

Kardeş Türküler as ‘art action’: The multiple cultural heritages of Anatolia

OZAN EREN 

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Sociology, Maltepe University, Istanbul, Türkiye and Center for Advanced Studies in Music (MIAM) of ITU, Istanbul, Türkiye

E-mail: ozaneren84@hotmail.com

Abstract

This article focuses on Kardeş Türküler, a band that reflects the multiple cultural heritages of Anatolia in its concerts and albums. Kardeş Türküler has taken a unique stance in choosing to express itself from a culturally pluralistic perspective rather than following a single language or identity. Referring to Kardeş Türküler as ‘art action’, and utilising the non-reductive methods of John Street that focus on the two-way interaction between music and politics, I conducted in-depth interviews in 2017, 2020 and 2021 with the core members and the former coach of the group regarding its intellectual roots and internal modus operandi. There are three main reasons for Kardeş Türküler’s deep engagement with music as protest: being against the cultural–artistic policies of the Republican period; the political meaning of making multilingual music in Türkiye; and Kardeş Türküler’s engagement with post-neoliberal street protests such as the Gezi Park movement.

Introduction

This article shows how the *Kardeş Türküler* (whose name translates as ‘Ballads of Fraternity’) project represents a deep engagement with music as protest. Formed in 1993 in Türkiye, Kardeş Türküler is an ethnic/folkloric band reflecting the multiple cultural heritages of Anatolia¹ in its concerts and albums. Kardeş Türküler’s engagement with music as protest rests on three things: opposition to the cultural-artistic policies of the Republican period;² the political meaning of making multilingual

¹ It is worth noting that Anatolia today mainly constitutes the Asian part of Türkiye. Having a unique location that includes the continents of both Asia and Europe, from the beginnings of civilisation the Anatolian peninsula was a region that hosted many migrations. Owing to these various population movements, Anatolia has always been a multicultural place bringing together different ethnic groups, languages, cultures and beliefs.

² In Türkiye, the Republican period started on 29 October 1923. With the declaration of the Turkish Republic, the assembly elected Mustafa Kemal as its first president. This period was characterised by rapid restructuring of the institutions according to the ideology of the newly established state. For a

music in the 1990s, when Kardeş Türküler began to be active; and Kardeş Türküler's engagement with post-neoliberal street protests such as the Gezi Park movement.³ In addition, my interviews with the band showed that core members of Kardeş Türküler also understood their music primarily as 'protest'.

There are particular reasons for choosing Kardeş Türküler among many other protest bands and musicians. First and foremost, Kardeş Türküler has been able to endure for many years owing to its work discipline in a country like Türkiye, where bands often break apart because of conflicts of interests (Eren 2018, p. 152).⁴ A band's survival for 30 years is a remarkable exception, not only in Türkiye's musical scene, but also in the rest of the world. Kardeş Türküler's longevity as a band and its perseverance in staying together, despite possible conflicts between its members, are the main grounds for choosing Kardeş Türküler as the subject of this article.

Various studies have centred on major figures of protest music in Türkiye, including Orhan Gencebay, Bülent Ortaçgil, Grup Yorum and Özlem Tekin, based on the period in which they appeared on the music scene.⁵ However, in Türkiye there has been no holistic sociological analysis of Kardeş Türküler and their protest music.⁶ It is important to note that the political conditions in Türkiye did not permit artistic performance in other languages, and the years when Kardeş Türküler was forming as a band could not be described as years of 'cultural diversity'. This raises questions about how such a group could take shape and persevere in such a political climate. First of all, how could it adopt a common stance despite the fact that its members come from different ethnic/national backgrounds? Secondly, as the band positioned itself in the political and musical spheres of the time, was it focused on the transformation of politics into art, or vice versa? More importantly, when considering protest music as contextual,⁷ how does Kardeş Türküler position

detailed historical account of this period, see, for example, Çınar and Sayin (2014, pp. 367–68) and Ongur (2016, pp. 1–2).

³ Being one of the largest acts of civil disobedience, Gezi Park protests began on 28 May 2013 in Istanbul. There have been several reflections on and analyses of these protests (for example, della Porta 2020; della Porta and Atak 2017). When I define the Gezi protests as post-neoliberal street protests, I also aim to discuss it in the context of 'authoritarian neoliberalism', as discussed by Ali Bilgiç (2018). For a detailed analysis of the protests and the role of music in this movement, see Bianchi (2018).

⁴ Eren (2018) states that frequent changes of band members are especially common among Anatolian Pop musicians. For instance, Cem Karaca has been involved in many groups, including Apaşlar, Dervişan, Moğollar and Kardaşlar.

⁵ See, for example, Kâhyaoğlu (2002, 2010), Özbek (2013), Sakar (2014) and Stokes (1992). Gencebay, Grup Yorum, Ortaçgil and Tekin represent various groups of agents performing in the protest music subfield in Türkiye from the 1960s to the 1990s.

⁶ One recent study (Williams 2020) discusses Kardeş Türküler with regard to narrative genre in musicking and the theories on social identity construction.

⁷ Older kinds of music might be reinterpreted and gain a protest character when repositioned in new contexts. For instance, students at Istanbul's liberal and prestigious *Boğaziçi* ('Bosphorus') University used music to protest the appointment of the AKP party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, 'Justice and Development Party')-linked rector in 2021, Melih Bulu, and demand his resignation. During their protests, students made use of Metallica's 'Master of Puppets', specifically because Bulu had previously stated that he was a fan of Metallica (The Guardian 2021). In this context, the song gained a totally new protest character. Although Metallica did not give a live performance there during the protests, the dance and satire displays of a group of students incorporated their song, and represented a different kind 'participatory style of musical performance' (Turino 2008, pp. 26–8).

itself in the context of today's Türkiye and what does it add to the soundscape of protest in Türkiye? How and to what extent have established protest music movements, such as the Anatolian Pop movement⁸ and the minstrel tradition,⁹ influenced Kardeş Türküler, and what does this reveal about Kardeş Türküler? This study takes these questions as points of departure to analyse Kardeş Türküler and understand its importance in Türkiye and in the broader region. In addition, it is important to investigate how the band could survive for such a long period. In this respect, it is crucial to understand Kardeş Türküler's *modus operandi*.

