Review Article

Music and Economic Behavior from the Sloterdijkian Perspective on Anthropotechnics: A Literature Review

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Music may be understood as a significant factor that not only shapes economic dynamics but is also shaped by them. To advance the understanding of these processes, this study examines, through Sloterdijk's perspective on anthropotechnics, interrelations between music and economic behavior highlighted in the literature. The methodological approach integrates bibliometric analysis with a systematic literature review of 53 economic papers indexed by Web of Science. The findings suggest that the influence of music is highly context-dependent and mediated by other technological instruments such as AI-driven recommendation systems and social media influencers. Moreover, demographic groups engage with music in differentiated ways, shaped by prevailing social, cultural, and economic norms. Ranging from family traditions to commercial playlists, music functions at the intersection of cultural and economic domains, intertwining affective experience with decision-making processes and fostering emergent modes of economic behavior.

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1. Introduction

Human existence can be critically examined through the lens of anthropotechnics, a concept that refers to the ensemble of technologies through which humans actively shape and reconfigure the conditions of their own existence[1]. In this sense, anthropotechnics is conceived as an intrinsic dimension of human self-formation. This conceptualization situates human life within a dynamic interplay of autoregulation and external technical mediation, where the subject not only adapts to but also actively re-engineers both bodily processes and environmental contexts[2]. According to previous studies, "like most of Sloterdijk's

key terms, anthropotechnics defies easy conceptualization (...) its ramifications far exceed the domain of techne. At stake in Sloterdijk's use of the concept is, among other things, the constitution of the human and humanity's being-in-the-world, its ability not only to modify but especially to exercise and transcend itself and the possibility to mediate human interiority with the non-human outside"[3].

This theoretical framework involves adopting a technophilic yet critically reflective stance, one that acknowledges the technogenic origins and continuities of humanity while resisting nihilism[4]. Through such a perspective, the human condition is seen as inseparable from technological environments that extend and mediate capacities while simultaneously introducing new complexities and forms of opacity. However, the resulting artificial milieus, while efficient and highly functional, open space for phenomena such as alienation and self-imposed forms of domination[5].

Religious and educational domains, for example, can represent distinct vectors within the anthropotechnical discourse. Religious anthropotechnics articulates practices that mold individuals toward an idealized form of existence in accordance with sacred precepts[6]. Conversely, contemporary education can be understood as a domestication technology, integral to the production of societal subjects under prevailing norms and power structures[7].

The ethical and social ramifications of anthropotechnics also come to the fore in the context of biotechnological enhancement and transhumanist ambitions. The drive toward self-directed evolution exemplifies a substantial expansion of human agency, wherein individuals aspire to surpass biological determinism through technological intervention[8]. Yet this trajectory harbors significant risks, notably the exacerbation of social fragmentation in favor of competitive individualism; "this stance is compared to the neoliberal ideal of the entrepreneur of oneself, which values individual success without considering collective consequences"[9].

In the musical context, "*l'autre nom de l'anthropotechnique, le devenir-homme de l'homme en tant que devenir de ses techniques, serait le devenir-âme de l'instrument. L'instrument n'a jamais été simplement un outil matériel, mais toujours un outil transcendantal, l'outil de l'anthropotechnique transcendantale, c'est-à-dire du règne de l'immatériel. L'instrument musical en particulier était voué à la formation de la matière sonore en tant que pur esprit*"[10]. Critical questions arise from the aspects mentioned in the previous paragraphs, such as how the outcome of this "pure spirit" context (music) interacts with human rationality, as conceptualized by the economic sciences. To address this question, the present study seeks to examine, through the lens

of anthropotechnics, the ways in which the literature has highlighted the (inter)connections between music and economic behavior.

2. Materials and Methods

This study employs a methodological framework that integrates bibliometric analysis with a systematic literature review, aiming to provide a comprehensive and nuanced mapping of the field. The Web of Science (WoS) Core Collection was selected for its established credibility and extensive coverage, ensuring the inclusion of a robust and representative corpus of publications[11]. Data collection was conducted in August 2025, guaranteeing that the analysis also reflects the current contributions available.

