

**The Lyrics of Politics:
How Music Conveys Political Ideology**

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Abstract

Over the course of history two stalwarts of public life, music and politics, have developed an intimate bond. Wherever political actions can be found, music will accompany it. Wherever music is observed, politics will accompany it as well. This trend has been observed from the ancient times of Plato - who warned of the dangers that music posed to the state - through the 20th century. Also working in tandem with this trend is the pervasive opinion that music can significantly alter the minds of listeners. With these two ideas in mind, I hypothesize first that listening to specific genres of music will significantly influence the political ideology of the listener. The secondary set of hypotheses are as follows: that rap/hip-hop, folk, blues and soul genres will be positively correlated with a liberal ideology, that metal, gospel, and country will be positively associated with a conservative ideology, and that pop, rock, and EDM will not be significantly correlated with any political ideology.

Through both qualitative and quantitative methods, this paper helps to fill a gap in research regarding this topic by discovering a correlation between music genres and the political ideology of the listener.

Background

There are aspects found within the very structural makeup of musical compositions that allow for them to serve as vessels for political messages. Street (2003) describes the most basic aspect that lends itself to the conveyance of an ideology: "music works directly on our emotions." By doing this, songs can capitalize on the listener's emotional state, swaying their political thinking to one side or the other or causing them to act out in a manner they otherwise wouldn't consider. Related are the musical concepts of burden and presence. The burden contained within a song, according to Dewberry and Millen (2014), is the "regular return or

repetition of a theme or phrase." This structural component of nearly all songs serves as the driving force behind a musician's thesis; it instills his/her message in the listener with great effect. Dewberry and Millen (2014) also explain the concept of presence, which refers to the musical aspect that is immediately present within the listener's consciousness. Most times what is most present is the burden, the repetitive theme or phrase of the song. This gives music a "rhetorical power" and strengthens the political message as well (Dewberry & Millen, 2014). Trigg (2010) refers to the progressive nature that music is capable of possessing. Songs hold the ability to emulate a forward momentum through their lyrics or melody. This allows music to actually move listeners to do something, potentially directing its audience to a specific goal that must be obtained. Given the inherent structural aspects of music that allow for it to be potentially conducive to political messaging, it follows that politics and music should have some sort of long-standing relationship.

This relationship between music and politics has been observed since the times of antiquity. Fox and Williams (1974) relate the opinion of the early political theorist Plato on the subject: "Any musical innovation is full of danger to the whole State, and ought to be prohibited... when modes of music change, the fundamental laws of the State always change with them." These thinkers saw a link between different genres of music and a shift in the ideological perspective of governments.

The historical association of music and politics continues on quite clearly from the time of the ancients to present day. A common way in which Plato's quote is played out is through the campaign song. Street (2003) defines campaign songs as being "at the simplest level ... a form of propaganda", a sentiment that is echoed even more strongly by Denisoff (1970) who states that campaign songs are a "potent weapon in the propaganda arsenal." Politicians choose their

campaign songs for a very specific and important purpose, they can effectively convey an image of the candidate and evoke favorable emotions in a stronger fashion than words alone (Street, 2003). More importantly, however, campaign songs can serve as a vehicle in the dissemination of a candidate's political positions (Van Sickel, 2005).

Take the campaign songs of two 20th century American presidents for example. Ronald Reagan's 1984 presidential campaign featured Bruce Springsteen's (1984) "Born in the U.S.A" as its primary soundtrack, a song whose hook repeated "I was born in the U.S.A, born in the U.S.A" (Dewberry & Millen, 2014). The seemingly patriotic nature of this song served as the perfect lyrical representation of Reagan's political vision, a renewed America that was strong once again. Bill Clinton's official campaign song for both his 1992 and 1996 presidential campaigns, "Don't Stop" by Fleetwood Mac, accomplished the same goal of conveying his political message. The progressive Clinton sought to revamp a stagnating economy and to progress into the coming 21st century, the lyrics of "Don't Stop" perfectly encapsulated his political visions (Dewberry & Millen, 2014). Fleetwood Mac lyricizes: "Don't stop thinking about tomorrow, don't stop it'll soon be here, it 'll be better than before, yesterday's gone, yesterday's gone." These lyrics effectively convey the hope and optimism that Clinton wished to exhibit through his progressive policies (Dewberry & Millen, 2014). It is important to note, however, that there are significant issues related to these campaign song choices, an issue that will be discussed further in the limitations section.

