This item was submitted to [Loughborough's Research Repository](#) by the author.
Items in Figshare are protected by copyright, with all rights reserved, unless otherwise indicated.

HipHop ist im Haus: Cultural policy, community centres, and the making of hip-hop music in Germany

PLEASE CITE THE PUBLISHED VERSION

<https://doi.org/10.2148/benv.2005.31.3.237>

PUBLISHER

© Alexandrine Press

LICENCE

CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

REPOSITORY RECORD

Hoyler, Michael, and Christoph Mager. 2019. "HipHop Ist Im Haus: Cultural Policy, Community Centres, and the Making of Hip-hop Music in Germany". figshare. <https://hdl.handle.net/2134/2455>.

This item was submitted to Loughborough's Institutional Repository by the author and is made available under the following Creative Commons Licence conditions.

For the full text of this licence, please go to:
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.5/>

This item was submitted to Loughborough's Institutional Repository by the author and is made available under the following Creative Commons Licence conditions.

For the full text of this licence, please go to:
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.5/>

This article was published in *Built Environment* 31(3) (2005), pp. 237-254.

The definite version is available at:

<http://www.atypon-link.com/ALEX/toc/benv/31/3>

© Alexandrine Press <http://www.alexandrinepress.co.uk/>

HipHop ist im Haus: Cultural Policy, Community Centres, and the Making of Hip-Hop Music in Germany

Michael Hoyler¹ and Christoph Mager²

¹ Department of Geography, Loughborough University, Loughborough LE11 3TU, UK
e-mail: m.hoyler@lboro.ac.uk

² Department of Geography, University of Heidelberg, Berliner Str. 48, 69120 Heidelberg, Germany; e-mail: christoph.mager@geog.uni-heidelberg.de

Abstract

During the past 30 years, community centres and youth clubs have emerged all over Germany, providing spaces that challenge traditional forms of high culture. This paper explores the role of these spaces in the making of hip-hop music in East and West Germany. From the mid-1980s, community centres served as local testing grounds for DJs, rappers, graffiti writers and breakdancers. 'Jams' encouraged an exchange of ideas and styles, the refinement of skills in competitions, and the establishment of lasting social networks. Centres and clubs provided important 'homebases' and nodes, linking local scenes with a highly mobile national and trans-European hip-hop community. The paper argues that the production and consumption of hip-hop as a hybrid cultural form was shaped in part by the way these local spaces were created and organized. In the context of changing cultural policies, the sites' historicities and their use as musical spaces are crucial for an understanding of the geographical constitution of hip-hop music in Germany.

Introduction

Hip-hop in Germany only got this big because of the nature of the public youth sector. (Breakdancer Spaiche, quoted in Krekow and Steiner, 2000, p. 136)

Hip-hop as a hybrid form of cultural expression evolved in different parts of the world during the 1980s, strongly influenced by US-American cultural and musical models (Mitchell, 2001). Grounded in the everyday experience of African American and Hispanic youth, a hip-hop culture had first emerged in the de-industrialized urban environments of Harlem and the South Bronx in 1970s New York City (Rose, 1994; George, 1998). It encompassed such diverse practices as graffiti or spray art, break dancing, and hip-hop music. The first hip-hop DJs played their musical mix of different pre-recorded sounds in the streets, in parks or at high school parties, using two turntables, an audio mixer, an amplifier and speaker boxes. Accompanied by MCs, or rappers, who would back up the mix lyrically, the music soon gained popularity. Technological innovations such as drum computers and samplers increased the sophistication of music production, eventually reaching a wider audience both nationally and internationally (Toop, 2000).

In a divided Germany, this new genre was adopted and adapted in two fundamentally different political contexts of reception and cultural translation. Whereas the Federal Republic of Germany was highly integrated in transatlantic flows of people, commodities and images, the German Democratic Republic, still in the ideological grip of the Soviet Union, remained ambivalent to hegemonic global sounds which penetrated the Iron Curtain only slowly (Connell and Gibson, 2003). Despite the difference in access to information about hip-hop culture in the US, a hip-hop scene emerged in both German states as part of their respective youth cultures in the late 1980s.

This paper focuses on the early years of hip-hop in Germany and explores the role of cultural policy in the creation of a built environment, in which alternative youth cultures and initiatives could develop. In both parts of Germany, the significance of cultural policies for community development and urban governance grew after World War II, reflecting social, economic and political changes as in many other European countries (e.g. Griffiths *et al.*, 2003; Jobs, 2004). A disillusionment with the exclusivity of traditional elite

culture and its institutions led to the creation of radically new and different cultural spaces such as community centres, youth clubs or cultural workshops in order to widen the participation of the population in cultural activities. Whereas in West Germany these new cultural institutions were conceptualized from the beginning as meeting places and spaces of communication and free play, their central purpose in the GDR – to nurture a socialist consciousness (Wallace, 1999) – could only cautiously be subverted and redefined under a repressive system of state surveillance.

The paper argues that these alternative spaces became decisive elements in the formation of a hybrid hip-hop culture in Germany. After a brief outline of the changing cultural policies in West and East Germany, we show how the community centres and youth clubs created since the 1970s were increasingly conceptualized as open and palimpsestic spaces that could be used by different socially and culturally engaged groups and adapted to their specific needs. We then explore the role of these new spaces in the development of hip-hop in both German states during the pivotal 'Old School' years between the mid-1980s and the early 1990s, and conclude that the *Spiel- und Freiräume* (spaces of free play) they provided became a crucial part of a communicative and performative hip-hop architecture that was to have lasting effects on the formation of the genre in Germany.

