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Research Article ♪ Araştırma Makalesi

Politics of lyrics in the UK and Türkiye: A comparison of early punk music in the United Kingdom and Türkiye

Şarkı sözlerinin politikası: Birleşik Krallık ve Türkiye'de erken dönem punk müziğinin bir karşılaştırması

Arda Arıkan[1], Cenk Takım[1], Claudia Lynn Nickolson[2]

[1] Akdeniz University, Faculty of Letters, Antalya, Türkiye.

[2] University of North Carolina at Pembroke, Former Associate Professor of Teacher Education, Pembroke, NC, United States.

ABSTRACT

This article compares two early punk cases from the UK and Türkiye, drawing on lyric-based textual analyses of selected songs by the Sex Pistols and Çığrışım/Tünay Akdeniz, and analyzing six songs produced between 1975 and 1978. We conducted a comparative thematic analysis of six song lyrics to understand how cultural and political pressures shaped the bands' music, as reflected in their lyrics. Results showed that the Sex Pistols' Anarchy in the U.K., Satellite, and I Wanna Be Me present punk as a form of public antagonism and resistance to the UK's national consensus, achieved through a mediated identity. In the case of Çığrışım and Tünay Akdeniz, in Salak, Dişi Denen Canlı, and Mesela Mesele, punk appears less as resistance to the nation's established profile of identities and more as resistance to Turkish honor dynamics stemming from their families and immediate social environments. This paper demonstrates that punk's resistant rhetoric is shaped by its cultural and political targets, underscoring the organic relationship between punk groups and the cultural and market conditions of their environments. In this sense, it can be concluded that in both cases the target of antagonism shifts to fit broader cultural and political conditions, while punk's resistant nature remains regardless of geographic origin. Although the sample size of the current study is small, practical implications include examining cases beyond early recordings, such as media coverage, distribution, and potential profits, to understand the punk movement's many faces across geographies.

Keywords: punk, resistance, antagonism, culture industry, the Sex Pistols, Çığrışım and Tünay Akdeniz

ÖZ

Bu makale, Birleşik Krallık ve Türkiye'den iki erken punk örneğinin karşılaştırmalı bir incelemesini sunmaktadır. Sex Pistols ile Çığrışım/Tünay Akdeniz'in seçilen şarkılarının söz temelli metinsel analizine dayanarak 1975 ile 1978 yılları arasında üretilmiş toplam altı şarkıyı çözümlemektedir. Kültürel ve siyasal baskıların grupların müzik üretimine ve bu üretimin sözlerine yansımasına etkisini anlamak amacıyla altı şarkı sözü üzerinde karşılaştırmalı bir tematik inceleme yapılmıştır. Bulgular, Sex Pistols'un *Anarchy in the U.K.*, *Satellite* ve *I Wanna Be Me* adlı şarkılarının punk müziği, dolayımlanmış bir kimlik üzerinden inşa edilen Birleşik Krallık'ın ulusal uzlaşısına yönelik kamusal bir husumet ve direniş biçimi olarak sunulduğunu göstermiştir. Çığrışım ve Tünay Akdeniz'in *Salak*, *Dişi Denen Canlı* ve *Mesela Mesele* adlı şarkılarında ise punk, ulusun yerleşik kimlik profiline yönelik bir direnişten çok, aileden ve yakın toplumsal çevreden kaynaklanan Türk namus dinamiklerine yönelik bir yansıma olarak görünür. Bu makale, punk müziğinin direnişçi söyleminin kültürel ve siyasal hedefleri tarafından biçimlendirildiğini; böylelikle punk grupları ile içinde bulundukları çevrenin kültürel koşulları arasındaki organik ilişkiyi belirginleştirdiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu anlamda her iki örnekte de husumetin hedefi daha geniş kültürel ve siyasal koşullara uyacak biçimde değişmekte; ancak punk müziğin direnişçi doğası, coğrafi kökeninden bağımsız olarak yerinde kalmaktadır. Mevcut çalışmanın örneklem boyutu sınırlı olmakla birlikte, punk hareketinin coğrafyalar arasındaki pek çok yüzünü kavrayabilmek için medya yansımaları, dolaşım ve olası kazançlar gibi erken kayıtların ötesindeki örnekler incelenebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: punk, direniş, kültür endüstrisi, Sex Pistols, Çığrışım ve Tünay Akdeniz

Arda Arıkan – ardaarikan@akdeniz.edu.tr
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1. INTRODUCTION

In 1978, the term punk-rock appeared on a Turkish record for the first time, on Tünay Akdeniz and Çığrışım's Mesela Mesele & Dişi Denen Canlı, and is widely regarded as the beginning of a punk scene in Türkiye (Alparslan & İnce, 2022; Way & Wallace, 2016). It does not define a punk movement in Türkiye, but, together with their earlier song Salak (1975), it creates an early case in which the punk label was claimed. This article reads the lyrics of these recordings alongside three contemporaneous recordings (1975–1978) by the Sex Pistols, who had become internationally known for their provocative punk tone.