This phenomena of using songs to convey the political ideals of a particular candidate can be taken even further, to a broader level, that being national anthems. National anthems tie music and politics in much the same way as campaign songs do. They are equally a "potent weapon for the dissemination of political ideas" as campaign songs (Van Sickel, 2005). National

anthems are a symbolic representation of a country and through repeated exposure they imbue a sense of patriotism and healthy nationalism. To that end, national anthems also indoctrinate the political ideals of a country into its citizens. Colley (2005) examined "God Save the Queen ", the national anthem of the United Kingdom, and discovered that it served as a powerful way to legitimate and spread the monarchical political structure and the ideals that go along with it. A lyrical analysis supports her assertion. Pertinent lyrics include: "Long to reign over us" and "Long may she reign." The same conveyance of political ideals can be seen in the "Star Spangled Banner." Of utmost importance to the conception of politics in the United States is the highly valued trait of equality. The "Star Spangled Banner" combines this political ideal into its music by lyricizing: "O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave."

Given the fact that music has been inextricably tied to politicians as a dissemination device for their political positions, it should come as no surprise that social movements utilize music in the same way. Eyerman and Jamison (1998), suggest that music serves as a more effective way to articulate group identities, thus lending itself to the formation of social movements. Mattern (1998) concurs, he explains that music allows groups to establish shared meanings and interests, their pragmatic use of music allows them to advance their "pre established aims." Trigg (2010) succinctly sums up these sentiments by speaking of the great impact music can have on social movements as he states that "the song itself is a key part of the progress that it seeks to effect. In a way it is that change." This definitely seems to be the case. The great social upheavals of the 20th century, as we will see, have all been backed by extensive soundtracks.

The first real instance in which a mass social movement used music to their advantage in the ways mentioned above was in 1934. At the time around 400,000 mill workers joined forces

and went on strike for better working conditions and higher wages, the largest collective strike in US history (Roscigno & Danaher, 2001). Roscigno and Danaher (2001) found a significant link between the presence of radio stations, then a burgeoning industry, and the presence of a labor strike. If a Southern county had a radio station then it was extremely likely that the textile mill workers of that county would go on strike (Roscigno & Danaher, 2001). These mill workers were significantly influenced by the pro-labor music that was played on the radio, leading them to take political action and protest (Roscigno & Danaher, 2001). The role that music played in creating conditions that were ripe for politically motivated labor protests cannot be understated, however, music played an even more prominent role in the social upheavals of the 1960's.

Music became intimately connected with the social movements of the 1960's, starting with the anti-war movement. Brooks-Klinger (2008) captures this relationship: "When you see footage from the 1960's and early 70's, it's almost invariably accompanied by a protest song from that era." Brooks-Klinger (2008) argues that music was essential to the anti-war movement, the relevant songs of the day fueled "individual and collective resistance" as well as promoting "feelings of hopefulness and global humanity." Classic songs such as "Fortunate Son" by Creedence Clearwater Revival, "Feel Like I'm Fixin' to Die Rag" by Country Joe and the Fish, "I Ain't Marching Anymore" by Phil Ochs and many others all provided lyrics to the protestors that promulgated their anti-Vietnam political messages. The lyrics of Country Joe and the Fish's song say it all: "And it's 1, 2, 3, What are we fighting for? Don't ask me, I don't give a damn, Next stop is Vietnam, and it's 5, 6, 7, Open up the pearly gates. There ain't no time to wonder why, Whoopee! We're all going to die"

The social movement that is most closely associated with the conveyance of political messages through music, however, is the Civil Rights movement. Trigg (2010) states that "Civil

Rights songs are progressive: they seek to move society forward," and Roscigno and Danaher (2001) add that the repetitive singing of these songs forms a ritualistic bond between members of the group, whether they are black or white. The forward moving aspect that Trigg (2010) speaks of can be seen in Civil Rights staples such as "A Change is Gonna Come" by Sam Cooke, "We Shall Overcome" and "Michael Row the Boat Ashore" by Pete Seeger. Clearly, these songs achieved their political goals.

Of course, not everyone is supportive of this association between music and politics. There have been many other instances of criticism since Plato's initial statements. Critics have always been concerned about music's potential mind altering and behavior changing powers. Peterson and Christenson (1987) as well as Denisoff (1970) dictate the opinions of several individuals regarding rock music as being both "Atheistic and Communistic "or "turning the younger generations rabid." Fox and Williams (1974) also encountered a similar sentiment. Some individuals thought that music of the 60's and 70's would "destroy America as we know it."