Changing Cultural Policies and the Rise of Community Centres in Germany

Due to the German federal system of government, cultural and educational policies are devolved to the individual states that are responsible for their decentralized administration and implementation. Within this system, each city and town is in the possession of a degree of civic freedom to provide subsidies and administer regulations for cultural infrastructure and local events through their own cultural commissions (Phipps, 1999; Burns and van der Will, 2003). Before reunification in 1990, this decentralized approach was limited to the Federal Republic. Cultural policies in both German states developed along very

different paths that changed direction with subsequent generations of social and political actors.

Three distinct phases can be distinguished in the shaping of West German cultural policies: the restoration of industrial society after World War II; a period of revolt against traditions in the political, social and cultural sphere, between the mid-1960s and the late 1970s; and a phase of 'lifestyle politics' since the early 1980s (Schulze, 1993). These embody a shift from a conservative 'high cultural' elitism to the promotion of popular culture based on a more participatory notion of 'socio-culture', and to an increasing commodification of both popular and high culture.

In East Germany, the first 15 years of a broadly anti-fascist cultural renewal were followed by different waves of repression and 'thaw' between the early 1960s and the late 1970s, resulting in the emergence of a distinctive GDR culture. The final crisis of the late 1980s reflected the widening gap between official state culture and counter-cultural scenes (Goodbody *et al.*, 1995). As culture and the arts were perceived to have enormous political significance in nurturing a socialist consciousness, severe efforts were made to implement cultural policies hierarchically top-down on national, regional and district levels.

The changing cultural policies in both German states were crucial for the establishment of a two-tier cultural infrastructure that exists in Germany today; an established landscape of traditional cultural institutions complemented by alternative spaces for the production and consumption of a range of diverse cultural articulations and activities.

Spielräume: Alternative Spaces of Culture in West Germany

After the end of World War II, West German cultural policy was bound up with a belief in the intrinsic value of 'high' culture. The main objective of a once again decentralized cultural policy was to 'reconnect with the cultural traditions of the West' (Burns and van der Will 2003, p. 141) by ensuring the rebuilding of the country's cultural infrastructure. A system of state and municipal patronage for the arts provided the main financial and institutional support for theatres, opera houses, concert halls, libraries and museums. Focusing on artistic excellence

and elite institutions, popular and mass culture were largely neglected by official cultural policy.

From the mid-1960s, a new approach to cultural policy gained acceptance, which intended to overcome the distinction between elite, lay and popular culture and tried to open up traditional cultural institutions to the working classes. Under the slogan 'democratization of culture', these policies aimed at providing equal access for every citizen to educational and cultural resources. Knowledge was interpreted as an important basis for a humane and enlightened life that should be made available equally to everyone by the German welfare state. The provision of *Bildung für alle* (education for everyone) and *Kultur für alle* (culture for everyone) was thought partly to solve the problem of a just redistribution of societal wealth by means of extensive educational reforms (Glaser and Stahl, 1974).

With its educational claim, the evolving new cultural discourse also responded to a perceived urban crisis that followed the post-war reconstruction of German cities. The functional separation of spaces for work, home, leisure and education in formerly highly integrated urban landscapes, it was argued, had led to growing social alienation, anonymity, isolation and apathy of the citizens (Mitscherlich, 1965). Resolutions of the *Deutsche Städtetag* (Council of German Cities and Towns), entitled *Rettet unsere Städte jetzt!* (Save our cities now!) and *Wege zur humanen Stadt* (Ways to a humane city), called for extended notions of education, culture and the arts to challenge the technologically and economically determined desolation of urban communities. Urban planning policies were to create *Spielräume* (spaces for free play) by opening up traditional cultural institutions to wider audiences and by establishing new urban sites for artistic activities both in inner cities and the growing suburbs. One major outcome of these ideas was the establishment of youth centres and the recruitment of community education workers in urban neighbourhoods. The significance attached to the built environment for the creation of an alternative and inclusive new urban culture was neatly summarized in 1976 by one of the main proponents of this 'socio-cultural' approach:

... the whole complex 'town' is increasingly conceived as a socio-cultural living-space. Here cultural policy has the task of providing and sustaining ecological

'niches' in which symbioses that had almost disappeared under the pressures of competitive society can take place. The term 'niche' must be understood in a topographical sense – as a place where culture happens (whether it be the municipal theatre or the 'culture corner shop', the communication centre or culture-pub, the large public art gallery or small private one, the central or travelling libraries, the education centre or culture centre, or the local branches of the adult education network in the suburbs). These cultural sites must be so structured and organized as to allow education and 'culturation' to take place as a process of communication and socialization where active, spontaneous or improvisatory behaviour come into their own. Cultural topography is about the provision of 'workshops for the future' (Glaser, 2003, p. 188).

In the following years, such spaces evolved all over Germany in the form of decentralized civic centres, live-music cafés, workshops for neighbourhood specific history, venues for the performing arts or special cinemas for non-commercial movies, often in abandoned buildings such as disused railway stations, factories or old town houses. Many of these centres became organized in the *Bundesvereinigung Soziokultureller Zentren* (Federal Association of Socio-cultural Centres) whose statutes lay down the common principles of artistic-creative self-determination, cultural empowerment, the integration of social and ethnic minorities and a non-commercial orientation (Wagner, 2001). These basic guidelines reflect the widened notion of a 'social' culture 'for everyone' and 'by everyone' and acknowledge the contemporary discussions in cultural policy. Within these socio-cultural centres, the emerging new social movements of the 1970s, but also different youth groups and local initiatives were able to develop authentic places with which they could identify; places to meet and belong, to negotiate and exchange ideas.