Punk is often treated as the nasty kid of the neighborhood especially by conservative audiences: "Absolutely bloody revolting [...] a deliberate incitement to anti-social behaviour," was once written about punk music and its culture in the UK (Street et al., 2018, p. 18), showing how punk was primarily received not as a form of art or even music, but as a disruptive problem requiring cultural, social, and political control and regulation. In Cohen's (2011) classic formulation, a "moral panic" arises when "a condition, episode, person or group of people emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests," (p. 1) and punk's offensive style was readily cast in those terms. Yet, the same provocation appeared to be profitable as the band's deviance was "deodorized and repackaged" as a business idea (Street et al., 2018, p. 27). Hence, in the band's case, what began as an attack on consensus in business form was reissued as a recognizable brand of rebellion (Adorno, 2001; Thornton, 1995).

Although the Sex Pistols' provocative tone toward nationalism and Englishness became, in time, both a public scandal and a marketable narrative about English culture (Adams, 2008; Ehmann, 2022), they are a reference point for early punk's repertoire: its idiom of insult, mockery, and refusal, all of which are locally aimed in Tünay Akdeniz and Çığrışım's recordings. The three Sex Pistols recordings distribute their hostility across the nation and the state in *Anarchy in the U.K.*, the media and manufactured identity in *I Wanna Be Me*, and, in *Satellite*, a woman cast as suburban inauthenticity. The three Çığrışım/Tünay Akdeniz songs, by contrast, concentrate antagonism almost entirely on romance and intimacy, where the figure of the woman and the man becomes the site at which gossip, family, and honor discipline the self.

Music and socio-cultural politics are closely and directly related, especially when different groups listen to, produce, or use music, whether or not they are aware of the political effects of their artistic activities. In this sense, the antagonistic repertoire travels but changes shape across different locales in the selected early punk cases. Through a close comparative reading of these recordings, this article argues that in the selected recordings, antagonistic repertoire, its idiom of insult, mockery, and refusal, is portable but locally aimed. This is not, however, a characterization of British or Turkish punk as a whole; the corpus is small and purposively chosen, and our claims do not extend to punk as a genre. Furthermore, rather than discussing whether Tünay Akdeniz & Çığrışım was a punk movement that existed in the 1970s, we take the 1978 record, together with their earlier song *Salak* (1975), as an early case.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Considering both the Türkiye and the UK settings, this study centers on a single organizing idea that punk supplies a portable stylistic repertoire, a set of rhetorical tools (insult, degradation, provocation, refusal) that travels readily across borders, while the targets it is aimed at are dictated by local socio-cultural conditions (Dunn, 2008; Way & Wallace, 2016). On this view, punk's circulation is not the export of a fixed politics but a process of adaptation, in which the imported is re-anchored to whatever authorities are most tangible in a given setting.

Research has shown that punk music started to affect both fans and bands in Muslim countries such as Indonesia as early as the 1970s as punk members, more and more, participated "in a set of subcultural practices that include hanging out in public places with other punks, attending punk concert events, drinking alcohol (a grave offense in Islam), and wearing punk clothing and hairstyles" (Wallach, 2008, p. 102). The Turkish setting was shaped by a long state project of musical Westernization. "The political rulers of the early Republic," starting in the 1920s, "pressed on, authoritatively, reshaping institutions teaching art and organizing their activities, with the aim of creating a new national elite" (Tekelioğlu, 1996, pp. 194–195). In the years that followed, these mostly Western-educated elite rulers suppressed Turkish and Arabic music and closed school departments established to teach and popularize the nation's traditional Turkish music. As part of a series of reforms aimed at westernizing the country, "a state conservatoire was founded, offering

Western-style education and repertoires" (Tekelioğlu, 1996, p. 195). Still, Arabesk music, in which "western instruments, the electrosaz, extended strings, and sometimes a quasi-polyphony were used in the Arabic manner" (Tekelioğlu, 1996, p. 211), became popular in the 1960s. Despite the "government-backed counter-campaign" that targeted it, Arabesk became "the only popular music of the 1970s" (Tekelioğlu, 1996, p. 212). However, Western-style music, including Rock and Pop, reached especially younger, urban, and Westernized audiences who listened to both Turkish and foreign singers and bands.

However, as punk music and style were imported from the UK by Turkish forerunners, some of the Turkish teenagers started to pick up what was offered to them by the movement similar to their American and British counterparts, who "picked up instruments they barely knew how to play and taught themselves quickly" by tossing "together a few chords, harsh vocals and a quick tempo to form bands that rapidly garnered fans" (OH Bondage up yours!, 2002, p. 42). At the center of the Turkish case, Tünay Akdeniz and Çığrışım are today widely regarded as the pioneers, or "godfathers" of Turkish punk, even though Akdeniz recorded only three 45-rpm singles between 1975 and 1978 (Dilmener, 2017). The punk-rock label on the 1978 recording was suggested by its producer, Nazmi Şenel, who had encountered punk while in England and who would become the first to release the Sex Pistols' *Anarchy in the U.K.* in Türkiye; by Akdeniz's own account, "in 1975 these terms did not yet exist" (Güzel, 2018).