These opinions then physically manifest themselves in the form of censorship. This censorship was not so much a banning of specific words that are said but a banning of broad political ideals. It was initially seen in the era of McCarthyism in which McCarthy's House Un-American Activities Committee blacklisted the Weavers, a popular group headed by Pete Seeger, who professed left-leaning sentiments (Denisoff, 1970). McCarthy was afraid of the political message that could be conveyed through their songs. In more recent times Clear Channel, a large radio company, banned all of their stations from playing music that was deemed un-American in the wake of 9/11 (D'Entremont, 2003).

Hypothesis

With that background in mind, the fact that politicians and countries officially use music to convey their political messages and that the success of the 20th century's greatest social movement heavily relied upon the fact that music can radically alter the listener's thoughts, my hypothesis is as follows. It is hypothesized that there will be a significant correlation between the listening of certain genres of music and the political ideology of the listener. More specifically, it is hypothesized that rap/hip-hop, folk, blues and soul genres will be positively correlated with a liberal ideology. Metal, religious and country music will be positively associated with a conservative ideology. Finally pop, rock and EDM will not be significantly correlated with any political ideology.

Literature Review

In order to either confirm or deny the hypotheses, we turn to the existing literature for potential answers. However, there has been a gross lack of research done on this subject. Only five studies that are at all related and only three of them attempted to tie music genres to political ideology. None of the studies are able to prove any causation, and a correlational relationship was the best that any could do.

One of the more common relationships that is observed between music genres and political ideology, at least anecdotally, is the relationship between country music with conservatism. Van Sickel's (2005) research finds that this may not actually be the case. Van Sickel (2005), cognizant of this anecdotal relationship, executed a content analysis of every number one country hit from 1960-2000, 1,217 songs in total. After coding for twenty broad political themes (patriotism, race, poverty and equality among others), Van Sickel (2005) underwent a manual analysis of the lyrics of all 1,217 songs. His findings indicated that only 73

songs, a mere 6%, contained references to any of the twenty political themes, and when they did it was rarely in a strong manner (Van Sickle, 2005). Several of the songs expressed conservative values, such as "Okie from Muskogee" and "The Fightin' Side of Me" both by Merle Haggard, which served as a response to the anti-war movement of the 1960's (Van Sickle, 2005). However several songs like "Harper Valley P.T.A" which spoke of breaking the traditional role of women, confounded both anecdotal evidence and the author's hypothesis (Van Sickle, 2005). There are some major limitations to this study though. By examining only the number one hits, Yan Sickle excludes thousands of other country songs that have conveyed political sentiments. Fox and Williams' (1974) study found a small but positive relationship between country music and a liberalism, which is in conflict with Sickle's results. Overall, Yan Sickle's (2005) research doesn't set a good precedent for my hypothesis. If no political content is found in the country genre it cannot sway the ideology of a listener.

Belcher and Haridakis (2011) examined the potential relationship between specific music genres and ideology in more general terms. Belcher and Haridakis (2011) examined the relationship between 28 different genres and political group membership or activism on a college campus. Belcher and Haridakis (2011) found that of the 261 respondents, after running regressions and controlling for various factors, those who listened to alternative and Christian rock were more likely to be involved with a political group. Conversely, those who listened to pop and rock exhibited a negative relationship with on-campus political group activities (Belcher & Haridakis, 2011). In terms of political activism, alternative, rap and trance exhibited a positive correlation while pop and rock showed a negative correlation (Belcher & Haridakis, 2011). This research shows that alternative, Christian rock, rap and trance mobilized listeners to act politically. However, it does not show the ideological leanings of those listeners.