Freiräume: Alternative Spaces of Culture in the GDR

In the German Democratic Republic, a unified social and cultural policy was established after the war. While the preservation of the high cultural heritage was organized in a few institutions mainly based in the urban centres of East Berlin, Leipzig and Dresden, cultural policies for a broad spectrum of citizens

were implemented by political bodies in the *Bezirke* (counties) and *Kreise* (districts). These decentralized cultural activities were predominantly organized either as public *Klubs* in municipalities, as cultural centres in nationalized factories, or initiated by public mass organizations such as the FDJ (Free German Youth), the youth organization of the Free German Federation of Trade Unions (Groschopp, 2001).

In the immediate post-war period, cultural policy in the eastern part of divided Germany was based on the concept of a broad coalition of democratic forces endorsed by a Soviet political hierarchy. The assumption that traditional cultural forms would appeal to a mass audience and play a major part in the re-education of Germany became an integral part of SED (United Socialist Party of Germany) thinking. Furthermore, hostility to all things American led to a strict rejection of popular fiction, abstract art and popular music by dogmatic cultural functionaries. Rock'n'Roll for example was denounced as 'symbolizing chaos' and to be an 'evil and anaesthetizing music' that made young people 'stupid and hysterical' (Schäfer, 2003).

After the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961, the GDR's conflicting needs for innovation and stabilization caused contradictory developments in cultural and youth policies. Since its establishment in 1963, the Youth Commission had tried to guide the growing popularity of Rock'n'Roll music by organizing youth clubs as meeting places and venues under the control of the state party's mass organizations. The Youth Law of 1964 had allowed dance styles such as Twist and Jive and conceded the influence of 'Beat', a term used indiscriminately to cover the whole range of traditional and contemporary Western pop music and the associated youth cultures (Goodbody *et al.*, 1995). In the wake of the third *Deutschlandtreffen der Jugend*, an all-German youth festival that attracted roughly 25,000 young people from West Germany to East Berlin in the same year, the radio studio DT 64 was set up which would remain the only officially sanctioned programme to broadcast popular music in the GDR until 1989 (Schäfer, 2003). The works played on the radio and at public events were regulated, as a quota of at least 60 per cent had to be by socialist or GDR composers in order to protect cultural life from alleged 'manifestations of decadence'. Although the popularity of Western culture was acknowledged, it

was still viewed with suspicion by the Party – as immoral, ideologically backward and potentially criminal (Goodbody *et al.*, 1995).

The Eleventh Plenum of the Central Committee of the SED in 1965 brought a radical change in cultural policy from cautious democratic reforms to greater ideological control and the reinstatement of bureaucratic centralism. In the subsequent years, authors and writers had to face severe censorship of their works and suffered from an intensified surveillance by the *Stasi* security service. Music groups were now encouraged to write their own songs in German or to develop a repertoire including international folk and American anti-war songs. However, unlike in the literary and broadcasting sphere there was only limited success in controlling the Beat movement, as the younger audience showed increasing enthusiasm for the mushrooming bands (Wicke, 1992).

New cultural spaces evolved outside the state-sanctioned infrastructure in unorganized 'leisure groups' beyond the direct political control of the FDJ. In reaction to this, a specific GDR 'youth dance-music' was proclaimed to subsume and legitimize cultural activities of young people under a centralized policy. This development was embedded in a broader change in economic and social policy. Erich Honecker, First Secretary of the SED, intensified the production of consumer goods after 1971, which led to a rise in living standards, and promoted a less restrictive cultural policy (Wallace, 1999). The extended state support for sports, leisure activities and mass culture manifested itself in a substantial increase in the number of youth clubs and community centres that provided multifunctional spaces for both entertainment and education. By the mid-1970s there was no longer any serious attempt to ban Western influences in music or fashion.

The relatively liberal cultural policy abruptly ended in the autumn of 1976, when the state party decided to stage confrontations with those intellectuals who tried to challenge its cultural authority. The expatriation of Wolf Biermann, a renowned GDR dissident, during an officially approved concert tour in West Germany, provoked a deep split dividing those intellectuals who sided with the state party and those who supported Biermann (Jäger, 1995). In the subsequent months a great number of intellectuals chose to leave the country and applied for a visa to move West. The new cultural and political offensive of

the state authorities aimed at establishing a large and expensive system of support for cultural activities with the goal of re-integrating and de-politicizing them. In the sphere of popular music, the bands were made highly dependent on the state's infrastructure and resources such as rooms for rehearsal and performance, permissions to import instruments and to sign record contracts with the state owned Amiga pop label or with West German music firms (Wicke, 1992).

In the late 1970s autonomous and unofficial peace groups started to appear in response to the state's introduction of Defence Studies in the school curriculum and to the plans of NATO and the Warsaw Pact to deploy short-range nuclear missiles in both parts of Germany. Environmental and feminist groups also increasingly articulated their interests (Goodbody *et al.*, 1995). These movements operated largely in *Freiräumen* (free spaces) either in their private homes or provided by the Protestant church, the only organization that was not directly controlled by the Party. At the same time, new youth counter-cultures evolved that rejected the GDR *Realsozialismus* but still believed in socialist values and traditions. The politics of these subcultures tended to focus on local urban districts and on the creation of an informal publicity beyond the state organizations. The existing urban youth clubs and the cultural centres of the nationalized factories were no longer capable of providing appropriate spaces for these activities. To some degree, their cultural and educational roles were subverted as they were increasingly claimed as entertainment spaces (Smith, 1998).