The Turkish youth's appreciation of Western music grew steadily into the 1980s as "a certain hedonistic cosmopolitanism initiated by Özal's liberal revolution has stimulated Turkish rock and pop and has (very selectively) repositioned a number of Turkish urban sounds as World Music/World Beat" (Stokes, 1999, p. 11). "The end of the 1980s," in Arıcan's words, "were the years when dedication to various music genres such as metal, rap, or acid house often caused cultural polarizations among the fans of these different music types" (Arıcan, 2012, p. 212). Thus, fans in Türkiye, at both individual and group levels, listened to the music produced by artists who received no institutional support from the government.

Meanwhile in the UK, the Sex Pistols recorded in a Britain where crises were visible. The mid-1970s brought the 1976 sterling crisis and the International Monetary Fund's intervention, rising unemployment, and a widely felt sense of national decline that punk would later crystallize in slogans indicating there is no future (Savage, 1991; Worley, 2017). Savage (1991) further reads the band against precisely this conjuncture of post-imperial anxiety and the economic crisis since this setting makes the nation and its institutions legible as targets. For instance, by forcing Britain's self-image to appear unstable through paramilitary references in *Anarchy in the U.K.* (juxtaposing the UK with the M.P.L.A., U.D.A., and I.R.A.), the band created a shock value that redefined the nation as a war zone (Encyclopedia Britannica, n.d.-a, n.d.-b, n.d.-c).

Punk's media reception in Britain is also worth distinguishing. The popular press, together with sections of the political and cultural establishment, treated punk as a public-order problem. The December 1976 television exchange between the band and the broadcaster Bill Grundy, the tabloid outrage that followed, and the establishment reaction to punk as a "moral panic" exemplify the responses to British punk in detail (Cohen, 2011; Street et al., 2018). In the Turkish context, this manifests as a safeguard of creative independence against both Islamic ideology and capitalist standardization (Alparslan & İnce, 2022). In short, punk's spatial expansion can be conceptualized as a process of "glocalization," wherein global goods are adapted to meet the tastes and sociopolitical structures of local markets (Way & Wallace, 2016, p. 112). As Byers (2002) rightly puts, "The fact that the Sex Pistols actually lived by the codes of punk, living in anarchy with a general disregard for those in power, was also appealing to those who fantasized about becoming members of the culture" (p. 72), suggesting the need for us to bring forward an "analysis of other punk rock groups and their contribution to punk culture" (p. 98). Thus, comparative analyses of punk music across different geographical locations can help us understand how regional cultural and political pressures shaped its formation, laying bare the overall reality of punk, as this current study aims to do.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study is a comparative, qualitative close reading of six song lyrics to interrogate the resistant rhetoric of early punk in two distinct geographical and sociopolitical contexts. Departing from an intentionalist approach that seeks to reconstruct the lyricists' subjective motivations, this study adopts a contextualist hermeneutic stance, situating lyrical content within the specific sociopolitical milieus of late-1970s Britain and Türkiye.

The selection is purposive rather than representative: the Sex Pistols' *Anarchy in the U.K.*, *Satellite* and *I Wanna Be Me* (all 1976–77), and Çığrışım/Tünay Akdeniz's *(1975) Salak, Dişi Denen Canlı* and *Mesela Mesele* (1978). The Turkish songs were chosen because they are the earliest recordings by the act that first claimed the punk-rock label in Türkiye, making them a natural case for studying that label's early, anomalous appearance. The Sex Pistols songs were chosen as a contemporaneous benchmark from the act that had, by 1976–77, come to stand internationally for punk's provocation. We deliberately hold the unit of analysis small because our question concerns the early cases, not the general British punk or Turkish punk, about which six lyrics could say very little. We make no claim that the songs are representative of either act's full output or of punk at large.

We retrieved the lyrics from publicly available digital archives. The Turkish lyrics are presented below in the original alongside our English translations, as is standard practice in the textual analysis of translated material; the translations aim to preserve sense and rhetorical force rather than meter. Because the article is written in English, the Sex Pistols' lyrics are quoted only in the original. To ensure linguistic equivalence for the comparative analysis, the authors translated the original Turkish lyrics of the Çığrışım and Tünay Akdeniz songs into English, prioritizing semantic nuance and rhetorical stance. Because "comparing two different authors' styles is possible only when one gains awareness of the various particularities of distinct language pieces given in literary texts in fragments" (Zorba et al., 2025, p. 24), lyrics are read at denotative and connotative levels by paying particular attention to the cultural uses of the text pieces analyzed.