Kardeş Türküler compiled music and dance practices representing different ethnic and national origins which normally seem unlikely to fit together, and did so in unprecedented ways, reanimating the thousand-year-old multicultural structure inherent to Anatolia. Following Howard Becker (2008), Diana Crane (1987), Tia DeNora (1995) and others, I argue that Kardeş Türküler should be considered an 'art action' rather than simply 'protest music'.¹⁰ If an art action can endure over the years, years which saw many political changes and conflicts, the conditions that create and preserve it should not, these authors imply, be overlooked. Furthermore, an art action is the product of accumulated years of experience. In this context, a sociological analysis of how and under what conditions Kardeş Türküler was formed raises significant questions. In this article, I have drawn on in-depth interviews with the principal members of Kardeş Türküler in order to understand the band's intellectual origins and structure.¹¹

Such a line of inquiry has important echoes in the work of John Street. Eric Drott quotes John Street saying that the terms politics and popular culture 'should not be regarded as separate but as continuous with one another' (Drott 2013, p. 558). While questioning how and under what conditions musicians engage with politics, Street (2006, pp. 60–61) also claims that general trends and political events may be important but are not necessarily decisive, and he suggests that we should always seek to understand 'political' music in broader political, creative and commercial processes. In the final section of his recent book *Music and Politics*, Street extends these views to engage with what Eric Drott would (later) call 'the immanent politics of music' (Drott 2013, p. 558). Street (2012) focuses here on the two-way interaction of music and politics, careful to avoid the problems of reducing one to the

⁸ Put forward by Moğollar's Taner Öngür, the Anatolian Pop movement which dates back to 1968 is a fusion aiming at bringing rock music and Turkish folk together. For a more detailed analysis, see, for example, Baysal (2018), Eren (2018) and Stokes (2010, pp. 116–17).

⁹ Folk poets and singers such as Köroğlu, Aşık Veyysel and Mahzuni Şerif are some of the most important representatives of the minstrel tradition of Anatolia.

¹⁰ As Eyerman and McCormick pointed out, several figures such as Becker (2008), Crane (1987) and De Nora (1995) have focused on music 'as organized social activity, where individual artists are linked into networks that both limit and sustain their creative acts' (Eyerman and McCormick 2016, p. 4). Music as a form of organised social activity may become the driving force for action (see, for example, Eyerman and Jamieson 1998). On that ground, an 'art action' may not only manifest as an organised social activity but also acquire a meaning as the driving force of change. When I refer to Kardeş Türküler as an 'art action', I emphasise Kardeş Türküler's artistic and political engagement with organised social activity. However, considering the Turkish context, the main reason for referring to the band as an 'art action' is its efforts to sustain the attempt to change, transform and influence the prevailing social conditions through art and its pioneering role in the social transformation process of the 1990s, by way of adopting a method which cannot be reduced only to music, as well as performing according to the principle of cultural pluralism.

¹¹ The members with whom I spoke have been part of Kardeş Türküler since its foundation.

other. Like Bianchi (2018, p. 215), I have found Street's non-reductive methods helpful in understanding the internal dynamics and struggles of 'art actions' in a complex field such as protest music, where political interests, context and dynamics are constantly changing. It helps me, too, to conceptualise, in the case of Kardeş Türküler, the agency of musicians.

I conducted the first interviews face-to-face between 8 March 2017 and 2 June 2017 at various cafes and the BGST¹² building in İstanbul. The interviews lasted from one to three and a half hours, the average being two and a half hours. I interviewed Ahmet Altınel, who coached the band between 1993 and 1995, before the group members. More recently, I conducted separate interviews with the core members between 13 November 2020 and 4 December 2021 to identify possible changes in the positioning of Kardeş Türküler in the musical field, in the period after the initial stage of the research, which dated back to 2017.¹³ Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, I conducted these interviews via Skype. These semi-structured interviews lasted an average of 45 minutes and included a pre-determined set of questions. For these new interviews, I also asked additional questions depending on the respondent's answers. The other main objective was to identify possible changes in the decision-making process since 2017. I also identified which parameters to emphasise in interviews based on my epistemological considerations so as to unveil the objective structure of the associations between the conditions that nurtured the music and the structures which marked that period, the actors, and the positions of the agents and institutions competing in the field. This detailed in-depth interview chart addressed Kardeş Türküler as a structure and included questions about its internal dynamics. I used the book *Kardeş Türküler: 15 Yılın Öyküsü* ('Ballads of Fraternity: The Story of 15 Years') (Özer 2008) compiled by Diler Özer (KT, percussionist) as a means of identifying the main questions.¹⁴ After transcribing the recordings of my interviewees, I identified common themes such as 'worldview', before highlighting more specific categories such as 'the principle of cultural pluralism'. Similar to a recent study by Zeynep Güven (2020, p. 144), I mainly utilised one of the text-analysis tables discussed by Russell Bernard (2006, p. 497), which makes a distinction between 'first-order category' and 'second-order category'. As the analysis progresses, splitting the major themes ('first-order category') into subthemes ('second-order category') facilitates the discussion with thematic analysis. This method helped me better understand the whole and the specific, and to interpret the findings, while conducting a thematic and conceptual discussion about Kardeş Türküler. I also applied this approach to my second set of interviews, which I conducted more recently.

In the following sections, drawing on interviews conducted in 2017, 2020 and 2021, I will first explore Kardeş Türküler's general structure, intellectual origins and networks. I will then explore how Kardeş Türküler have positioned themselves

¹² Boğaziçi Gösteri Sanatları Topluluğu (BGST, 'Bogazici Performing Arts Ensemble').

¹³ I didn't conduct another interview with Sevilay Saral, who worked as a supervisor (*süpervizör*) in Kardeş Türküler, because she told me that she no longer works with Kardeş Türküler.

¹⁴ The interview with Altınel did not follow the structure described above. Instead, I posed open-ended questions to understand his relationship with Kardeş Türküler and to capture his comments about it. Since Altınel witnessed a very short period of Kardeş Türküler's activities and was unable to observe all its transformations as an insider from its beginnings to the present, the questions posed to him were somewhat limited.

in Türkiye's complex musical and political fields, discussing in particular the significance of Kardeş Türküler's multilingualism and multiculturalism. Finally, I will concentrate on Kardeş Türküler's engagement with (global) post-neoliberal street protests, such as the Gezi Park movement in Türkiye in the 2010s.

The general structure and intellectual origins of Kardeş Türküler

The core members of Kardeş Türküler are mostly musicians born in 1970 and 1971 who graduated from Boğaziçi University,¹⁵ which was then by a long way Istanbul's most prestigious and liberal-minded university, famous at the time for its radical social science traditions. The network of clubs and societies at Boğaziçi University such as *Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Oyuncuları* ('Drama Club'), *Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Folklor Kulübü* (BÜFK, 'Folkloric Dance Club') and BGST substantially shaped the intellectual principles of the band.¹⁶

In order to analyse the intellectual origins of Kardeş Türküler, it is useful to consider its foundation and very first concerts. Kardeş Türküler gave its first performance in May 1993 under the umbrella of BÜFK at Boğaziçi University's Demir Demirgil Hall, where student events are commonly held. The concert drew a larger audience than expected and received positive feedback, thereby raising the hopes of the band members and giving them the motivation to carry on with other projects in the future. Thanks to these concerts, the musical tendencies and competencies of the band members became more pronounced, and they picked up hints as to how they could organise the division of labour cooperatively. For instance, this concert 'is the one which raised the hopes of Feryal Öney [KT, lead vocalist] for the performance of Azerbaijani and Central Anatolian songs and those of Vedat Yıldırım [KT, vocalist and percussionist] for the arrangement and performance of Kurdish songs and musical forms' (Sayşel 2008, p. 19).