Nrerland (2016) makes an attempt at tying music genres to political ideology through his research. However, it is only observational and correlational. Nrerland (2016) conducted a survey on members of the youth wings of five Norwegian political parties, ranging from the far left Communist party to the far right Fascist party. Participants were asked to rank 41 music genres in order of their favorite to least favorite (Nrerland, 2016). The left leaning parties identified indie rock, punk and protest songs amongst their top five favorites while the right leaning parties identified mainstream rock, hip-hop and dance as some of their common favorites (Nrerland, 2016). If specific genres were to influence the ideology of the listener, as I am hypothesizing, then the least favorite genre rankings should be the inverse of the aforementioned favorite rankings. Indeed, that was the case as Nrerland (2016) found that the left leaning parties consistently ranked dance related genres as their least favorite, which was a favorite of the right wing parties, and the right wing parties rated punk as one of their least favorite genres, a favorite of the more liberal parties. Additionally, Nrerland (2016) found that, when asked the question "Would you say that music has had any influence on your political engagement or on your opinion of a political issue," liberal parties responded in the affirmative 54% of the time. Nrerland 's (2016) results show at least a strong correlational relationship between several music genres and political ideology as well as the phenomena of music impacting the political positions of the listener.

Despite being conducted several decades apart, Stringer (2017) and Fox & Williams (1974) conducted their research into this topic using similar methods. Both Stringer (2017) and Fox & Williams (1974) used undergraduate college students as their population with Stringer (2017) using a sample of 448 and Fox & Williams (1974) using a sample of 730. Both studies utilized a Likert format to measure music genres; Fox and Williams (1974) conducted a Likert

assessment to determine favorability for a genre while Stringer (2017) used the Likert scale to determine the amount of time spent listening to certain genres. While both researchers used similar methods, different results were obtained.

Fox and Williams (1974) found that conservative students liked "current popular hits" and "easy listening" significantly more than liberal students at a rate of 28.7% more and 26.2% more respectively. Liberal students, on the other hand, enjoyed folk, blues and protest music significantly more than their more conservative peers (Fox & Williams, 1974). Fox and Williams (1974) found no relationship of statistical significance in regards to the enjoyment of either rock or country music.

Stringer's (2017) research found a predictive relationship between five genres and political orientation. Those five genres were as follows: rap/hip-hop, rock, alternative, pop and religious music (Stringer, 2017). Additionally, having conducted her research during the 2016 presidential campaign season, Stringer (2017) was able to discover correlations between several genres and candidate preference. On the Democratic side, Clinton supporters correlated positively with rap/hip-hop and negatively with rock music while Sanders supporters only correlated negatively with religious music (Stringer, 2017). On the Republican side, Trump supporters correlated positively with rock music while Cruz supporters correlated positively with religious music and negatively with rap/hip-hop (Stringer, 2017). The findings of both Fox and Williams (1974) identified differences in genre popularity across ideological lines, and Stringer (2017), who showed correlations between genres and candidate preference, either liberal or conservative, lend credence to the possible existence of music to political ideology relationship.

Original Research and Limitations

Since the research I am conducting is original, in order to more accurately test my hypotheses research was done on the obstacles that other studies have faced in the hopes of avoiding some during the research for this study. Music as a whole poses certain risks and problems to study ranging from the message music can deliver to the voices of singers which all need to be kept in mind to ensure accuracy.

In order for a piece of music to convey a message that could influence the ideology of the listener, the lyrics first must be intelligible. Some of the previous researchers, Stringer (2017) and Fox & Williams (1974), also identified this as a major concern in their respective studies.

Fox and Williams (1974), in particular, identify this concern by stating that the output of musicians are "frequently incomprehensible and unintelligible" and Denisoff (1970) further contextualizes this argument by giving the example of "Subterranean Homesick Blues", a Bob Dylan song, which he says contains "nearly unintelligible lyrics." Fox and Williams (1974) effectively sum this point up when they say that "political argument can scarcely be advanced by the "sh-boom, sh-boom" lyrics of the fifties." These assertions can be adapted to more modern times with regard to rap lyrics, lyrics that are often said so fast that they can't be understood.

If a musician is able to clearly enunciate their lyrics to the listeners, the listeners then must be able to interpret the meaning of said lyrics in order to garner some kind of political message. The interpretation of lyrics has also be identified by researchers as a potential hindrance to the conveyance of political meanings, with several factors contributing to this difficulty.

