

Sounds of Rebellion – Popular Music and Transnational Black Freedom Struggles

Panel Organizers

Wilfried Raussert

Matti Steinitz

(Center for InterAmerican Studies, Bielefeld University)

From soul over hip hop and punk to house: While many of the sounds that reflect the history of black liberation struggles have their origin in the United States, these genres have shaped popular cultures and youth movements across the globe. Throughout the 20th and early 21st centuries, black popular music styles created in the U.S. converge in the key role they have played as platforms of anti-racist expression, resistance and transnational communication between Afro-diasporic communities. These border-crossing flows were by no means unidirectional: The crucial participation of Afro-Cuban, Puerto Rican, Panamanian and Jamaican immigrants in the making of genres that have been perceived as strictly African American such as jazz and hip-hop and the emergence of new crossover styles such as mambo, Latin boogaloo, and salsa speak to the importance of processes of hemispheric transculturation that resulted from the convergence of migration waves from the Deep South, the Caribbean and Latin America in contact zones such as New York City. The panel focuses on the intimate relationship between music, social movements and the internationalization of black freedom struggles. Within the African diaspora, music has functioned as a vision of the future and a "method of rebellion," strategically employed to develop solidarity and identification between people who might otherwise be culturally, ideologically, or spatially separated (Shana Redmond, *Anthem*). The diffusion and creative appropriation of musical genres across national, cultural and linguistic barriers has also been essential to the development of practices of black internationalism that have been shaped by translocal and transgenerational dialogues between diverse Afro-diasporic communities, movements and cultures. While many African American music genres have been analyzed in their local and national dimensions, the transnational and hemispheric perspectives for which this panel aims to open a space are focused precisely on reviewing how social and cultural movements have been nourished by transversal sonic dialogues. We are interested in discussing how different chapters in the struggles of the Black Americas have been reflected in popular music and how these sounds often became a *lingua franca* of marginalized peoples within and beyond U.S. borders, contributing to the globalization of symbols and slogans of African American movements and cultures but also to a growing sense of diasporic blackness within the United States. We will explore how practices of appropriation and translation of black popular music in international contexts have generated impulses for counter-hegemonic youth movements but also provoked rejection and repression by local elites who perceived these external influences as a challenge to the status quo.

Presentations

X-treme Sounds: Hardcore Punk, Sonic Activism, and Black Resilience

Steffen Wöll (Leipzig University)

Am I Feelin' Myself? U.S. Commercial Rap Music Videos and Dutch Black Young Women and Men's Self-images.

Kim Dankoor (Utrecht University)

Global Dance Machines: The Transnational Theatre of Chicago House Music

Marcel Hartwig (Uni Siegen)

Hemispheric Soulscapes: Soul music and the rise of Black Power in Afro-Latin America

Matti Steinitz (Uni Bielefeld)