In its first concert, Kardeş Türküler performed Azerbaijani, Armenian, Turkish and Kurdish songs, bringing four language groups together. It immediately commenced archival studies on the repertory of these four language groups (Özer 2008, p. 20). Kardeş Türküler's exploration into the musical representations of different languages put them in greater communication with institutions as well as individuals who had mastery of, and conducted comprehensive research on, a given language, thus further reinforcing the communication network of the band. During this period, Kardeş Türküler learned more about music and other cultures, thereby strengthening its cultural capital while systematically creating an archive. Likewise, owing to the expansion of its communication network, it steadily increased its networking opportunities.

Discussing the relatively successful first album of Kardeş Türküler, released by Kalan in 1997, Eliot Bates (2016, p. 96) also emphasises the linguistic diversity of the

¹⁵ Being the first American college founded overseas, Boğaziçi University is one of the most prestigious universities in Türkiye. Boğaziçi University's tradition of autonomous decision-making and its horizontal and transparent policy-making process is at odds with the centralised and hierarchical presidential system that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, current president of Türkiye, is attempting to impose (Kirişçi and Kirişçi, 2023).

¹⁶ Regarding his first visit to Boğaziçi University in 1996, Martin Stokes remarks: 'What surprised me the most during this period was the revival of folk music and dance performances in BÜFK and BGST in such a striking way and with a critical approach to the idea of the nation' (Stokes 2008, p. 204).

band's repertoire and further notes that 'subsequently, BGST developed several "wings", including their performing wing, which eventually took the name Kardeş Türküler, and a folklore research and publication wing' (Bgst Yayınları). These wings, and the relationship between BGST and Kardeş Türküler, are also important in terms of understanding the organisational structure of Kardeş Türküler.

Observing how Kardeş Türküler organises its division of labour is interesting, because roles are not ascribed, and the members take decisions collectively at every stage. Within Kardeş Türküler, the group's dance unit, theatre unit and music unit operate as part of a larger whole, not separately. The member managing the lighting systems will not necessarily always manage the lighting systems, but later may rotate to other tasks and duties. This emphasis on democratic productive process in the band reflects a broadly Marxian view of cultural production gained from their familiarity with classical sociological studies (for instance, Williams 2005). This perspective differentiates the unusual structure of Kardeş Türküler from that of other professional bands. Even the people who serve drinks and do the cleaning are not always the same in Kardeş Türküler. Kardeş Türküler organises such daily errands by alphabetical order so that everybody has the opportunity to experience different lines of work. Vedat Yıldırım (who also performs in the Kurdish psychedelic rock band Bajar) comments that every member in Kardeş Türküler can do anything that his/her potential affords. In his interview, he offers the example of Leonardo da Vinci:

We continuously discuss production processes at BGST. For example, we are against professional agents. It will not work for us if we leave the entire process to the hands of an agent as we present Kardeş Türküler to people ... Take da Vinci as an example. He had an idea about everything from anatomy to philosophy. Even though we have a dedicated person for the lighting system, the rest of us can make an effort to learn about how it works. (Yıldırım 2017)¹⁷

In his book *Art Worlds*, Howard S. Becker (2008) suggests that the artistic production process cannot be reduced to one individual, and that each and every person involved in the process contributes to the whole. Becker insists that there can be no distinction between those performing the main (core) activities and those carrying out auxiliary (support) activities. If music is the field of art in question, the composer might be considered part of the core personnel. Those dealing with sponsorship, organising the concert, arranging the musical works, organising makeup artists and liaising with record companies might be part of the 'support' personnel. Such distinctions may vary depending on different music production processes. Kardeş Türküler, like Becker, insists on recognising all contributions to the productive process, categorising all members as 'support' (*destek*) personnel and making systematic efforts to eliminate any hint of separation between 'core' and 'support' personnel. Kardeş Türküler encourages each member's self-improvement, showing no favouritism to composers, arrangers or instrumentalists. In Bourdieusian terms, even though there is a specific habitus in Kardeş Türküler, each social agent in the group contributes his/her distinct cultural capital, bringing their own habitus into the structure.

¹⁷ By questioning a system entirely in the hands of an agent, Yıldırım makes a point that the artist is also important as a person and that he/she should be able to express himself/herself while improving him/herself in various fields of art. This recalls Bill Ryan's argument in *Making Capital from Culture* (1992), summarised by David Hesmondhalgh (2008, p. 566), that 'capital cannot make the artist completely subservient to the drive for accumulation. Because art is centred on the expressive individual artist'.

Even though Kardeş Türküler makes no distinction between titles or specific fields of expertise, some members have inevitably gained more knowledge and experience in some areas than others. In his interview, Ayhan Akkaya (KT, bass guitarist) comments on this distinction as follows:

For example, Fehmiye [KT, vocals] and I take more responsibility for the Balkan music. When it comes to Central Anatolia and the Taurus mountains, Feryal takes more responsibility. Vedat is particularly well-versed in percussion arrangements. Actually, each of us more or less has his/her own area of responsibility. But what is important to us is participation. (Akkaya 2017)

It is also possible to interpret the elimination of the split between support personnel and core personnel as an effort to prevent the emergence of resentments and feelings of superiority. Making assumptions about the typology of producers rather than the end product or the process itself ultimately bears the risk of having a detrimental effect on the production process. Relations between the members have been strained on certain occasions, and some members broke away from the core group as a result. For example, Kardeş Türküler experienced a short-term crisis during the production of the album *Hemâvâz* (2002). As a result, the connection between different structures, particularly the Kardeş Türküler–BGST relationship, almost reached breaking point; Erol Mutlu, a prominent member of the band, left. However, Kardeş Türküler's organisational ethos gives careful consideration to its internal *modus operandi* in order to have a control mechanism in place that sustains the structure in case of any potential disagreement.¹⁸ Thus, approaching the group's structure not as a band but, in Becker's terms, as a project/art action is useful here.