The analytical procedure integrates thematic analysis with the constant comparison method, a process that facilitates pattern identification through iterative engagement with the text. We do not attempt to recover the authors' private intentions as the ground of meaning; instead, we focus on antagonistic rhetoric characterized by themes of insult, degradation, refusal, and provocation. The rhetoric also encompasses sociopolitical targets, including media, identity, public order, and cultural hierarchies. Ambiguous lyrical segments were systematically re-evaluated within the context of the full song to prevent decontextualized misinterpretations. The findings are substantiated by detailed textual excerpts, enabling a transparent demonstration of how motifs are linguistically constructed.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. The UK Recordings

Across the three songs, the Sex Pistols aim their antagonism outward, but at more than one target. *Anarchy in the U.K.* takes the nation and the state; *I Wanna Be Me* takes the media and the manufactured self; *Satellite* takes a woman. The first two fit the familiar picture of punk as anti-establishment provocation; the third complicates it, and we give it particular attention because the song can routinely be read as about the suburbs when it is, more precisely, about both a woman and the suburbs.

Anarchy in the U.K. opens with a self-naming whose function is to scandalize:

Right now / I am an Antichrist / I am an anarchist / Don't know what I want, but I know how to get it / I wanna destroy the passersby / 'Cause I, I wanna be anarchy (Sex Pistols, 2012).

The most pointed move is geopolitical. By lining the country up with a sequence of armed organizations, "Is this the M.P.L.A. / Or is this the U.D.A. / Or is this the I.R.A. / I thought it was the U.K.," the song reframes Britain as a zone of military conflict, borrowing the charge of the Angolan war and the Northern Irish troubles to make national stability look like a fiction (Savage, 1991). The antagonism is outward and institutional, targeting the nation, the state, the consumer future. Subsequently, *I Wanna Be Me* redirects this same hostility toward the media and manufactured identity. The song opens inside press logic, "Turn the page, and it's / The scoop of the century [...] This is brainwash," and turns cameras and magazines into weapons:

"I got you in my camera / A second of your life ruined for life / You wanna ruin me in your magazine" (Sex Pistols, 2008).

The closing demand, "I wanna be me," reads as a refusal of the publicly manufactured self, and the wish for catastrophe, "Gimme world war three we can live again," as a grotesque fantasy of starting over. Here, the target is not the state but the apparatus of representation. The song's final movement intensifies the imagery by dragging the press into a crypt of its own making:

"Down down down down / And I'll take you down on the underground / Down in the dark and down in the crypt / Down in the dark where the typewriter fit / Down with your pen and pad ready to kill / To make me ill / [...] A typewriter god a black and white king / PVC blackboard books black and white / I wanna be me" (Sex Pistols, 2008).

The "typewriter god" condenses the song's argument into a single image: the print machinery is ranked above the people it represents, and the writer's tools are weapons "ready to kill." The speaker refuses by insisting, against those who want to absorb him, "I wanna be me."

Satellite is the song that does not fit the anti-establishment template directly, but the satellite here represents the London suburbs. Its addressee is a person, a woman, and the song is, for most of its length, an extended sexual put-down:

"Suburban kid, you got no name, / Too dumb, baby, and you got no brain [...] / You try and join the scene but you're too obscene, / You're lookin' like a big, fat, pink, baked bean, / Lookin' like a dirty lavatory, / There ain't no bid for your chastity" (Sex Pistols Official, 2010).

The chorus then twists the convention of the love song into a mock-refrain whose tenderness is undercut by the next stanza's explicit threat:

"Hey babe, I love you, I love you, I love you / You look at me but I just can't tell / You're lookin' like you just came outta hell / How did you figure that you'd be any use / When all you're gonna get is my abuse" (Sex Pistols Official, 2010).

The same speaker who repeats "I love you" in the chorus tells the woman she "came outta hell" and promises "abuse" in the next breath. The earlier line, "you're good for my shoe," works in the same direction: the woman figure is reduced to an object of use, whose only function is to be stepped on.

The geography that gives the song its title is, in context, an insult aimed at her, "You know I don't like where you come from, / It's just a satellite of London," so that discontent for the suburbs is delivered through a woman's body, intelligence, and chastity. There is a politics of authenticity here, as the speaker compares a metropolitan scene with a suburban one and, in doing so, shows how punk's anti-mainstream stance can generate its own hierarchies and exclusions (Thornton, 1995). The band's antagonism is therefore distributed on different images: the nation and state in *Anarchy in the U.K.*, the press and manufactured identity in *I Wanna Be Me*, and a suburban figure in *Satellite*. The same punk repertoire thus reaches three different targets. Turkish songs, by contrast, focus on a single target.