Community Centres and Socio-spatial Formations of Hip-Hop Music

Both in West and East Germany, the newly created cultural centres of the 1970s and 1980s provided spaces – *Spiel- und Freiräume* – in which youth groups could meet, form social relations and perform cultural activities and practices (Göschel *et al.*, 1995). One of the new musical styles that became closely associated with these centres in the mid-1980s was hip-hop. Music clubs, the street, and private homes were all important sites in the constitution of a German hip-hop culture. It was however, the built environment of

community centres and youth clubs that arguably played the most significant role in the creation of first generation 'Old School' hip-hop in both parts of Germany.

Social Formations of Hip-Hop Space I: Old School in West Germany

The US-American armed forces stationed in West Germany were critical for introducing the new cultural form of hip-hop. One of the early protagonists, the breaker, graffiti writer and DJ, Cutmaster GB from Frankfurt, remembers:

In Frankfurt there were many GIs, also in Heidelberg and Berlin; these cities were packed with Americans. And many of the hip-hop people from New York City were deployed here as well. Additionally, there was a large club scene, where groups from the United States performed. For example, in the early 1980s our crew called Universal Movements breakdanced with the Rock Steady Crew at the Frankfurt Air Base ... In 1983 the *Funkadelic* opened in Frankfurt. As far as I know, it was the first club in Germany which promoted Black Music that was almost totally hip-hop orientated. This club would never have survived without a US-American crowd. In this way the whole thing developed and grew larger. (Cutmaster GB, personal communication, Frankfurt, May 2002; translated by authors)

For the members of the most notorious German rap group of the 1990s, *Die Fantastischen Vier*, personal contacts with soldiers in the US armed forces and visits to clubs for GIs and their families were the main routes into hip-hop. In their home-town of Stuttgart in Southern Germany, they experienced the advent of hip-hop as an enjoyable form of cultural imperialism, as the title of their recent autobiography *Die letzte Besatzermusik* (The Last Music of the Occupying Forces) suggests (Niemczyk, 1999). Apart from these locationally highly concentrated sites of cultural contact between DJs, rappers and breakers of US-American origin and German youth, television and cinema were the crucial media that communicated hip-hop culture to Germany. Internationally distributed songs like 'Rapper's Delight' by the Sugarhill Gang, usually referred to as one of the first rap songs on wax, were mainly perceived as disco music.

In the early 1980s, seminal films like *Wild Style!*, co-funded by a German public broadcasting company, and *Beat Street* documented some of the circumstances out of which hip-hop had arisen and acted as a blueprint of how to rap, DJ, write graffiti and dance to break beats. In this way, the practices of hip-hop consumption and production were widely distributed in West Germany, illustrating the importance of a mass mediated global diffusion of its cultural forms. However, the fact that hip-hop finally got adopted and adapted by different groups of young people depended to a high degree on the appropriation and the re-making of hip-hop in 'local' contexts (Bennett, 2000; Mitchell, 2001). Like other forms of Western popular music, hip-hop developed from simply imitating US-American models, i.e. rapping in American English over instrumentals from imported 12 inch singles B-sides, to a de-anglicized German version in the late 1980s and early 1990s, to an increasingly hybrid adaptation and mixing with 'traditional' musical and lyrical styles and contents (Regev, 1997).

In the early 1980s, 'b-boying' or 'breaking' became fashionable in West Germany when two teenage magazines, *Bravo* and *Pop Rocky*, organized nation-wide contests and published special issues that provided instructions and visual illustrations of easy dance moves. Hip-hop tracks by contemporary US artists Kurtis Blow, Afrika Bambaataa or Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five were simply conceived as music to be breakdanced to. In the rehearsal rooms of private homes and dancing schools, young people tried to imitate popular break dance styles that were often performed at dance-offs in streets and inner-city pedestrian zones. In the mid-1980s, the enthusiasm for breakdancing faded away and many young people turned to other popular musical styles. What remained was a very small and highly scattered subculture that tried to acquire a deeper understanding of the different production techniques (Jacob, 1993).

Hip-hop in West Germany at that time was mainly perceived as a comprehensive form of counter-cultural expression that was characterized by a radically new and creative do-it-yourself mentality. There were no clear instructions of how to spray a graffiti piece, how to scratch or backspin vinyl, how to cross-fade or mix two musical sources, or how to write a rhyme. Experimenting with some basic technological equipment such as tape recorders

and turntables, young hip-hop activists tried to create their own version of US-American musical models in the living rooms and bedrooms at home (Verlan and Loh, 2000). This is illustrated by group names such as the Ulm-based *Kinderzimmer Productions* (Kids Room Productions), or album cover designs, for example by the *Stieber Twins* from Heidelberg posing in their studio, a converted bedroom, on their LP *Fenster zum Hof*.

The paucity of hip-hop know-how not only concerned the technical aspects of music making but also hip-hop's cultural background in the day-to-day social experiences of African-Americans and Hispanics from deprived urban neighbourhoods in US cities. In order to make the new genre work in Germany, its proponents had to adapt hip-hop as a political comment on their own life experiences. These political attributes made hip-hop especially attractive to young people of migrant backgrounds, whose parents had been recruited as *Gastarbeiter* (guest workers) in the 1950s and 1960s to meet the needs of a then booming West German post-war economy. Although it was thought that the *Gastarbeiter* would return to their home countries after a few years, many stayed and established diasporic communities: hybrid and hyphenated cultures that developed transnational connections between Germany and their home countries (Kaya, 2001).