In terms of educational background, the members of Kardeş Türküler and the initial representatives of the Anatolian Pop trend attended similar schools. Many major representatives of Anatolian Pop attended very prominent schools in Türkiye such as the German High School, Kabataş Boys High School and Robert College. Although almost all core members of Kardeş Türküler graduated from Boğaziçi University, a significant number of them also graduated from prestigious high schools like Galatasaray High School, Bornova Anatolian High School, Kadıköy Anatolian High School and Ankara Atatürk High School. Therefore, like a number of musicians associated with Anatolian Pop, the majority of the members of Kardeş Türküler had the opportunity to become acquainted with Western music before progressing to university. However, one of the principal differences between the representatives of the Anatolian Pop trend and Kardeş Türküler is the ease of access of the former to high culture, starting from an early age. Since Anatolian Pop musicians usually come from high-culture families, they had the potential to appreciate outstanding cultural products even before they went to school. In contrast, the members of Kardeş Türküler do not come from artistic families with familiarity with, or a tendency for, art; therefore, they had to develop their cultural capital primarily at academic institutions. At this point, to avoid any possible confusion, it is worth noting that the families of the members of Kardeş Türküler have many connections with music. For instance, Selda Öztürk's father plays bağlama (long necked folk lute) at home and has an interest in listening to Âşık Mahsuni. Artistic connections run through the households of Kardeş Türküler as

¹⁸ It is also noteworthy that Kardeş Türküler periodically reviews the labour–income curve and discusses how the money will be shared during each revision.

they do for Anatolian pop, an example, in Bourdieusian terms, of these families' middle class social 'distinction' (Bourdieu 1984). For example, the parents of Cem Karaca, one of the pioneers of Anatolian Pop, were actors. Likewise, Barış Manço's great-great-grandfather is Tanburi Ali Efendi, one of the greatest Ottoman classical music composers of the 19th century (Eren 2018, pp. 154–5).

It is noteworthy that the pioneers of the Anatolian Pop trend and the members of Kardeş Türküler attended similar academic institutions. Like the former, the latter strove to establish a path for themselves by interacting musically with the minstrel tradition. As Eren puts it:

The Anatolian Pop trend cannot be separated from the minstrel tradition which has had a direct or indirect influence on many musical styles in Türkiye. Many singers who have become very popular through the Anatolian Pop and even Anatolian Rock trends boomed when they arranged and modernized folk songs under the influence of Western music. (Eren 2018, p. 147)

Ahmet Altınel, a former coach of Kardeş Türküler, stated in his interview that although he intervened in arrangements, the group systematically made collective decisions. As he reflects on the process extending from BÜFK to Kardeş Türküler, Altınel attributes the early organisational ethos of Kardeş Türküler to the class positions of its members:

Cultural–artistic policies of the Republican period were discussed at BÜFK. In-depth read-out aloud sessions including the works of Althusser were held while dancing, music and acting were woven together. ... The members of Kardeş Türküler began with their a priori cultural backgrounds. But they are graduates of elite schools, a group of young middle-class people studying at Boğaziçi University. Individuals trying to sing folk music and on a quest. (Altınel 2017)

The main motivation for Kardeş Türküler is their ideal of cultural pluralism. The fact that the members of Kardeş Türküler were born and raised in very different regions paves the way for cultural permeability and interaction between different identities. For example, Vedat Yıldırım and Selda Öztürk (KT, percussionist) are of Kurdish origin while Diler Özer's mother is a migrant from Bulgaria. Fehmiye Çelik's family is from Yugoslavia. This diversity fostered different approaches to Kardeş Türküler. Çelik is one of the rare members whose family passionately supported her involvement in Kardeş Türküler. As Çelik explained in her interview, their appreciativeness and support parallels the tolerance of the people of the former Yugoslavia towards ethnic difference:

My father has always been very supportive of me during my time in Kardeş Türküler. They have always enjoyed Kardeş Türküler's concerts. Before its collapse, Yugoslavia was a socialist, federal state. Different communities co-habited. They coexisted despite their differences just like my father and mother. That's why they have never 'otherized' (*ötekileştirmediler*) the person next to them. (Çelik 2017)

The positioning of Kardeş Türküler in musical and political fields

As we have seen, in Kardeş Türküler roles are not ascribed, and members took decisions collectively at each and every stage. However, during the Covid-19 period, some changes began to occur in the decision-making process. This is worth considering,

if only in passing, because it reveals some important facets of their organisational ethos, and changes to it. As the opportunity to rehearse and arrange songs together disappeared, as in previous periods, individual arrangers for some specific compositions came to the fore, starting from 2020 (Öney 2021; Özer 2021; Öztürk 2021; Yıldırım 2021). While the group still tried to give careful consideration to its internal modus operandi, the collectivism that forms the basis of Kardeş Türküler's organisational structure and ensures its longevity weakened. In her interview, Özer described the individually conceived arrangements of this period as 'soulless' (Özer 2021).

Kardeş Türküler's members gave a variety of responses when I asked about the processes through which they started to refer to themselves as political, mentioning their circles of friends, families, the council works at Galatasaray High School, their literature teachers prior to university, and BGST or Kardeş Türküler as influences on their political identity. Stating that their families generally have *Kemalist* and *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* (CHP, 'Republican People's Party') tendencies,¹⁹ the members have a collective approach towards the political field, and interestingly stand against high politics and the reductionist stance of a single party. As Levent Soy (KT, dancer) puts it in his interview:

It is not possible to establish other things without criticizing the culture and art policies of the Republican period. What we call the culture and art policies of the Republican period are actually the basic elements used to shape that nation while forming nation states in the West. In other words, the aim is to create a culture and place it within the framework of national culture . . . However, dances are like birds. They are not bound by borders. (Soy 2017)

During the 1990s, Türkiye's music industry saw pop music supersede arabesk music,²⁰ which had previously been the dominant genre in economic terms. These were also the years in which the image of the musicians gained great importance. Various actors took advantage of this emerging trend and became more visible. This prioritisation of image became an important source of economic capital for image-makers, and fashion designers such as Neslihan Yargıcı came to the fore. Yargıcı helped many musicians create their image, especially Seden Gürel (Kutlubay) and other pop musicians of the 1990s (Dilmener 2014, p. 359). However, Kardeş Türküler chose to express itself by following a different path from the musical trends and dominant images of the 1990s.