4.2. The Türkiye Recordings

The three Çığrışım/Tünay Akdeniz songs aim their antagonism inward, at the everyday governance of courtship in a predominantly Muslim society. Across all three, the lyric voice is a man appraising women and the social machinery (gossip, family, the judgment of elders) that surrounds romance, and across all three, that machinery is named in the vocabulary of honor dynamics as a public, reputational good (Ergil, 1980; Kalav, 2012). What looks at first like a comic complaint about love is, on closer reading, a sustained dramatization of reputation as a disciplinary force. *Salak* (idiot) narrates a love affair as a sequence of follies, each punctuated by a chanted insult, and is explicit that what ends the affair is not feeling but talk (Table 1).

Table 1

Salak (1975): Turkish original and English translation (A.K. Müzik, 2018).

Turkish (original)	English translation
Bir kerecik gördün onu, / Kalbin sanki duracaktı salak.	You saw her just once, / your heart was about to stop, idiot.
Ne çabucak aşık oldun, / Hadi gidip konuşsana salak.	How quickly you fell in love, / go on then, go talk to her, idiot.
Teklif kabul edilince, / Sevincinden uçtu bizim salak.	When his offer was accepted, / our idiot practically flew with joy.
Olacaklardan habersiz, / Nasıl bizim salak.	Unaware of what was to come, / just like our idiot.
Salak / Salak / Salak / Salak	Idiot / Idiot / Idiot / Idiot
Her gün eve geldi durdu, / Dedikodu aşkın sonu salak.	Every day she kept coming round, / gossip is the end of love, idiot.
Baba duydu ana duydu, / Biliyordum sonu buydu salak.	Dad heard, Mom heard, / I knew this would be the end, idiot.
Çok geçmeden bir gün gördüm, / Ağaç olmuş bizim salak.	Not long after, one day I saw him, / our idiot had turned into a tree.
Boynuzları tartamayım, / Yataklara düştü salak.	I cannot even count the horns, / the idiot ended up bedridden.
Salak / Salak / Salak / Salak	Idiot / Idiot / Idiot / Idiot

The insult functions as a chorus of social judgment. Romance collapses because it has become known: "Gossip is the end of love; Dad heard, Mom heard." Here reputation, not desire, is decisive (Kalav, 2012). The lover's fate, to "grow horns" (a figure of public humiliation in the 19th century Turkish novelistic tradition) and end "bedridden," confirms that the song's real subject is exposure before others.

Dişi Denen Canlı (the creature called female) builds its misogyny on the authorization of elders (Table 2).

Table 2

Dişi Denen Canlı (1978): Turkish original and English translation.

Turkish (original)	English translation
Okul dönüşü gör onu, / Saçı başı darmadağın…	See her on the way back from school, / her hair all in a mess…
Bir de diskotekte gör bak, / Böyle bir güzele bakmak, / Ayıp değil der eskiler.	Now see her at the disco, / "looking at a beauty like that / isn't a shame," say the elders.
Dişi denen canlı, / böyle işte.	The creature called female, / that's just how she is.
Peki biz ne yapacağız? / Öyle derken böyle derken, / Hangi kıza kanacağız?	So what are we going to do? / This way, that way, back and forth, / which girl are we going to be fooled by?
Dişi denen canlı, / böyle işte. / Dişi denen canlı, / böyle işte.	The creature called female, / that's just how she is. / The creature called female, / that's just how she is.

The speaker licenses his looking by quoting the authority of "the elders," and then fixes woman as a type. The refrain converts a situational observation into a sweeping generalization; the misogyny is not presented as personal idiosyncrasy but as received wisdom, backed by the voice of tradition. The closing collective question, "Which girl are we going to be fooled by?" (Ahmed Yesevi, 2011), frames women as sources of deception and men as potential victims, recasting desire as a problem of risk management.

Mesela Mesele (suppose, an important matter) turns courtship into a mechanical loop of hypotheticals (Table 3).

The blunt syntax and heavy repetition drain the scene of interiority. The song proposes that the "important matter" can simply be "solved together […] top to bottom, left to right" (Vintage Molası, 2020), a barely-veiled gesture at physical intimacy that, in the song's setting, remains taboo, so the loop never resolves. The effect is to render desire as an administrative problem to be managed under the eyes of others.

Table 3

Mesela Mesele (1978): Turkish original and English translation.

Turkish (original)	English translation
Mesela sevdin aşıksın / Mesela o seni sevmedi	Suppose you fell in love, you're head over heels, / suppose she didn't love you.
Mesela mesele mühim mesele / Gel beraber çözelim bunu seninle / Yukardan aşağı soldan sağa	An important matter, a weighty matter, / come, let's solve it together, / top to bottom, left to right.
Mesela gördün çarpıldın / Mesela o seni görmedi	You see her and are struck / she does not see you.
Mesela mektup gönderdin / Mesela o geri yolladı	Suppose you sent a letter / suppose she sent it back.
Mesela gittin yalvardın / Mesela o geri dönmedi	Suppose you went and begged / suppose she didn't come back.
Mesela birden kaybettin / Mesela o senin kalbinde	Suppose you suddenly lost her / suppose she's in your heart.
Mesela gördün çarpıldın / Mesela o onun kolunda	You see her and are struck / suppose she's on his arm.
Yukardan aşağı soldan sağa / Yukardan aşağı soldan sağa / Yukardan aşağı soldan sağa	Top to bottom, left to right / top to bottom, left to right / top to bottom, left to right.