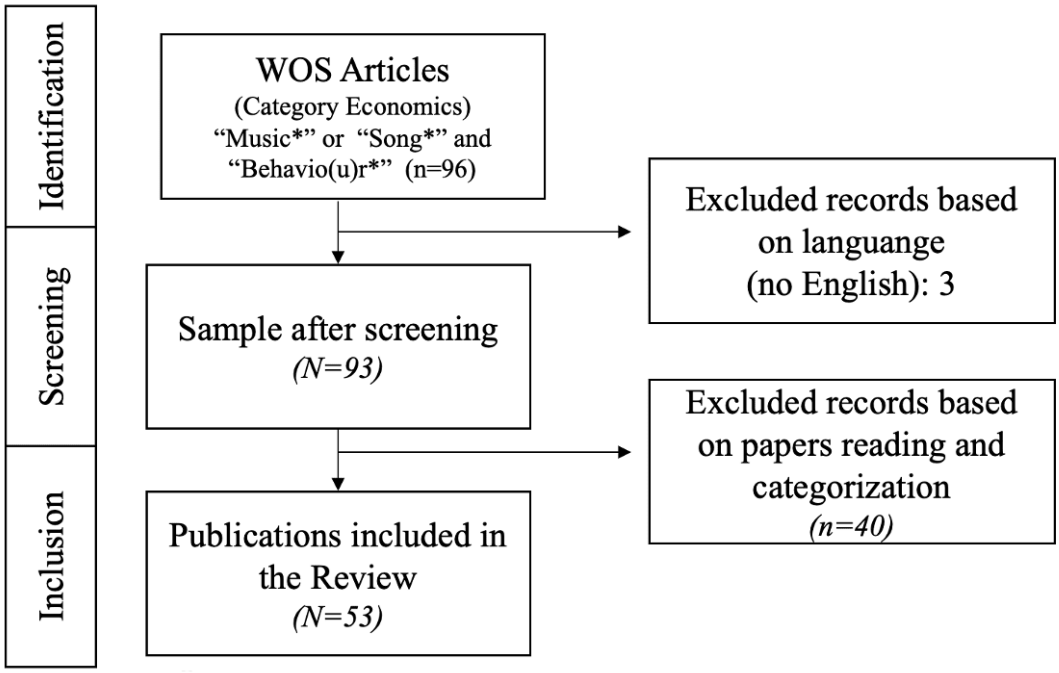

Figure 1. Flow diagram

For the literature analysis, relevant articles from the category "Economics" in English were selected based on the presence of the terms "Music*" or "Song*" and "Behaviour*" or "Behavior*" within their main topics. Subsequently, papers were included based on an evaluation of their alignment with this study's objective, yielding a total of 53 records (Figure 1). The objective of this study is to contribute to a better understanding of, from the Sloterdijkian perspective on anthropotechnics, what (inter)relations between music and economic behavior are emphasized by this literature.

The systematic literature review followed the PRISMA framework[12], which ensured transparency and methodological rigor throughout the process. All 53 publications initially identified were screened for language. During this stage, the author reviewed and categorized the studies by using NVivo (version 15) software.

The bibliometric analysis was conducted using VOSviewer (version 1.6.20). The output was a systematic mapping of the literature, allowing for the identification of dominant theoretical frameworks, central conceptual structures, and recurring researched themes. A minimum threshold of five co-citation occurrences and five term occurrences was applied. By integrating bibliometric analysis and a systematic literature review, the study seeks to offer a broader and deeper insight into the complex nature of the dynamics considered.

3. Results

3.1. Bibliometric analysis

Over the period considered, a total of 53 articles addressing the topic were published, with 2022 representing the year with the highest proportion of publications (13.5%). The three journals with the highest number of publications (8% each) are the Journal of Behavioral & Experimental Economics, the Journal of Cultural Economics, and the Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization. No individual institution accounts for more than three publications, suggesting a decentralized pattern of institutional affiliation. Regarding country-level contributions, the United States, China, and Germany emerge as the leading contributors, accounting for 29%, 15%, and 14% of publications, respectively.

