a critical perspective on male and female roles, most songs still maintained a mirrored image of gender roles. However, highlighting the difficulties and challenges that still exist in this context, prompts a call for a continued effort by musicians, activists, and legislators to support gender equality and change deeply rooted norms in Kosovar society.

This study highlights the importance of using conscious language and the inclusion of different perspectives in song lyrics. These are certainly critical steps towards changing stereotypes and promoting a fairer and more equal society. In this context, music, as a tool accepted and loved in society, has an important role in positively affecting social change. In this regard, a researcher claims that music is one of the most important forms of social change in cultural history and the study of society has always been related to music (Spencer-Espinosa, 2022: 62).

Recommendations

Recommendations for Researchers

- To focus on the most in-depth analysis of musical texts to reveal gender stereotypes at the level of their depth;
- To conduct longitudinal studies to monitor the change of gender stereotypes over time and to observe the effects of social changes in popular music;
- Use different, including qualitative analysis and field studies to understand the context and influence of the musical text in the formation of gender stereotypes.

Recommendations for Applicants

- Create conscious music and lyrics that promote a more equal reflection of gender roles in society;
- Use music as a tool to challenge gender stereotypes and raise awareness of the harm they can cause;
- Focus on creating a music culture that respects and represents gender diversity in encouraging ways.

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Biodata of Authors



Dr. sc. **Bahtije Gerbeshi Zylfiu** currently holds the position of Associate Professor in the Master and Bachelor Programs at the Faculty of Education, University of Prishtina in Kosovo. She finished her PhD studies in the Faculty of Philosophy, Department of History at the University of Prishtina in the year 2003. Her main research interests are history, culture, gender, democratic citizenship, and Interculturalism. Currently, she is teaching the following subjects: Social studies, Education for democratic citizenship, Teaching/Learning history, Action research, Social harmony and conflict resolution, Teaching the history of religions, and Intercultural competencies at the OTH-Regensburg and Amberg-Weiden (Germany). She has published a considerable number of scientific papers in various journals as well as two books, one focusing on gender issues and the other one on culture. Furthermore, she has actively participated in several scientific conferences (oral presentations) in different countries around the world and has made significant contributions to national and international projects—affiliation: University of Prishtina, Prishtina, Kosovo.

Affiliation: University of Prishtina, Kosovo.

Email: bahtije.gerbeshi@uni-pr.edu

ORCID: 0000-0002-0740-808X

Academiaedu: <https://independent.academia.edu/BahtijeGerbeshi>

Researchgate: <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Bahtije-Zylfiu>



Msc. **Armend Xhoni** studied musicology at the AAB University in Kosovo and music theory studies at the University of Tetovo in North Macedonia. He completed his post-graduate studies at the University of Tirana, Albania in the department of musicology and pedagogy. He also has a master's degree in the program of modern music, digital production, and management, with a profile in composition. He is currently engaged as a lecturer at AAB College, Kosovo.

Affiliation: AAB College, Kosovo.

Email: arm.xhoni@gmail.com / xhoni51@hotmail.com

ORCID: 0000-0002-3978-6237

Academiaedu: <https://independent.academia.edu/xhoniarmend>

Researchgate: <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Armend-Xhoni-2>