Denisoff and Levine (1971) provided the initial research into the arena of lyrical interpretation and their findings are still considered to be an authority. Denisoff and Levine

(1971) sought to investigate the lyrical interpretation of the song "Eve of Destruction", a protest song by Barry McGuire that criticized many developments of the 1960's, most particularly the Vietnam War and racial violence. Denisoff and Levine (1971) distributed a questionnaire in 1965 (during the height of the song's popularity) to college students at a San Francisco university, a population they deemed would be more supportive of such a song due to their liberal leanings. Denisoff and Levine (1971) discovered that only 14% of respondents correctly interpreted the theme of the song. Their findings have been anecdotally replicated several times among other musicians and politicians. Denisoff (1970) relates the story of Glen Campbell who covered "Universal Soldier", a decidedly anti-war song, Campbell was quoted as saying: "Draft card burners *should* be hanged." Obviously Campbell didn't understand the meaning of this song. Dewberry and Millen (2014) show this trend amongst politicians who incorrectly use campaign songs whose true meanings run antithetical to their campaign platforms. Reagan incorrectly interpreted "Born in the U.S.A" as being an intensely patriotic song, when in reality it is an anti-Vietnam War song. Clinton also incorrectly interpreted his campaign song of "Don't Stop" as being progressive, in reality it was about overcoming an unfaithful relationship a theme Clinton would wish to forget.

There are several factors that contribute to an incorrect interpretation of lyrics. Perhaps most common is the influence of the listener's personal background when interpreting lyrics. Root (1986) identified three aspects of audience response to a song: taste, judgement and occasion. Of the three occasions is the most pertinent to an incorrect interpretation of song lyrics, due to personal factors. Root (1986) writes that "what seems maudlin and sentimental under careful analysis may be moving and evocative in a private, intimate moment ", in other words personal factors and emotions of the listener can change the meaning of the song. Wolfe and

Haefner (1996) showed how this can play out through their study of the Beatles song "All You Need is Love." They asked students to interpret the meaning of the song's lyrics and several responded that it made them think of a deceased friend or relative, not at all what the song is really about (Wolfe & Haefner, 1996).

A final way in which lyrics can be interpreted incorrectly is due to the influence of the artist. Many times a listener's perception of the artist significantly changes their interpretation of their song's lyrics. Root (1986) writes that many times a "songwriter may create a persona in the composition which clashes with the persona of the performer." When this happens, listeners are unable to remedy the two personalities, and instead interpret the lyrics through their perception of the performer. Platoff (2005) shows how this can happen through his analysis of two similar songs released in generally the same time, "Revolution" by The Beatles and "Street Fighting Man" by The Rolling Stones. Both songs spoke of the protests during 1960's and both in some way expressed either the band's lack of involvement or lack of desire to participate. In "Revolution", John Lennon lyricized "don't you know you can count me out," of the protest, and Mick Jagger in "Street Fighting Man" sang "cause in sleepy London town, there's just no place for a street fighting man"(Platoff, 2005). Despite expressing similar sentiments, the Beatles song was eviscerated in the media and the Rolling Stones song was not. This was due to the Beatles being seen as spokespeople for a generation, in this case they were in conflict. While the Rolling Stones weren't and they were also perceived as having more in depth lyrics, the listeners assumed that what Mick Jagger said wasn't really what he meant (Platoff, 2005). So, if listeners can both understand what an artist is saying in their musical composition and then accurately interpret the lyrics, they may be prone to the political influence of the song. However, lyrical interpretation and deciphering cannot occur if the listener doesn't have access to the music in the

first place. We have seen the impact censorship can have on the dissemination of music through Denisoff's (1970) and D'Entremont 's (2003) research, but other issues regarding the access of music, such as cultural, class based and media related, exist as well.

For many years certain types of music were excluded from the public consciousness in the United States due to cultural reasons. Denzin (1970) explains that "Negro blues, long the expressions of the suppression of blacks in America, have only recently been seen as indicators of the shifting nature of Negro culture." It took popular white artists, such as Elvis Presley, to get "black music" into the public sphere, beforehand this type of music couldn't politically influence anyone because it wasn't heard. Related to cultural issues is the issue of class, certain genres are closely associated with the upper class, for a variety of reasons. Nrerland (2016) saw this in his study of Norwegian politicians. Those from more affluent and well-educated backgrounds tended to enjoy classical music, jazz and traditional music more. Perhaps this is because a certain amount of wealth is required to go to a classical orchestral concert, an ability lower income people don't have. This can significantly curtail the ability for classical music to convey a political message on a wider scale.