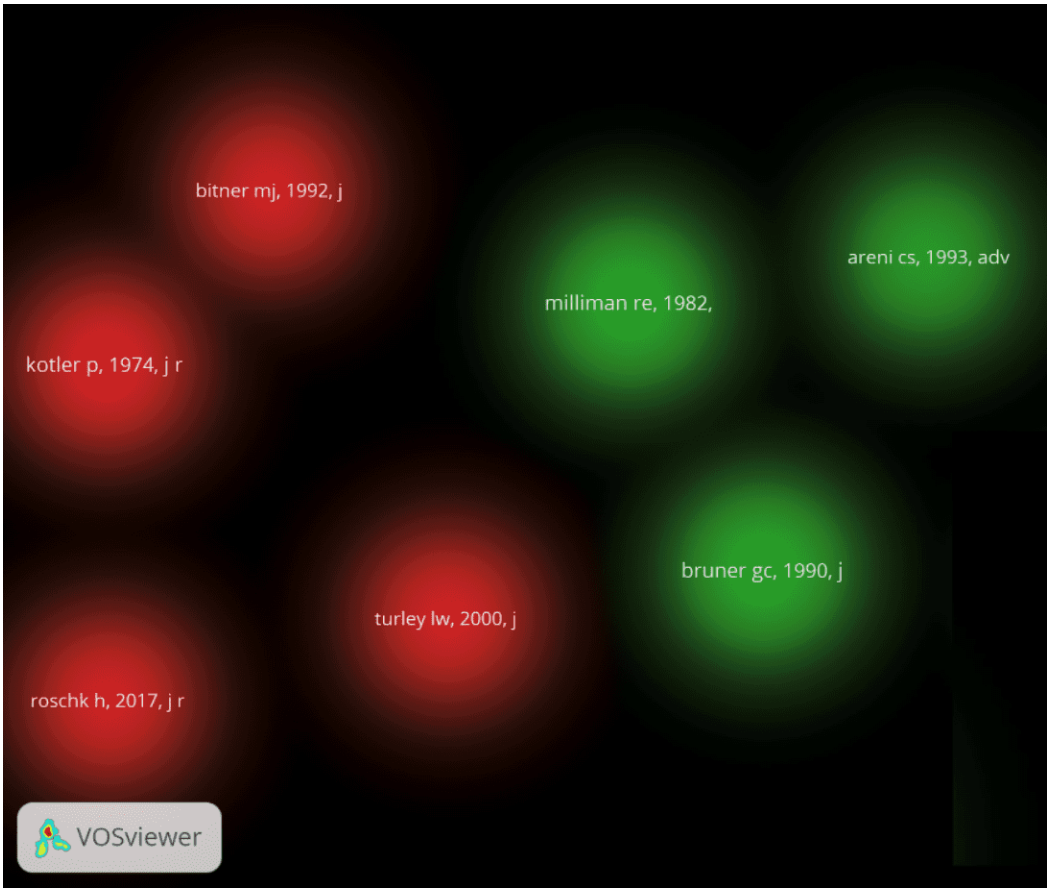

Figure 2. Cluster of Co-citation

Regarding co-citation, an analysis of the distribution of the most frequently cited studies by the selected papers reveals the presence of two distinct clusters (Figure 2). The green cluster comprises research focused on the influence of music on consumer purchasing behavior[13][14][15], whereas the red cluster encompasses the examination of broader aspects of the atmosphere on purchasing[16][17][18] as well as employee behavior[19].