In addition, Kardeş Türküler's views on the Anatolian Pop legacy contribute to an understanding of how and where the group positioned itself in the musical field. However, even though Akkaya emphasises in his interview that he respects the Anatolian Pop movement and keeps close track of its prominent representatives, he criticises it both personally and on behalf of Kardeş Türküler:

During 1960s in the post-war period, Rock & Roll spread to every corner of the world. For example, it reaches India and has a sitar added to it. Complementing it with a jura or a

¹⁹ After the collapse of the multinational Ottoman Empire, various structural changes were implemented under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in order to gain full independence in the nation-state building process. Kemalism refers to an ideology and a new social order supporting a modernised lifestyle. There are six principles of Kemalist ideology: *Cumhuriyetçilik* ('Republicanism'), *halkçılık* ('populism'), *milliyetçilik* ('nationalism'), *laiklik* ('laicism'), *devletçilik* ('statism') and *inkılâpçılık* ('reformism'). CHP, which adopted these basic principles, is the oldest political party in Türkiye, founded by Atatürk.

²⁰ Being Arab-influenced, it is a musical genre popular throughout Türkiye. For a more detailed analysis, see Stokes (1992).

stringed *tanbur* would not be something unexpected in Türkiye. We have unending respect for people who push the work forward. But I believe it should be taken ahead and enriched. The performers of Anatolian Pop themselves express that they played the songs with only four chords in that period. Nonetheless, Cahit Berkay came up with nice melodies ... Anatolian Pop was an important wind of change. However, even though it had the potential for further improvement, they could not fulfill this potential. (Akkaya 2017)

Kardeş Türküler's opinions regarding the methodological, musicological and theoretical aspects of the Anatolian Pop movement are parallel to its views on the cultural and artistic policies of the Republican period. Despite their significant differences, we can see here, again, that Kardeş Türküler followed the lead of the Anatolian Pop movement in many respects. Kardeş Türküler members often take the opportunity to voice their appreciation of Anatolian Pop and hold it close to their hearts because of the numerous innovations it introduced in Turkish music. This does not stop them criticising it. As Ülker Uncu, Kardeş Türküler's manager has stated in her interview, Kardeş Türküler members also consider themselves to be standing too close to the nationalist discourse that was used in structuring the nation-state. Such conflicts can be seen in this quote:

Anatolian Pop was always a source for inspiration. It was important for us from this perspective: Traditional music is practised by this trend while being accompanied with the linguistic and social perspectives of the day. Urban discourse is carrying the traditional music into another perspective. That's exactly what Kardeş Türküler is trying to do, not through the form of rock, but rather something else ... There are also other examples of Anatolian Pop from which we politically set ourselves apart. For instance, in some examples of Anatolian Pop, a very nationalistic discourse was used. But generally speaking, there is a very serious experimental effort in it. (Uncu 2017)

Even though it seems to have made no significant developments, Anatolian Pop may be considered an avant-garde movement during the period in which it was originally introduced. It embraced experimentation with very new forms of music in Türkiye, and adopted hybrid practices by observing tradition, while using Western musical instruments and harmony. If Anatolian Pop can be considered avant-garde, particularly as its experimental arrangement of Anatolian music goes back to the late 1960s and early 1970s, then can we consider Kardeş Türküler as part of the avant-garde art movement of the 1990s in Türkiye? When I interviewed the members of the band about where Kardeş Türküler positioned itself regarding the political and musical fields of the 1990s, all of them stated that Kardeş Türküler had an avant-garde attitude and musical identity. However, during the interview, Sevilay Saral responded: 'I don't think that all of the works by Kardeş Türküler are protest and avant-garde. Therefore, in my opinion, the things it creates should each be considered individually' (Saral 2017).

Still, the positioning of Kardeş Türküler as an avant-garde band in the 1990s, in both the political and musical fields, parallels the ongoing interest of other performers of protest music. Kardeş Türküler reportedly took influences from foreign and Turkish musicians and bands such as The Who, Led Zeppelin, Joan Baez, Victor Jara, Yes, Pink Floyd, Cem Karaca, Fikret Kızılok, Zülfü Livaneli, *Ezginin Günlüğü* ('Melody's Diary'), *Çağdaş Türkü* ('Contemporary Ballad') and *Yeni Türkü* ('New Ballad').²¹ These

²¹ Being a musical genre representing left-wing, Nueva canción movement in Latin America influenced several groups in Türkiye such as *Çağdaş Türkü* and *Yeni Türkü*.

musicians not only pushed the limits of contemporary musical possibilities but also challenged unjust practices all over the world, such as racial segregation, the exploitation of workers, class inequalities and the victimisation of people affected by wars.²²

Just as in the minstrel tradition on which Kardeş Türküler draws, the transfer of cultural capital embedded in music from one generation to another is tied up with the preservation of the multicultural heritage of Anatolia. Kardeş Türküler has always benefited from the knowledge and experience of these old music masters and perpetuated their traditions of 'multicultural' knowledge under the umbrella of BGST. This was something that – necessarily – took shape outside their formal schooling process, hostile as it was to expressions of multiculturalism within the Turkish state.²³

The multicultural repertoire of Kardeş Türküler offers insight into the unusual position of the band in the protest music sub-field in the 1990s. The repertoire archive, which Fehmiye Çelik shared with me,²⁴ covers the first 15 years of the band and includes bilingual songs as well as those in Kurdish, Turkish, Armenian, Azeri, Greek, Macedonian, Syriac, Arabic, Lazuri, Circassian and Georgian. The inclusion of works by composers and/or songwriters from different ethnic and national backgrounds – such as Karacaoğlu, Pir Sultan Abdal, Âşık Mahzuni, Neşet Ertaş, Şivan Perwer, Kusan Aşot, Dan Gharibyan, Kusan Şahen, Tofik Guliyev, Marcel Khalife and Thabısım Wumar – also demonstrates the cultural diversity of Kardeş Türküler. Most of these figures represent the minstrel tradition, and this by itself is another indicator of Kardeş Türküler's distinctive mission to carry this tradition forward. On the other hand, their albums mostly lack overt marks of a single identity since the repertoire represents a wide range of ethnic and national backgrounds, demonstrating how Kardeş Türküler serves as a bridge between different cultures (as its name suggests).

Kalan Music is the main label that has released Kardeş Türküler's albums. In the 2000s, with the increase of online music-sharing platforms, very few record companies were able to survive. Kalan Music is one of those that did. In other words, although Kardeş Türküler has tried to stay out of the market, it has also maintained organic ties with a record company that is considered authoritative in the field. However, the establishment of BGST Records in 2018 as an independent music label provided autonomous recording opportunities for Kardeş Türküler. For the very first project of BGST Records, Kardeş Türküler collaborated with Candan Erçetin, one of Türkiye's most popular singers, and released a single called *Bekle* ('Wait').