Finally, in terms of access to music, a paradoxical relationship with the media has been observed by several researchers. Technology has advanced to a point in which media outlets have become extremely numerous as well as extremely accessible. Nearly everyone has access to unlimited options on their smartphones. However, the proliferation of media has not necessarily led to an increase in political music or the dissemination of it. Stringer (2017) and Brooks Klinger (2008) write about this paradoxical trend in their research. Brooks-Klinger (2008) sees this trend as exhaustive to listeners, the breadth of media options overwhelms individuals to a point in which they either don't receive the message of songs or they simply don't care in

general. Stringer (2017) talks of media as being a “two-way street”, media can influence us, as my hypothesis states, but we also possess a capability to influence the media that we receive. Perhaps the music doesn't influence political ideology but a pre-existing ideology influences the musical choice.

A final limitation exists within the music itself, the very musical sound that accompanies lyrics holds the potential to change lyrical meanings. The melody and rhythm of a song, the actual musical sound that is heard can serve as hindrance in primarily two ways. First, the music can actually nullify the lyrics completely. Prinsky (1987) exemplifies this belief in his study, finding that most teenagers ignore lyrics altogether. Denisoff and Levine (1971) illuminates this belief further by referring to an interpretation of music as "background noise." Some people don't actually listen to what is being said in the songs at all, the music simply serves as a sort of white noise that is mindlessly played in the background (Denisoff & Levine, 1971).

The second way in which the music itself can act as a hindrance is through its ability to change the meaning of the actual lyrics. The divergence between this ability of music and the prior is that the lyrics are heard and they are interpreted. They are not blocked out by the music; however, they may be influenced incorrectly by the music. Peterson (1971) illuminates this trend by stating that "the meaning of lyrics depends as much on what the audience hears as on what the lyricist intends." Pedelty and Keefe (2010) further support this assertion by stating that "people react as much or more to the ‘feel’ of a given song as to the manifest meanings of the words."

Dewberry and Millen (2014) provide a prime example of this phenomena in the hit song "Pumped Up Kicks" by Foster the People. Driven by an upbeat, positive and poppy sound the meaning of the song was widely perceived to be positive, however the lyrics reveal that it is about an angry teen contemplating a school shooting (Dewberry and Millen. 2014). Clearly this

is quite the barrier to the dissemination of political ideology in song, if the melody and rhythm can completely change the lyrical meaning, then the political statement cannot be received accurately.

Given the great deficit of research into the topic due to the difficulties of studying music in general, as seen above, any conclusion in either a positive or negative direction regarding my hypothesis cannot responsibly be made. There simply is not enough existing literature to confidently make a claim in either direction. Therefore, original research had to be conducted to contextualize the literature review and to aid in the conclusion of my hypothesis. As mentioned above many obstacles were also faced during this research such as how it is very important to acknowledge that my sample size is severely lacking. Twenty-one respondents is not nearly enough to make any type of claim for causality, thus I am only showing and arguing for correlation, it is also not enough to be representative of the general populous. Additionally, the sample skewed highly liberal due to the fact that the demographics of the study were college students at a liberal arts campus, thus limiting the ability to draw correlations between music genres and a conservative ideology.

Methodology

A short survey containing nine questions was distributed across the history and political science department at York College of Pennsylvania. Included in the survey were questions to identify three general categories: political ideology, music preference and demographic controls.

To determine political ideology a 6 point Likert scale was utilized as well as a party identification question. To determine music preference participants were asked to rank 10 genres of music from favorite to least favorite. Demographic controls included questions regarding gender, ethnicity, age and family income. In total 21 responses were collected, on which a

bivariate correlational analysis was conducted in order to illuminate any potential correlations between ideology and music genre.

Results and Discussion

The breakdown of political ideology, and party identification for that matter, skewed highly liberal, potentially due to the sample being entirely composed of college students. The results of both political ideology questions can be seen in the chart below.

Table 1: Responses to political ideology Likert scale.

	Aggregate Number	Percent of Total (n=21)
Very Liberal	4	19%
Liberal	7	33%
Somewhat Liberal	6	29%
Somewhat Conservative	3	14%
Conservative	1	5%
Very Conservative	0	0%

Table 2: Response to party identification question.

	Aggregate Number	Percent of Total (n=21)
Republican	1	5%
Independent	8	38%
Democrat	11	52%
Other	1	5%

In order to determine music preference, the respondents were given 10 genres to rank order of most favorite to least favorite. "1" being most favorite and "10" being least favorite. The genres included in the survey are as follows; rock, pop, metal, EDM, soul, blues, folk, rap/hip-hop, religious and country. For the sake of conserving space, each genre's ranking won't be enumerated here in a table format rather the top and bottom three will be listed. Coming in at the top of the rankings was rock, 8 number one votes, then pop and rap/hip-hop with 5 votes apiece. At the other end of the spectrum was religious music, with 10 last place votes, then metal, 5 last place votes, with country and EDM tying at 2 last place votes apiece.