From about 1987, the so-called 'Old School' hip-hop activists of migrant and German backgrounds increasingly performed in public spaces provided by the existing youth centres, and developed loosely structured local hip-hop communities. A journalist describes the contemporary hip-hop scene in Nuremberg's southern quarter of Gostenhof:

... during the last few years, Turkish, Italian, half-Peruvian and German homeboys grew together here as one of the largest, most productive and politically most radical hip-hop communities in Germany. In the Gostenhof youth centre, hardcore rap rules like hardcore rock elsewhere. Acting kings are Incredible AI and Chill Fresh a.k.a. King Size Terror ... The homebase of all these musicians is the youth centre Gostenhof with a room for DJs in which everybody meets. The basic infrastructure was provided by the city council; the musicians bought turntables, samplers and other necessary equipment. (Terkessidis, 1991, p. 39; translated by authors) (See figure 1)

The author's rhetoric here is strongly influenced by US-American discourses on hip-hop culture of the late 1980s and early 1990s, with terms like 'homeboy' or 'homebase' referring to the social and local place of origin. The article's subtitle 'South Central Gostenhof' plays on the notorious image of South Central Los Angeles as a place of gang violence and drug related crime. Despite the differences between the experiences of black working-class youth in US-American inner cities and the daily life of native and immigrant young people in cities and towns of European welfare states, the notion of a local base called 'home' is crucial for an understanding of the social and sonic organization of popular music (Leyshon *et al.*, 1998). Hip-hop culture and music are marked by a strong attachment to the local environment and to local peer groups. The emphasis on place, locality and identity is a major factor contributing to hip-hop culture and rap music's character (Forman, 2002). 'Homebase' expresses this sense of belonging to a place where you can meet like-minded people and receive reliable support.

Figure 1. The youth centre as a key space for early hip-hop formation in Germany. Members of the Turkish-German rap group *Karakan* rehearse in Nuremberg's youth centre Gostenhof during the early 1990s. *Karakan*, an offshoot of *King Size Terror*, was one of three groups that formed the trans-local hip-hop music project *Cartel* in the mid-1990s. (Photo courtesy of Kinder- und Jugendhaus Gostenhof)

In the context of hip-hop in late 1980s West Germany, youth clubs and community centres became the focal points for meeting other hip-hop artists from the same urban quarter or town. The available infrastructure enabled and promoted individual autonomy and self-determined cultural expression outside the direct control of parents, school or church. In these spaces, it was possible to communicate ideas about do-it-yourself musical production, to exchange musical knowledge and personal experiences, or to perform in front of a small audience. If and how a local musical hip-hop scene emerged was of course highly dependent on the commitment of individuals to this particular form of cultural expression, and their willingness to make music actively.

Initially, the emergence of a West German hip-hop culture and music was limited to a few isolated places. However, the Old School proponents soon felt a need to share their enthusiasm for hip-hop and started to link their activities. Linguist, an immigrant from Ghana and a founding member of the notorious Heidelberg-based group Advanced Chemistry, recalls the dynamic development:

[The youth centre] was very important because it was there that we first met other people and exchanged ideas. Later it became very important again, when we began to travel more in Germany. When we founded Advanced Chemistry and started to contribute to jams [hip-hop parties], these first jams were held in or were organized by youth centres. This was about 1987/88 when we became more mobile. But in the initial phase, the youth centre was the place where we met. You could go there in the afternoon and everybody was there. (Quoted in Loh and Güngör, 2002, p. 131; translated by authors)

Linguist not only stresses the crucial role of public cultural infrastructure in the founding days of hip-hop in Germany, but he also introduces the idea of a mobile hip-hop space created through travel and exchange. As train fares were comparatively cheap, young hip-hop artists frequently set out to explore other venues in the country after scanning newspaper articles and mobilizing personal contacts. Due to the high visibility of graffiti and hip-hop fashion and the shared knowledge about youth and community centres as meeting places, it was easy to find the few like-minded in other cities.

Informal networks linking not only to hip-hop activists in other European countries, but also to the Caribbean, the USA and some African states, began to be established at the same time. Occasional European-wide jams brought together groups of young people of different national, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds at one of the homebases. Jams were devoted to the celebration of unity and to the performance of hip-hop as a way of life in a relaxed and peaceful atmosphere. A vivid exchange of styles and ideas took place as graffiti writers sprayed pictures on the walls or mutually signed their 'black books' with sketches and name tags, breakers performed their latest dance moves 'battling' against each other in a circle, and competing rappers proved their skills, rhyming over DJ delivered beats. During a jam, the primary focus of attention shifted dynamically so that everybody could potentially contribute to each of these different practices. The usual distinction between performer and audience or stage and auditorium became blurred: producing hip-hop culture was inextricably linked to watching others rap, perform music, dance and write (Mager, 2003).

The national and international networks developed by Old School hip-hop artists became temporarily grounded at jams, with youth and community centres operating as nodes in an informal hip-hop network. Spaces of hip-hop parties therefore should not be thought of as primarily bounded and local but have to be conceptualized in terms of complex relations with other places. Hip-hop culture in Germany is, just as popular culture in general, 'not a closed system of social relations but a particular articulation of contacts and influences drawn from a variety of places scattered, according to power-relations, fashion and habit, across many different parts of the globe' (Massey, 1998, p. 124).

Connecting people at jams in the late 1980s and early 1990s proved to be crucial for the further development of hip-hop in Germany mainly for two reasons. First, hip-hop activists tried to bring together as many participants from as many different locations as possible at their homebase and to attend as many jams at other locations as they could. This meant fame and respect, two basic principles in hip-hop to gain notoriety and to position oneself and one's neighbourhood in a growing and differentiating musical scene. By assuring that they had 'been there, done that' – participated and networked at jams – a sense of historicity and 'realness' was constructed that was rooted in the spaces of the

youth centre: place was used 'to authenticate music and vice versa' (Cohen, 1995, p. 64). Second, the participants of jams were able to establish sustainable networks in the form of friendships, information flows, musical collaborations and joint cultural productions. During the early period of commercialization of hip-hop and rap music in the 1990s, these Old School networks helped to establish formal and informal hip-hop infrastructures such as specialized magazines, hip-hop stores, mail-order businesses or independent labels and studios. These new institutions did not only play a key role in creating, reproducing and distributing the new music, but alerted the popular media and major record companies to the commercial potential of German hip-hop music.