It would be misleading to call these recordings purely "antagonistic," but these songs do resist the era's music's solemnity and, arguably, the propriety that honor culture enforces, which they expose by naming it so bluntly (Çerezcioğlu, 2014). The humor is built on the degradation of women, and the honor the songs embody is actually the lyric voice speaking from within the reputational culture it describes, sharing its terms. We therefore read the Turkish corpus as not directly antagonistic, but rather staging and exploiting the policing of intimacy rather than straightforwardly opposing it, showing a punk idiom turned upon courtship, critical of social surveillance and complicit in misogyny at once.

5. DISCUSSION

The emergence of punk subcultures in the United Kingdom and Türkiye during the 1970s offers a profound study of how local sociopolitical realities shape the targets and textures of rebellion. In the UK corpus, punk emerges amid acute social fragmentation, marked by urban decay, systemic unemployment, and a pervasive crisis of the social-democratic settlement (Worley, 2017). This environment necessitated an outward-facing rebellion, with the state infrastructure and national identity as the primary sites of contestation (Adams, 2008). Conversely, the Turkish punk corpus articulates a rebellion defined by domestic antagonism. Here, the semiotic weight of protest is directed not at the state apparatus but at the governance of intimacy and the micro-authorities that discipline social life within a secular-Muslim society. This comparative framework seeks to analyze how these divergent local pressures, i.e., state-focused infrastructural threat versus familial and honor-based policing, manifest in distinct rhetorical strategies.

On one hand, for the Turkish songs, we draw on the sociological literature on honor. It is tied to socially validated status, reputation, sexual propriety, and others' judgment, all of which regulate conduct, especially women's conduct (Ergil, 1980; Kalav, 2012; van Osch et al., 2013). Honor, in this sense, is a public, collectively enforced feeling that the Turkish lyrics repeatedly invoke. On the other hand, the UK songs illustrate an initial cultural shock starting with a perceived threat to national values, heritage, and national self-image. In other words, the Sex Pistols' punk was, at the time, seen as a site of outward public antagonism. Yet it is ultimately absorbed by the culture industry (Adorno, 2001) as a site of nostalgia and heritage value. In Ehmann's (2022) words, this shows how a controversial brand can become a popular piece of musical heritage, depending on what needs to be replayed. Both cases, therefore, do specific local-level work on one's own culture.

Across *Anarchy in the U.K.*, *Satellite*, and *I Wanna Be Me*, the lyrics present an anarchic *I* (emphasis added) who targets the national order and consumer life, followed by suburban mockery and an attack on identity constructed by the press. This clustering of targets aligns with socio-cultural realities in the UK within a conjuncture of social fragmentation, violence, and high unemployment at that time (Worley, 2017). Such antagonism targets a contestable social order, making its fragility visible. It therefore resonates with late-

1970s Britain marked by blocks, dereliction, and the urban-social crisis (Adams, 2008). As Gildart (2013) notes, the Sex Pistols' historical positioning at the center of 1970s conflicts in the UK shows that their punk challenges social orthodoxies, thereby creating shock value.

Hence, the British corpus reveals that a widespread anti-establishment attitude and a strong rejection of the system as a whole characterize the songs. *Anarchy in the U.K*. clearly incorporates sociopolitical references, including M.P.L.A., U.D.A., and I.R.A., which, interestingly, were abbreviations that mostly referred to organizations considered terrorist groups at the time. Moving from the system to the (sub)urban citizen while continuing to reject the system altogether, *I Wanna Be Me* suggests that the citizen is brainwashed by the media, which is controlled by the typewriter god. Although there is a common theme of urban alienation and interpersonal conflict across these lyrics, in *Satellite*, suburban life is depicted as a packaged product; the lyric guards punk's authenticity by placing London at the center and treating the suburbs as inferior, almost as if the suburbs cannot produce *real* rebellion (emphasis added). Overall, these lyrics convey a message of radical independence and disillusionment with British societal norms, advocating for the destruction of traditional rules to achieve true self-expression.

In the UK case, therefore, the Sex Pistols attach antagonism to national identity, public order, and mediated selfhood. However, the band does not embody all the qualities associated with the multiplicity of punk music and culture produced worldwide. As Çerezcioğlu (2014, p. 21) argues, "punk groups gained visibility as a community that reproduced a distinctive integrity of their own in the name of forming a distinct cultural group with their own morality, modes of communication, ways of living and having fun, and artistic activity", which made their stance political. Hence, in both cases, the lyric voice declares hostility towards the limits of British identity, with punk becoming a national spectacle and eliciting institutional responses. The point is not whether the Sex Pistols were authentic, but that their punk operates in a field where scandals and visibility are converted into cultural value. Over time, that same visibility also enables rereading through nostalgia and heritage, which is one way the culture industry neutralizes threats without discarding the signs that once signaled them (Adams, 2008; Ehmann, 2022).