'Kardeş Türküler's debut album was a transitional moment for the group with regard to arrangement aesthetics' (Bates 2016, p. 96). According to Eliot Bates, in this album, Kardeş Türküler's arrangement of a suite of Kurdish/Alevi songs, 'Demme/Ala Gözlü Nazlı Pirim', is one of the most evident examples of Kardeş Türküler's distinctive multicultural sound:

²² It is also important to note that the content of the protest songs and attitudes of protest musicians varied depending on the time period and the political context. Protest music had a profound effect especially during the social, cultural and political changes of 1968, which marked the escalation of musical protests against the Vietnam War and various authoritarian practices. This year also marks the beginning of the Anatolian Pop movement in Türkiye.

²³ In Bourdieusian terms, Kardeş Türküler could not develop an 'institutionalized cultural capital' – knowledge and information acquired through educational institutions (Bourdieu 1986, pp. 247–8).

²⁴ Çelik, personal archive.

[T]he group uses many percussion instruments, including several asma-davul (double-headed drums played with the hands), two erbane drums,²⁵ and a bendir played with a wire brush – each playing a distinct rhythmic part. As a point of contrast, polyrhythmic percussion was quite unusual in Türkiye at the time and doesn't have an obvious inspiration in any particular rural tradition either. Erol Mutlu sings the first verse of 'Demme' solo, but at the start of the first chorus, a number of performers join in with held 'ah' syllables. From this point on, vocals are polyphonic, and the medley showcases early examples of some of the many 'vocal effects' that Kardeş Türküler used to define another of their 'signature sounds'. (Bates 2016, p. 96)

Kardeş Türküler mostly arranges traditional songs into new versions, but the band also has vocal and instrumental compositions such as 'Debla bé To', 'Dilgeş', 'Kerwanê', 'Sîya Şaperan' and 'Hewara Gulê'. Ahmet Altınel stated in his interview that Kardeş Türküler had already established its sound, and it was therefore high time for the band to compose more songs and come forward with its own line of work (Altınel 2017).

On the other hand, most bands with a strong stand in the music market arrange a song's rhythm according to its melody, therefore accentuating the rhythm less. However, in most arrangements by Kardeş Türküler, rhythmic elements are more prominent. In this way, Kardeş Türküler reinforces the protest characteristics of the songs by increasing the tension through rhythmic processes. The group's interpretation of 'Dargın Mahkûm' ('Bitter Prisoner') is one of the most evident examples of this, as Özer states:

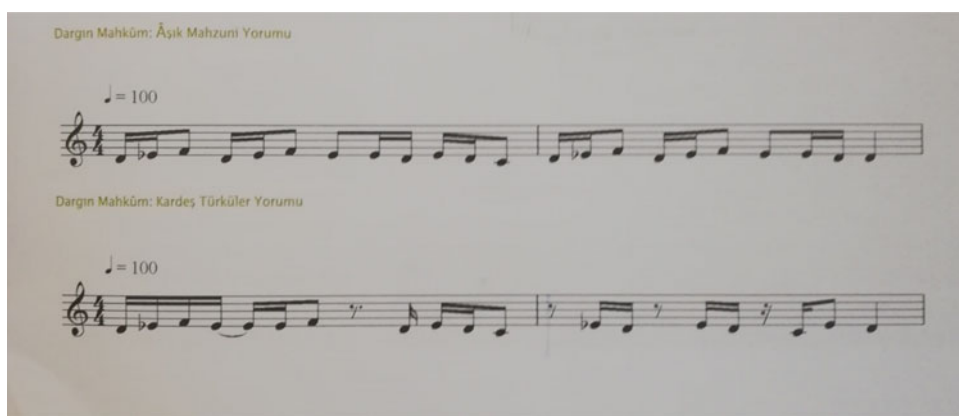
The record of Dargın Mahkûm by Âşık Mahzuni has a melody with typical rhythmic emphasis and they correspond to strong beats. But in Kardeş Türküler's interpretation of the song, the melodic aspects were shifted and a syncope which would put the rhythmic aspects forward was employed. This way, the band tried to make the tensions and statements in the melody more pronounced by making a metrical shift and to emphasise the protest characteristics of the song more generally. (Özer 2008, p. 123)

The protest character of this song is not only related to its musical structure. Yıldırım stated that they weave various political statements into their performance of this song at concerts, to which audiences reacted positively.²⁶ He also added that this song started to appear as a protest song in the 2010s, when the number of intellectuals and journalists imprisoned in Türkiye significantly increased (Yıldırım 2021). This is another demonstration of the importance of contextuality in protest music, particularly evident in the case of Kardeş Türküler.

When I asked members of Kardeş Türküler what they thought they added to the soundscape of protest in Türkiye today, they replied in various ways. Almost half of my interviewees (Akkaya 2021; Öney 2021; Soy 2021) said that narrating the songs and highlighting the story of each song are what make Kardeş Türküler different from previous protest music trends. On the other hand, Öztürk (2021) explained the distinctive protest sound of Kardeş Türküler based on three main factors: the use of percussion instruments in the foreground; the use of riffs to

²⁵ Also known as 'tef' or 'def', this is a Middle Eastern frame drum dating back to ancient times. It is widely used in Iran, Pakistan and among Kurdish communities.

²⁶ They also make political speeches and references during the performance of other songs. Yıldırım told me that mostly Feryal Öney, Fehmiye Çelik and himself make such speeches, which might be spontaneous or prepared in advance (Yıldırım 2021).



Example 1. Different interpretations of 'Dargın Mahkûm' (Özer 2008, p. 121). The former is Âşık Mahzuni's interpretation. The latter is Kardeş Türküler's interpretation. Mahzuni's interpretation is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bORoNyYoTaI> (accessed 23 February 2023). Kardeş Türküler's interpretation is also available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JplO7eMqMyk> (accessed 23 February 2023).

form the main musical structure; and playing stringed instruments such as bağlama²⁷ in non-traditional ways. Özer (2021) also stated in her interview that while Kardeş Türküler built their sound on cultural resources and folk instruments, they did this differently from the Anatolian Pop movement:

the Moğollar, for example, used the ıklığ,²⁸ bağlama or any other instrument to add color to the melody. By contrast, we created the main sound using the instruments characteristic of that culture and building on them as the backbone of the song. They were included as the main instruments, not (simply) to add variation.

Özer went on to explain how Kardeş Türküler differed from the understanding of protest music in Türkiye before the 1990s:

Until the 90s, protest music was nurtured by traditional music, that is, folk music. Secondly, the issue of ethnicity was not raised in any of those songs. ... Therefore, they were perceived as Turkish protest music. Another characteristic was that ... there was a particular emphasis on the lyrics. (Özer 2021)

Based on my interviews, the main factors defining Kardeş Türküler as a protest music project were the effects of the historical conditions in Türkiye and the fact that Kardeş Türküler had a structure that withstood changes in Türkiye's social structure. Öztürk points out in her interview that Kardeş Türküler has similarities with the pioneering Chilean protest band Inti-Illimani, stating: 'my understanding of protest music is based on the combination of aesthetics and discourse. I think the music performed by both Kardeş Türküler and Inti-Illimani has that combination'

²⁷ The association of the *bağlama* with religious repertoires and spiritual groups in Anatolia is noteworthy. The instrument's primary usage in Anatolian epic songs and protest music including a variety of themes from love to political injustice is also striking (O'Toole 2019, p. 170; Reinhard 1989, p. 12).