Social Formations of Hip-Hop Space II: Hip-Hop in East Germany

In East Germany, then controlled by the *Realpolitik* of the socialist GDR, the film *Beat Street* was the visual catalyst for the reception of hip-hop in the mid-1980s. Until then hip-hop was mainly known through West German television or the West Berlin radio station *Sender Freies Berlin* (Radio Free Berlin). Broadcast to show the social inequalities resulting from capitalist competition, *Beat Street* created a rising interest in break dancing among East German youth (Krekow and Steiner, 2000). However, due to the isolated position of the GDR, the few young people interested in hip-hop music suffered severely from a lack of information and organization. Only very few of them had relatives in West Germany who could organize the occasional tapes or newspaper articles. Others were able to purchase some of the few imported US-rap vinyls by Run-D.M.C., Tone Loc or Public Enemy when on holiday in Budapest. Lacking sufficient technical equipment and knowledge of the English language, the musical quality of the first East German attempts to produce hip-hop was rather poor. Most of the musicians started to work with tape recordings at home, trying to loop musical snippets by halting, rewinding and playing the same sections of a song over and over again. The technologies of cutting and mixing with turntables did not evolve until the end of the 1980s.

The retreat to private spaces was a major strategy to cope with the state control of popular cultural life. Most of the leisure time was not spent in one of

the community centres participating in the cultural programmes of the state's mass organizations but together with family and friends at home. Playing games, listening to music or watching television – mostly West German programmes – was a way partly to escape the surveillance of the *Stasi* security service and a network of reporting informants (Smith, 1998). In the sphere of hip-hop, these private spaces were increasingly used as rooms for rehearsal and as studios to record and copy music outside the state's formal production and distribution monopolies.

In 1987 the East Berlin-based state-owned youth radio DT 64 launched a show named *Vibrationen* that occasionally documented the developments of hip-hop music in the GDR. Listeners could send in their home recordings which were broadcast despite their often poor sound quality. As its production was largely limited to the spaces of private homes, the nation-wide transmission of GDR hip-hop stimulated the desire to exchange information and ideas with other musicians.

The reaction of the state bureaucracy to this evolving subculture was reported to be indifferent (Elflein, 1998) but young people could not completely escape the extensive surveillance of the state. As hip-hop culture became more and more visible and audible in the streets and in state-run cultural centres, any independent group was regarded with suspicion. The breakdancer Cooké recalls his first years of hip-hop in Leipzig:

There was this emptiness of daily life, and [hip-hop] was somehow like a small rebellion ... You couldn't escape but hip-hop came in ... We sometimes danced in the Medler arcades – on a marvellous floor. But most of the time we break danced outside on the concrete. It was really funny. Some people stopped and put money on our tape recorder – a mono recorder actually, there was no stereo at that time. We were very proud and pleased and felt affirmed ... We even painted names and pictures of our crew on the backs of our sports wear ... But as our group grew larger and larger we were raided by the police several times. They cordoned off the arcades and arrested us. The police told us that they didn't have anything against the dancers but that our group got too big. (Cooké, personal communication, Leipzig, October 2001; translated by authors)

In Dresden, another main centre for early hip-hop music in the GDR, rapper Electric B, who wrote lyrics in English with the assistance of two lecturers from the local university, was observed at each of his performances at a local youth club by at least one *Stasi* officer and subjected to interrogation (Wagner, 1999). Consequently, some of the young hip-hop artists used the *Freiräume* provided by the church as spaces in which they could improve their skills and develop new styles. The state, recognizing the growing popularity of hip-hop and the ongoing 'westernization' of GDR culture, increasingly tolerated rap music in its youth centres and *Klubs*. Arguing that hip-hop supported the state's proclaimed internationalism and solidarity with the struggle of the black urban working class in the US, state officials tried partly to incorporate hip-hop culture into their system of funding and promotion (Krekow and Steiner, 2000).

The most obvious example was the financial, institutional and organizational assistance for breakdance-crews. Since the 1970s the propagation of a distinctive national culture was paralleled by an extended support for sports and GDR mass culture. As many young people, in particular those keen on sports, were attracted to the new acrobatic dance moves, the state organized breakdance-workshops in different cities. Emerging breakdance-crews were evaluated and rated by a cultural commission – for example as *Ausgezeichnetes Volkskunstkollektiv* (Distinguished People's Art Collective). Successful young artists were provided with rooms for rehearsal in the same nationalized factories in which they attended vocational training. Partly exempted from their workplace they could travel the country, perform at state company parties and weddings, and earn an extra income that often exceeded the average wages of workers. Some hip-hop artists were even invited to perform on the national television programme (Cooké, personal communication, Leipzig, October 2001).

Comparable to rock musicians, hip-hop artists were allowed to use rooms for rehearsal and basic infrastructure for musical production in community centres and youth clubs. Even rapping in English was tolerated as long as the lyrics were harmless and followed the official political agenda with titles like 'Peace and Harmony', or supported state policies such as anti neo-fascism (Fuchs, 1996). Using their personal connections to some national youth programmes on television and to the widely distributed daily FDJ newspaper

Junge Welt, the East Berlin-based duo *The Electric Beat Crew* managed to gain nation-wide notoriety. Regarded by most of the early GDR hip-hop artists as 'successful outsiders' (Krekow and Steiner, 2000, p. 128), they released the only two official hip-hop records in the GDR on the state-owned pop label Amiga in 1989.