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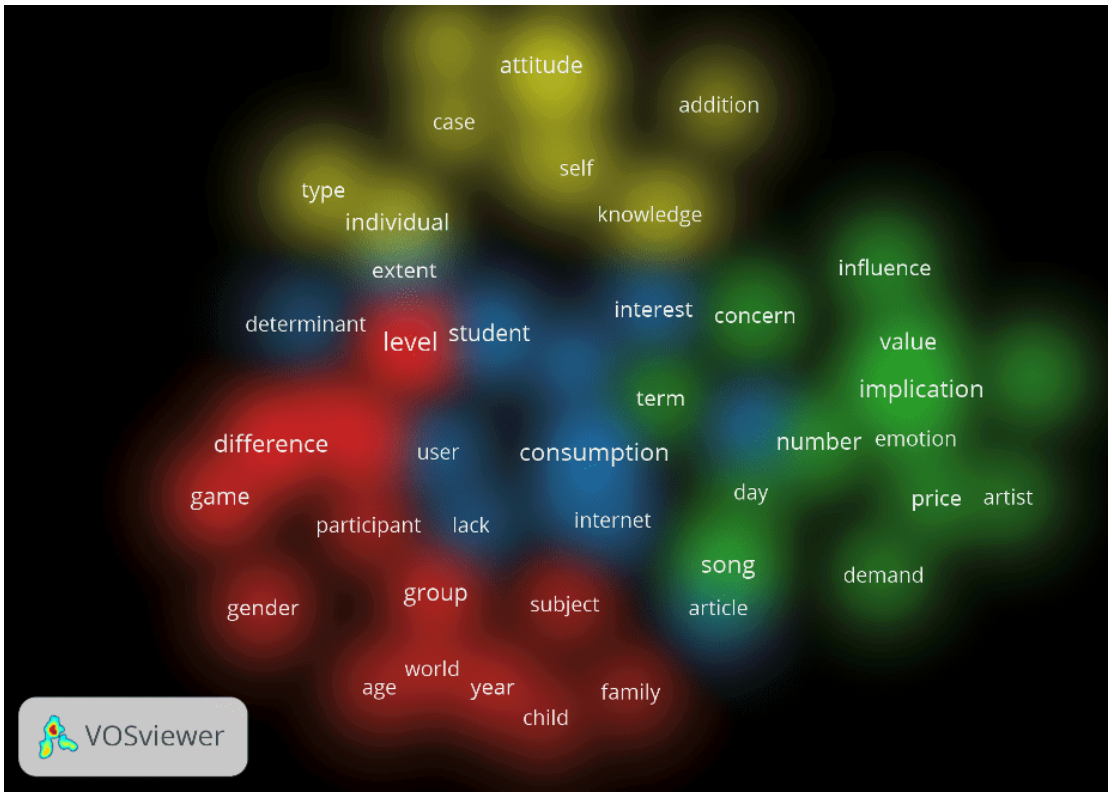

Figure 3. Cluster of terms

Figure 3 presents the analysis of the most frequently mentioned terms in the selected articles. Overall, four clusters were identified. The green cluster contains traditional economic terms, such as value, price, and demand, alongside less recurrent terms like emotions. In this context, the artist is seen as the seller.

The blue spheres highlight the presence of consumption, associated with the internet, users, and students. The red cluster includes references to games, families, children, and gender. Terms such as attitude, self, and knowledge also appear within the yellow cluster. This distribution indicates a certain degree of thematic diversity within the literature, ranging from traditional economic concepts to socio-behavioral and digital consumption perspectives.

3.2. Systematic analysis

3.2.1. Music and Consumption/Demand

Although melancholic songs tend to achieve greater success in competitions[20] and on heavily polluted days[21], circumstances such as the COVID-19 pandemic shifted listeners' preferences toward feel-good

tracks[22]. Music, such as pop, boosts dwell time, spending[23], impulse buying, and customer satisfaction[24][25][26][27], particularly among Generation Z[28]. Gen Z is also "less prone to music piracy than Millennials, and those who pirate music tend to share similar social norms, a limited understanding of copyright infringements, and poor views about the music industry"[29]. Perceived benefits also influence piracy levels[30]. In this context, religiosity appears to have little effect on the intention to refrain from pirating music[31].