²⁸ A long-necked instrument, considered an ancestor of the kemancha.

(Öztürk 2017). Along with bands such as Quilapayún and musicians such as Victor Jara, Inti-Illimani contributed greatly to the formation of Chilean revolutionary folk music. Having revolutionary views and singing for the workers, the peasants and the unemployed youth of Chile form the basic features of Inti-Illimani. In a similar way, Kardeş Türküler also tries to cause changes in the social structure. Öney also states in her interview that 'the music that we make is protest music in a way, since one of its main themes is protesting the current system' (Öney 2017). Çelik, in her interview, similarly associates the theme 'rebellion' with protest music. She argues that 'Kardeş Türküler is a protest music group, which means that it is rebelling against something that has gone wrong, something that the memory and conscience cannot bear and something that the heart cannot endure' (Çelik 2017). She further adds that 'the protest character of music begins where freedom, equality and the right to live together are destroyed' (Çelik 2017).

Along with some recent studies pointing out the ambiguity of the term 'protest music' (Eren and Ergene 2021, p. 85; Street 2014, p. 887), Özer refers to the vagueness of the term and notes the importance, in attempting to define it, of social conditions (Özer 2017). Yıldırım's statement in his interview exemplifies this situation:

We had problems with RTÜK ('The Radio and Television Supreme Council') because of the video filmed for the song called *Kara Üzümlük Habbesi* ('Black Grape Seed'), since it had lyrics in Kurdish. From that point on, the song was no longer a love song but a political song. (Yıldırım 2017)²⁹

Ozan Aksoy, one of the former members of Kardeş Türküler, draws attention to the divisions between TV channels that the song exposed:

Although the video clip, sung both in Turkish and Kurdish (a first of its kind) received some attention in mainstream news programs, the self-censoring national TV channels did not broadcast it at the time. For many listeners, such songs had been considered to be 'traditional Turkish songs' until they heard the Kurdish version and perhaps only then realised that such songs had original versions in other languages. (Aksoy 2014, p. 238)

This illustrates the effectiveness of hegemonic state discourse on the display or restriction of cultural products.

When I asked the interviewees how they approach the music and ethnic culture of a certain region while devising a repertoire, a question, in other words, about their working methods, their answers were significant. In her interview, Uncu states,

First of all, the song is not viewed from the mere perspective of melody. A couple of other things are done too. For example, different interpretations of the same melody are sought. When, in which period, and how was that song performed? Which instruments were played in that performance? Are there different lyrics for it, so to speak? Some of them are selected. There are dramaturgical reasons behind the choices. Later on, some other issues are developed, depending on the song to be analyzed. If possible, fairy tales in that language and the history of that region are researched ... The musical formulation of the song is ascertained. The past narrative about the song is brought to the surface. For instance, if there is a Bektashi saying in it, the place of the song in the general Bektashi belief system is explored. (Uncu 2017).

²⁹ When discussing hybridity in cultural forms, Hough (2010) gives 'Kara Üzümlük Habbesi' as an example 'which refuses to definitively assign the song either Turkish or Kurdish origins'.

The significance of Kardeş Türküler's multilingualism and multiculturalism

In today's modern states where different cultures live together, multilingual singing practices can emerge which reveal the region's cultural heritage or patterns of contact between people from different national or ethnic origins. However, in nation-states where a single official language becomes dominant, possibilities for expression in other languages will be suppressed. The rise of Turkish nationalism in Türkiye and the suppression of freedom of expression in other languages is an obvious example to this situation.³⁰ Hence, Zeydanlıoğlu (2014, p. 167) draws attention to the 1982 Constitution, which is still valid today, emphasising the indivisibility of Türkiye and the supremacy of the Turkish language and ethnicity as aspects of Turkish nationalism.

In Türkiye, restrictions in the field of cultural production in the 1980s commodified music and thus standardised it. While arabesk music conformed with socio-political circumstances and gained popularity, other genres were banned or excluded from the music industry. It was not until the 1990s that different genres began to circulate in the music industry. 'The 1990s witnessed the transformation of expressive forms of music, from being banned or holding a restricted status, to at least a linguistic pluralism in musical and artistic forms for numerous minorities, particularly for the Kurds' (Aksoy 2014, p. 225). However, the transition towards expressive forms of music was not as easy as it seemed, 'since the people struggling for self-expression were subjected to reactions either from the state or from different sections of the public in the form of suppression, censorship, bans, or even in the most violent way' (Özer 2011, p. 108).

Since its beginnings in 1993, Kardeş Türküler has performed in various languages – predominantly Turkish, Kurdish, Azerbaijani and Armenian in addition to Laz and Circassian – as well as other dance forms and practices. The group does not opt to identify itself with a specific national or ethnic representation, but rather promotes itself as *Kardeş Türküler*, striving to demonstrate the mere possibility of rejoicing fraternity songs in Türkiye. Sociological research into Kardeş Türküler as a band thus offers insights on the role of art and artists in reinforcing the significance of cultural diversity and as well as the relation between art and social structure.

In the 1990s, when instability prevailed with coalition governments in power, Kardeş Türküler set peace and fraternity as its goal and advocated against totalitarian and despotic practices while reckoning with the official ideology of the nation-state. The group argues, in its public statements, that different ethnic and national representations should not be denied. Kardeş Türküler employs a protest approach, making a statement with the help of art and adopting a cultural–political stance through intertwining music and politics, although being careful not to reduce one to the other. This contributes to the diversity of its audience – its musical values are as important as its political values (Uncu 2017). Generally speaking, Kardeş Türküler has attained an important place in the musical field by performing folk

³⁰ There are various studies (see, for example, Aydın 2013; Aydın and Özfidan 2015; Kaya and Aydın 2013) discussing multicultural and multilingual education in Türkiye. These studies have shown that although there were some efforts to implement educational reforms in the 2000s and 2010s under the AKP, multilingual education is still not adequately supported in Türkiye.

songs of various ethnic groups quite successfully and continuously taking part in events staged by oppositional structures in Türkiye.