For the small musical hip-hop subculture of the late 1980s, decentralized cultural facilities in urban neighbourhoods and rural towns became the focal points of activities. As culture was recognized as an important medium to create and enforce a socialist consciousness, these cultural centres were funded by the state and could operate within a relatively protected financial and material environment. In the final years of the GDR, the state's focus on a few prestige projects of 'high culture' in major cities coincided with growing difficulties to maintain the surveillance of the decentralized cultural facilities. The staff in the cultural centres were no longer required to report back on all staged events. As a consequence, a lively musical scene emerged in the *Klubs* and youth centres. Occasionally, publicly licensed *Schallplattenunterhalter* (record entertainers, disc jockeys) were hired for discotheques who often disregarded the state-imposed 60:40 ratio of socialist GDR versus foreign music. Thus in the late 1980s many of the political spaces of the cultural infrastructure became meeting points for local musical and subcultural scenes (Schäfer, 2003).

Only on very few occasions were hip-hop musicians in the GDR able to link to people from other East German cities. For example, two enthusiasts from Dresden planned and organized hip-hop events that would bring together rappers and DJs from all over the country to compete in lyrical skills, musical delivery and performance. In the summer of 1988 the first 'Rap-Contest' took place after it had been announced on DT 64's *Vibrationen* radio programme. Approximately 2,500 people travelled from all over East Germany to a venue in the Radebeul quarter of Dresden to watch the performances of about ten groups. The same number of musicians and spectators attended the second contest a year later. These events presented the state of GDR hip-hop art and revealed a broad spectrum of musical and technical qualities, ranging from clumsy spoken words and pop instrumentals to sophisticated rhymes over well-composed and programmed drum routines with live turntable mixing (Wagner, 1999).

Additionally, in 1989 a workshop on hip-hop music was conducted in Schloss Nickern, a small youth centre in Prohlis, another district of Dresden. Similar to the arrival of breakdancing some years earlier in East Berlin's *Haus der Jungen Talente* (House of Young Talents), this workshop aimed at advancing the musical practices of hip-hop musicians and hoped to initiate a network of artists. There was even the short-lived idea of establishing a Universal GDR Hip-Hop Family (Krekow and Steiner, 2000).

However, these events in Dresden, 'da town of rap, capitol [sic] of hip hop' (rappers Three M-Men's [sic] in their 1989 song *Talkin' 'Bout Da Scene*, quoted in Wagner 1999, p. 322), were not widely recognized in the established musical scene or the media. It followed that hip-hop performers found it difficult to get their music recorded professionally. The activities of the few hip-hop enthusiasts in the GDR centred around private homes, public youth centres and other cultural venues that provided the most convenient *Freiräume* to articulate an East German hip-hop way of life. However, due to the poor technical quality of early equipment and musical output, and the isolated geographical and political position of rap music, East Germany's hip-hop history remained highly invisible and inaudible during the 1980s.

New School, 'Deutschrap' and the Spaces of Hip-Hop in the 1990s

In 1990 a distinctive GDR cultural policy ceased to exist. Although many of the cultural centres in the East were subsequently closed and many rehearsal rooms for hip-hop disappeared, a few continued after reunification and re-emerged as youth clubs or socio-cultural centres following West German models (Freytag *et al.*, 2002). Despite the political and economic changes, some of these centres remained focal points for alternative popular culture. In Leipzig, for example, a thriving alternative music scene continued to use the various surviving and sometimes abandoned cultural spaces for concerts that featured local, national and international bands. When in 1991 the former GDR youth centre *Eiskeller* in Leipzig's *Connewitz* district was earmarked for sale to a private investor, the city's alternative scene successfully campaigned in support of its continuation as a local youth centre (10 Years Conne Island,

2001). The building was subsequently reopened as *Conne Island* – a reference to both the local quarter and to Coney Island, the fair district in New York's borough of Brooklyn. In the first years after reunification, the youth club became a major hip-hop venue. Many of the West German and international hip-hop artists who travelled and toured the East performed at a *Conne Island* jam, with up to 400 people gathering in the familiar atmosphere of a graffiti covered venue (figures 2 and 3).

Figure 2. *Conne Island* youth centre in Leipzig-Connewitz, a self-governed 'centre for left-wing thinking, youth, pop and subcultures'. (<http://www.conne-island.de/>) (Photo courtesy of Conne Island)

Figure 3. *Conne Island* flyer announcing a party with two German hip-hop bands in the mid-1990s: *Anarchist Academy*, Old School hardcore from Lüdenscheid and *Absolute Beginner*, an early New School group from Hamburg. (Flyer courtesy of Conne Island)

In the 1990s however, the cultural spaces of youth centres not only served as homebases or nodes for hip-hop fans, but the educational and creative work conducted in these spaces was in turn strongly influenced by hip-hop practices and values. Community education and social workers developed projects that used hip-hop to encourage young people to experiment with spray cans and magic markers, to learn dance moves, or to express themselves musically and lyrically. A prominent example of social work using hip-hop as an element of its pedagogy is the Berlin-based *Hip Hop Mobil*, a mobile studio unit equipped with turntables, a mixer and recording devices. Founded in the early 1990s, the *Hip Hop Mobil* brings hip-hop culture and its history to the neighbourhood with demonstrations of how to breakdance or write graffiti and an introduction to musical production techniques (figure 4). The idea of

developing a mobile hip-hop unit that can be booked by youth centres and schools to conduct workshops and to record music turned out to be very successful. After reunification, the *Hip Hop Mobil* was one of the very few openings for former East German artists to get their music on vinyl. The first East German hip-hop compilation *Pioniermanöver: HipHop aus der DDR*, released in 1994, contains several tracks that were recorded in the *Hip Hop Mobil*, at a small studio in *Conne Island* and at several different youth centres.