By contrast, Çığrışım/Tünay Akdeniz uses a different scale for antagonism. Their songs target micro-authorities found in the neighborhood, ones that regulate intimacy, including family hearings, gossip, and the social talk that turns romance into a public case. Resistance is staged through scenes of everyday discipline rather than explicit confrontation. This representation matters because it shows that punk's resistance targets culturally popular, tangible forces. The songs dramatize familiar socio-cultural mechanisms such as shame, surveillance, and reputation through easily repeatable hooks and mockery, rather than relying on specialized political or historical knowledge of the countries.

Across Akdeniz's songs, the lyric voice relies on mundane, repeatable social scenarios framed by criticism of social discipline and coercion around romance, while the object of the male vocalist's desire, women, are treated as sirens rather than equal halves. Interestingly, *Salak* (idiot) echoes the Sex Pistols' lyrics in "God Save the Queen," in which the group declares that the Queen's fascist regime "made [the addressee] a moron," albeit in a slightly different way. The song narrates a rapid unfolding of events and centers on a repeated insult: "idiot." Hence, the voice judges the lover at every step, seeing, falling fast, and celebrating the accepted offer. The insult functions as a chorus of familial discipline regarding romance, marking it as stupidity. The climax is the inevitability of social policing, as the lovers' parents are not in the background here because they appear as the mechanism that functions as the policing apparatus of society.

The most politically revealing line reads like a slogan but functions as a social law: "Gossip is the end of love." The narrative then makes the enforcement mechanism explicit: "Dad heard, Mom heard." Here, romance collapses through hearing, making reputation decisive. In other words, love ends not by choice but through the circulation of talk. This matters in context, as scholarship on honor in Türkiye emphasizes social reputation as a high-stakes cultural value (Ergil, 1980; Kalav, 2012; van Osch et al., 2013). The song, therefore, refers to a mechanism in which reputation management serves as the primary form of social discipline (Kalav, 2012), as the lyrical mention of the romantic "growing horns" is not merely a metaphor but a cliché from nineteenth-century Turkish novels signifying betrayal and public humiliation. Because "well-crafted figures of speech play a crucial role in adding layers of meaning and creativity, thereby sustaining the effectiveness and memorability of songs across generations," such culture-bound metaphors enrich the song's cultural background while keeping the evolving language and attitude of the punk scene in Türkiye (Aras et al., 2024, p. 48) against the norms of the country in which it is produced.

Turkish scholarship further distinguishes honor as a socially validated status rather than an inner value, and links it to public evaluation, including others' assessments and confirmations. Ergil's (1980) sociological account of honor frames it as both aspired to and validated, and discusses how honor is tied to virtue, sexual morality, and prestige, emphasizing that it is produced through public recognition. Similarly, Kalav's (2012) analysis of honor and gender treats honor as embedded in Turkish cultural norms, which regulate behavior and sexuality. So, when the lyric turns romance into something that ends once it becomes "talk," it does not simply describe family drama but depicts reputation management operating as a form of everyday governance: a kind of micro-authority that can discipline intimacy without needing an explicit state presence.

In *Dişi Denen Canlı*, the lyric voice seeks authorization from "the elders" to legitimize its actions, reflecting a strategic use of traditional authority to avoid potential humiliation within a moral economy that fears social talk. However, the final stanza highlights a collective stance: "So what are we going to do; This way, that way, back and forth; Which girl are we going to be fooled by?" (Ahmed Yesevi, 2011). The key phrase "Be Fooled by" frames romance as deception and casts men as potential victims. The danger is not simply rejection but also distraction and a tendency to make mistakes, which can ultimately lead to public humiliation. The idea of being fooled is analytically crucial because it shows romance as a status threat, not an emotional loss, but humiliation in the eyes of others, especially other men. In a socio-psychological study on Turkish honor culture, concerns about personal and family honor are highlighted as intensifying responses to insults and social threats (van Osch et al., 2013), consistent with the idea of reputation as collectively rather than individually consequential. This explains why *Dişi Denen Canlı* treats desire as risk management: the anxiety of being fooled is calibrated to public evaluation, which is also why the lyric evokes a misogynistic attitude and seeks authorization and legibility within the moral economy it negotiates. Moreover, in terms of moral and social economy and gendered judgment, research on female vocalists in Türkiye has also shown that societal judgment and, thus, pressures fortify "sexist discrimination in the music industry," exemplifying the perspective that Turkish songs represent (Uçar Tören & Sazak, 2024, p. 319).

Unlike the British corpus, the Turkish corpus emphasizes the complexities of romantic relationships and the social consequences of emotional vulnerability. A key theme is the uncertainty and emotional strain of unrequited love. This interpersonal focus is set within a context of social surveillance tied to reputation, as the songs show. There is also a strong focus on how external observers view the female subject in various social settings, such as schools and discos. Therefore, Turkish songs consistently explore the anxieties of individuals navigating romantic relationships under the judgmental eyes of society.