Kardeş Türküler in 2010s: engagement with post-neoliberal street protests

Starting from the 2000s, the second period of Kardeş Türküler, the AKP³¹ became the sole authority, dominating many spheres, particularly cultural–artistic ones. The fracturing of the political and cultural–artistic fields in the 2000s and 2010s had a negative impact on the annual number of concerts that Kardeş Türküler gave. Stating that the average number of concerts given by Kardeş Türküler was around 45–50 in a given year before the Gezi Parkı protests, Uncu added that this number dropped to 30–33 during 2015–2016 (Uncu 2017). Uncu recently stated in her interview that Kardeş Türküler gave over 40 concerts in the year before the 2019 local elections. However, as for many musicians, Covid-19 had a devastating effect on the number of concerts Kardeş Türküler could perform (Uncu 2020). Nonetheless, since the entire music industry felt the repercussions of the pandemic, these disruptions did not result in any disintegration within Kardeş Türküler, although the members lost their motivation to a certain extent (Akkaya 2021; Öney 2021; Özer 2021; Öztürk 2021; Yıldırım 2021). Uncu stated that the number of concerts dropped to below 10 in 2020, also noting that since Kardeş Türküler is a large band, it has limited performance opportunities owing to the scarcity of large concert venues (Uncu 2020).

On the other hand, starting with the Gezi Park Occupy movement which started on 28 May 2013 in Istanbul, Kardeş Türküler maintained deep engagement with post-neoliberal street protests. This is most evident in ‘Tencere Tava Havası’ (‘Sound of Pots and Pans’). This song quickly went viral on Facebook and Twitter at the beginning of the Gezi Park occupation. While the following lines of the lyrics portray a specific political message by criticising neo-liberal urban policies, they also help to internalise what led up to the occupation:

Satamayınca gölgelerini (‘They couldn’t sell their shadows’)
Sattılar ormanları (‘So they sold the forests’)
Devirdiler, kapadılar (‘They knocked down, closed down’)
Sinemaları, meydanları (‘Cinemas and squares’)
Her tarafın AVM’den (‘Covered in shopping malls’)
Geçesim yok bu köprüden (‘I don’t feel like crossing this bridge’)
N’oldu bizim bu şehre? (‘What happened to our city?’) (‘Tencere Tava Havası’ [‘Sound of Pots and Pans’], Kardeş Türküler, 2013)

The lyrics depict the cutting down of trees at Gezi Park in Taksim Square in order to build artillery barracks and construct a shopping mall and a mosque. Under the leadership of former Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (who became President in 2014), the aim was to restructure Taksim Square. ‘Cinema’ refers to Emek cinema, one of Türkiye’s oldest and most prestigious landmarks.

³¹ The AKP, a conservative and authoritarian party with Islamist roots, has been in power in Türkiye since 2002. For a more detailed analysis of the frequent political and/or economic tensions owing to the hegemonic (and authoritarian) power of the AKP government, which are at odds with the principles of the Republican period, see, for example, Çınar and Sayın (2014), Esen and Gumuscu (2016) and Ongur (2016).

Despite the efforts of various protesters (BBC 2013; The Guardian 2013), this historic building was demolished on 20 May 2013 in an attempt to transform it into an entertainment and shopping complex.

The banging of pots and pans has been a long-lasting, traditional way of protesting in Türkiye, which has been used to oppose issues such as price increases, unprosecuted murders, corruption and violence against women.³² However, this was the first time that pots and pans had been used as instrumental objects expressing a political message in a song. Erdoğan's efforts to criminalise banging on pots and pans have resulted in some court cases (Milliyet 2013). On the other hand, 'Sound of Pots and Pans' has become a song for solidarity against the prohibitions and injustices. More recently, more than 120 Greek artists performed the song to express their solidarity with Grup Yorum, a long-standing left-wing protest music group banned in Türkiye (Duvar 2020).

Coda

This analysis of Kardeş Türküler documents how the band entered the protest music subfield and became an established presence in Türkiye during the 1990s, a time when multilingual cultural production was unprecedented. Therefore, it would not be unreasonable to say that Kardeş Türküler was far ahead of its time in terms of social change in Türkiye. In particular, Boğaziçi University's support for cultural production through its clubs and its positive approach towards different artistic establishments were a great source of motivation for Kardeş Türküler's formation. The fact that the core members were mostly born in 1970 and 1971 laid the foundation for their later political socialisation and influenced their sympathy and consensus on the reflection of their historical testimony on the cultural production process.

Both the Anatolian Pop movement and the minstrel tradition have influenced Kardeş Türküler, as I have shown. This is a strong indication that the agents who provided such a different musical panorama in the 1990s were not completely independent of well-established musical tendencies.

The most prominent reason for considering Kardeş Türküler, not as a band but as a project (or, to use Becker's language, an 'art action'), is its ability to maintain a strong and long-term position in the protest music subfield. The main rationale behind referring to Kardeş Türküler as an 'art action' was to underline its character as both an organised social activity and a driving force of change. Kardeş Türküler has been able to survive in the musical field for the past 30 years, not as an affiliation between single entities, but rather as an extension of a structure resting upon agreed ideological pillars and as an extension of BGST, which is likewise an extension of a previous structure. Otherwise, Kardeş Türküler could easily have failed. The longevity of Kardeş Türküler as a protest music project also depends on its collectivist *modus operandi*, which it maintained strongly until the Covid-19 period, in which every decision was made collectively.

I have attempted to offer here a sociological analysis of Kardeş Türküler, which dwells holistically on the objective structure of connections between the conditions

³² Known as 'cacerolazo', it is also a form of social protest and a symbol of discontent in some Latin American countries.

under which the music was born and developed, while also focusing on the variety of structures, actors, competing agencies and institutions that marked that era. I have suggested throughout that we must approach protest music contextually. In this light, we can consider Kardeş Türküler's engagement with 'protest' under three main headings. Firstly, Kardeş Türküler has always been against the cultural-artistic policies of the Republican period, which has long provided nationalist propaganda. Secondly, making multilingual music in Türkiye in the 1990s was itself an act of protest. Thirdly, Kardeş Türküler's recent songs such as 'Sound of Pots and Pans' have involved Kardeş Türküler in broader (and global) post-neoliberal street protests such as the Gezi Park movement. Producing such a protest song in Türkiye can be considered a direct critique of the hegemonic power of the AKP government. Although the case of Kardeş Türküler can be useful for rethinking concepts of music and protest more generally, not just in Türkiye but in global context, more research on protest music in Türkiye is certainly required. We might, in closing, recall Becker, to stress the ongoing nature of this research: 'The lesson I draw from my experience is, rather, that we are never through, but occasionally stop to tell our colleagues what we have learned' (Becker 2008, p. xxi). Today, Kardeş Türküler continues to present multicultural Anatolian heritage as a living process and to demonstrate that art and the artist assume a major role in the quest for cultural pluralism.

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