After the raw data was tabulated and the necessary coding changes were made, a bivariate correlational analysis was conducted. Due to how the ideological responses were coded, a positive number will indicate a correlation between the genre and a liberal ideology while a negative number will indicate a correlation between the genre and a conservative ideology. The results of this correlational analysis can be found in the table below.

Genre	Correlational Value
Pop	0.445
Rock	.216
Rap/Hip Hop	.182
Religious	0.067
Blues	0.033
Soul	-0.004
EDM	-0.03
Folk	-0.167
Metal	-0.203
Country	-0.352

The results of my correlational analysis have yielded mixed results in regards to my hypotheses. The primary hypothesis was found to be true, there is some correlational relationship between political ideology and the music listened to. According to the analysis several genres showed a strong and significant correlation, anything over +/- .15 is deemed significant, with their respective ideologies. Country was revealed to have a moderate to strong relationship with a conservative ideology, resulting in a value of -.352, as well as metal at -.203. Both of these findings support my hypothesis that country and metal would influence the listener towards a

conservative ideology. On the other side of things, rap/hip-hop showed a significant but weak relationship with a liberal ideology, resulting in a value of .182. This is in line with my hypothesis that rap/hip-hop would influence the listener towards a liberal ideology, however it is weakly supported. Pop, at .445, and rock, at .216, showed the strongest relationships with the liberal ideology. However this goes against my hypothesis which predicted these two genres to be relatively neutral. The folk genre went against my hypothesis, although weakly, due to its -.167 value which shows a correlation with the conservative ideology. Soul, at -.004, EDM, at -.030, blues, at .033, and religious, at .067. all showed essentially no relationship in either direction.

Several outside factors can potentially explain the results of my survey. First, some of the strongest of relationships, seen in pop and rock correlating strongly with a liberal ideology. could be explained by the outside factor of age. The sample for this survey was comprised of an exclusively younger demographic, a demographic that also tends to be more liberal, young people also probably listen to mainstream genres, such as pop and rock. That could also explain the weak and non-existent relationships seen as well, particularly in regard to folk, soul and religious music, not many people of this generation, irrespective to ideology, listen to those genres, therefore there wasn't much of a relationship at all.

The hypotheses were all partially supported and partially refuted. I hypothesized that folk, rap/hip-hop, soul and blues would be significantly correlated with a liberal ideology. This was supported by my results for rap/hip-hop and weakly refuted by my results for soul. folk and blues. I hypothesized that country, metal and religious music would significantly correlate with conservatism. This was supported by both the country and metal results, however it was weakly refuted by the results for religious music. Finally, I hypothesized that pop, rock and EDM would

have no bearing on political ideology. This was strongly refuted by my results for pop and rock but was supported by my results for EDM.

Conclusion

In conclusion, based on both the qualitative and quantitative research, there definitely seems to be at least a correlational relationship between certain genres of music and political ideology. The observational evidence that links music with politics is compelling and once the pervasive notion of music's mind-altering powers is added into the equation, the argument gets even stronger. Some of the previous research, as well as aspects of my original research, back up the correlational link between music and political ideology. Several genres have been found to have a correlational relationship, at the very least, with certain ideological positions, from my study pop, country, rock and metal all correlated significantly with either ideology. However, it is very important to note that none of the aforementioned studies or research have proved causality, only correlational link has been discovered. At this point it would be irresponsible to claim that genres of music can cause a shift in political ideology. In order for that claim to be made additional research, explained below, needs to be conducted.

Further Research

Given the fact that there is relatively little research and that none of the research could establish causation, I believe that further research into the topic is needed. Specifically, further research needs to be conducted in a manner that may be able to prove a causal relationship between certain genres and political ideology. Perhaps this research could come in the form of a study of teenagers, whose minds are starting to form their political beliefs, who are randomly assigned a certain genre to listen to extensively. The impact of the genre could be clearly seen as a casual mechanism of ideology then. Whatever the method, further research should be

conducted in this area to conclusively prove that certain music genres dictate particular political leanings.

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