Comparison reveals that in each setting, the imported socio-cultural context is re-anchored to the most tangible local authority: British songs to national institutions and the press; Turkish songs to family, gossip, and honor. This is what it means for the repertoire to be portable but locally aimed, and it has a further consequence. For instance, because the Turkish songs fasten onto mechanisms everyone recognizes (shame, surveillance, reputation) through repeatable hooks and mockery, they remain legible without any specialist political knowledge, and in Adorno's (2001) terms, the form favors what is audible and repeatable under local conditions of circulation. The British case, meanwhile, displays the longer arc that the culture industry traces in response to such provocation: the Sex Pistols' threat to national self-image was, in time, recoded as heritage and nostalgia (Adams, 2008; Ehmann, 2022), neutralized not by censorship but by absorption.

Finally, another concept helps to articulate how punk's repertoire is received and absorbed. It is that punk's global expansion is a process of "glocalization," wherein global goods are adapted to meet the tastes and sociopolitical structures of local markets (Way & Wallace, 2016, p. 112), and, paradoxically, the Do-It-Yourself (DIY) ethic, which asserts a claim to creative autonomy and a rejection of profit-driven motives, remains embedded within the capitalist logic of production and distribution (Hesmondhalgh, 1997; Jones, 2021). This dynamic manifests in the Turkish context as a safeguard of creative independence against both Islamic ideology and capitalist standardization (Alparslan & İnce, 2022). Yet, as Bourdieu (1996, p. 12) asserts, there is "no way out of the game of culture," so while appearing anti-cultural, the band ultimately operates within the broader framework of the socio-cultural policies.

6. CONCLUSION

"Writing about punk has always been a risky business, especially when one is approaching it from an academic perspective," as "punk is anti-academic and supposedly anti-formal" reality, which "prioritizes the lived experience over both scholarly theory and mediated opinion" (Reddington, 2016, p. 91). However, to bring new insight into the evolution of punk and its global repercussions, this paper compares two punk groups from different cultural geographies, and the findings show that differences in political perceptions and aspirations between these two groups may primarily stem from geography-bound cultural differences. Our comparison also shows that punk can betray itself in multiple ways. In the UK set, *Satellite* performs subcultural boundary work by degrading the suburban figure and centering London as the legitimate site of rebellion. It illustrates how punk can oppose mainstream hierarchies while establishing a new hierarchy within the subculture (Thornton, 1995). This complication strengthens the culture-industry argument because a marketable posture can coexist with familiar social scripts, thereby reducing moral risk and improving legibility (Adorno, 2001). At this point, we remember the historical differences between the UK and Türkiye, the former a long-established democracy, the latter facing a military coup after a decade of political instability marked by terror, protests, and imprisonments in a country where a Muslim majority population is trying to exercise a secular democratic government through endless coalitions and collapses.

In conclusion, the British corpus primarily takes a broad, confrontational stance, targeting the state, the media, and consumerist culture's shopping scheme with a pronounced nihilistic tone that aims to dismantle institutional authority rather than uphold social harmony. In contrast, the Turkish one remains domestic and family-oriented, emphasizing the complexities of maintaining emotional relationships amid anxieties stemming from family pressures. While the British corpus actively seeks anarchy, its Turkish counterpart focuses on managing the challenges of love affairs at the expense of their social reputation. While in Britain the community acts as a systemic force of brainwashing, in Türkiye, it is replaced by the family, more specifically, by one's parents, who, through gossip and parental authority, play a decisive role in shaping an individual's life. In either case, regardless of who or what they target, the punks of both countries in the 1970s seem to feel that their lives are monitored and regulated by external forces, whether political authorities or family members. In both countries, despite the differences mentioned, these young men feel trapped and emotionally overwhelmed, as external influences control their lives and they react to them. This feeling, as our data indicate, makes punk what it is, regardless of the geographies in which it is lived and experienced.

Ethical approval

Ethical committee approval is not required for this research as it does not involve the use of human or animal subjects or sensitive data.

Author contribution

Study conception and design: AA, CT, CLN; data collection: AA, CT, CLN; analysis and interpretation of results: AA, CT, CLN; draft manuscript preparation: AA, CT, CLN. All authors reviewed the results and approved the final version of the article.

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During the preparation of this work, the authors used Claude (Anthropic) for language editing, formatting, structural revision and reference checking. After using this tool, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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Çalışmanın tasarımı ve konsepti: AA, CT, CLN; verilerin toplanması: AA, CT, CLN; sonuçların analizi ve yorumlanması: AA, CT, CLN; çalışmanın yazımı: AA, CT, CLN. Tüm yazarlar sonuçları gözden geçirmiş ve makalenin son halini onaylamıştır.

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