Contextual aspects, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, can shift consumption loyalty: in this period, digital music sales declined as a result of an influx of new pirates, primarily people facing reduced income and increased time at home[32]. On music crowdfunding platforms, the number of backers grows with the backer volume, suggesting the presence of a herd behavior effect[33][34]. Gender also influences the subscription profile of this kind of service[35]. Furthermore, girls primarily use the Internet for activities such as listening to music, while boys mainly use it for playing games[36][37]. In the game's context, listening to classical music encourages social well-being[38].

The literature highlights associations between music consumption and stock market returns[39], volatility[40], and brand equity[41]. A positive mood, measured by positive songs, leads investors to buy more and shift their investments from lower- to higher-risk assets[42]. Loss aversion decreases when people listen to music that they like[43]. Exposure to low-tempo music results in increased risk-taking[44]. On the other hand, music festivals drive customers' actions related to lowering risks, more specifically, to travel planning and arrangements[45]. The demand elasticity of digital music varies across European countries[46]. Engaging in complex economic decisions is associated with favoring simpler music[47].

3.2.2. Music and Supply

Regarding market concentration, songs that enter the charts significantly enhance their likelihood of being streamed repeatedly[48]. Furthermore, leading artists typically produce longer songs[49]. Instagram personalities, even in the music industry, experience increased financial success associated with higher levels of body exposure[50].

Concerning advertisements, music that was misaligned with the advertisement content heightened viewers' attention, enhanced ad recall, and imposed a higher cognitive load[51]. Apropos of ticket prices, they tend to be related to the size of the local population[52].

3.2.3. Music and Identity

Engagement in paternal behaviors, including singing songs, is positively linked to both cognitive and socioemotional development in children[53]. In recent years, AI recommendations have shaped the variety of music consumed, leading some users to reduce musical exploration to maintain their identity consistency[54]. There is discussion regarding the effect of music on oxytocin, trust-related behavior, and perceived trustworthiness[55]. Individual biases are relevant to the economic behaviors of agents[56].

4. Discussion

Music is more than entertainment; it can influence relevant aspects of our lives, like economic behaviors. The literature considered indicates that the moods we experience while listening to music can influence our willingness to take financial risks, showing how deeply music is intertwined with our everyday choices. At the same time, these influences are not always straightforward: they can inspire and uplift, but they can also contribute to feelings of alienation, reflecting the complex nature of how humans engage with technological systems.

Our musical tastes also shift depending on the context. During the COVID-19 pandemic, for instance, many people turned to different kinds of music, which in turn affected their emotions and the way they consumed media and goods. These shifts reveal how music mediates our experience of the world, illustrating the anthropotechnical ways in which technics help shape, guide, and sometimes transform the human condition.

Other technologies also play a key role in how we experience music today. AI-driven recommendation systems can narrow our exposure to diverse sounds, while social media platforms and influencers, such as Instagram personalities in the music industry, exert enormous influence on our listening habits. These digital interventions transform both individuals and their surroundings, showing how humans create and navigate artificial, functional spaces that guide both experience and behavior.

Music also intersects with social identity. Different demographic groups, including Generation Z and various gender identities, engage with music in distinct ways. Online streaming, music piracy, and other behaviors are shaped by social and economic norms, demonstrating how music interacts with the biological and social dynamics of our lives.

Even the most everyday musical practices, such as listening habits at home, family singing traditions, or music's role in cognitive and emotional development, can be seen as exercises in shaping the self. They

connect to broader ideas about education and human formation, highlighting the anthropological significance of how we cultivate culture and identity.

The literature also highlighted that music in commercial spaces, from curated playlists to festivals, shapes how long people stay, how satisfied they feel, and what they buy. In this way, music bridges the cultural and economic spheres, indicating that emotional experience and practical decision-making are intertwined and that they can create new ways of being and acting in the world[1].

Footnotes

[1] During the preparation of this manuscript, the author used ChatGPT for the purposes of language (English) review. The author has reviewed and edited the output and take full responsibility for the content of this publication.

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