Figure 4. Bringing hip-hop to the community: the Berlin-based *Hip Hop Mobil*, a mobile studio unit equipped with turntables, mixer and recording devices. (Photo of event courtesy of Wolf Friedel; photo of *Hip Hop Mobil* courtesy of Gauner)

The success of initiatives and workshops such as the *Hip Hop Mobil* was paralleled by an increasing media coverage of hip-hop in Germany. German reunification in 1990 not only marked a political and territorial caesura but saw the emergence of a renewed form of national consciousness, which opened up spaces for the commercialization of nationally coded forms of popular culture.

Between 1990 and 1996, the domestic share in the German Top 100-charts more than doubled and remained as high as about 40 per cent for the single and around 25 per cent for the long play market (Bundesverband der Phonographischen Wirtschaft e.V., 2002). For major record labels, recorded German hip-hop music therefore seemed a promising and profitable commodity. Fuelled by chart topping hits by groups like *Die Fantastischen Vier*, a musical sub-genre called *Deutschrap* was invented whose main criteria were the German language and popular appeal (Elflein, 1998). The importance of community centres as homebases and nodes of cultural production diminished as they were gradually reduced to mere venues for staging rap concerts. This development was paralleled by an ongoing commercialization and professionalization of these centres due to severe cuts in public funding in the 1990s and the pressure to increase earnings (Freytag *et al.*, 2002). As a consequence, socio-cultural centres were forced to compete with commercial private clubs, discotheques, festivals or concerts of a 'New School' in German hip-hop.

'New School was a totally different generation, the networks of jams and the travelling all over Germany ceased to exist. Hip-hop was in the media and in stores that did not exist some years earlier' (DJ RickSki, personal communication, Cologne, November 2001; translated by authors). The polyethnic and more internationally orientated hip-hop activists of the German Old School perceived this development as a loss of unity of a small self-confident and independent scene of informed and engaged representatives of a 'genuine' and 'authentic' hip-hop. They continued to draw on their inter-local and international connections developed during the 1980s and established their own independent infrastructure of hip-hop music production. Today, rap music in Germany is highly differentiated, ranging from articulations of particular ethnic groups to various popular 'Schlagermeisters ... sprechstimming romantically over "highly polished breakbeat stylings"' (Christgau, 2002) to small groups of hardcore 'anarchist' rappers and groups with right wing and neo-fascist sentiments on the extreme fringes (Loh and Güngör, 2002).

Conclusion

The close nexus of cultural and urban policies in Germany was crucial for the creation of new cultural spaces and their organization as *Spiel- und Freiräume* during the past 30 years. Reflecting extended notions of culture and the changing realities of social life, community centres and youth clubs in West Germany offered spaces for self-determined, autonomous cultural activities, for communication between different socially and politically engaged groups and for the articulation of alternative life styles and youth cultures. These built spaces physically inscribe their critical potential in urban space and enable a continuous discourse between different cultural positionalities (Knoblich, 2001). In the former German Democratic Republic however there was only limited scope for a subversion of the dominant cultural policies before the end of the 1980s because of the centralized structures of cultural planning and state control.

In the late 1980s, youth clubs and community centres became key sites for the emergence of hip-hop culture in both German states. They provided Old School activists with the most convenient spaces for rehearsal, collaboration, and the development of distinctive styles. The social formation of hip-hop was dependent on the characteristic features of these spaces: they are multifunctional and palimpsestic – re-usable and re-writeable – for purposes as diverse as live concerts, theatre performances, exhibitions, lectures, discotheques or hip-hop jams. Designed to facilitate cultural interaction, the spaces of the youth club or community centre enabled hip-hop fans to join in at jams and contribute to breakdancing, writing graffiti or making music.

Although these institutional spaces of youth culture played a crucial role in the formation of hip-hop music in both parts of divided Germany, the contrasting political and socio-economic systems significantly affected the diversity of the emerging hip-hop cultures, their ability to form (trans-)national networks, and their level of technical sophistication. Due to the severely restricted exposure to Western media and limited other contacts, young people in the East were less well connected to global musical flows and technological innovations than their peers in the West. In addition, the few hip-hop artists in East Germany often lacked sufficient knowledge of the English language to

adopt and adapt easily to US-American models. Early hip-hop in West Germany, on the other hand, was characterized by an extended national and international mobility of hip-hop activists from diverse ethnic and social backgrounds. For these groups, community centres and youth clubs provided inclusionary spaces that allowed for a substantial contribution of societal 'outsiders', such as second generation immigrants, to the formation of the new genre.

Given hip-hop's 'primary thematic concerns: identity and location' (Rose, 1994, p. 10), the sites were crucial for the creation of a sense of 'home place' in the initial Old School years of hip-hop in Germany; places where it was possible to meet, exchange ideas and share enthusiasm. Furthermore, local community centres became trans-local nodes in an emerging hip-hop network, connecting spaces in which similar processes of identity construction took place. In this sense, hip-hop architecture is 'about both providing the stage (backdrop) and privileging (inviting) the performance, where space is produced through the conjunction of people within it' (Wilkins, 2000, p. 12).

References

10 Years Conne Island (2001) Ein Streifzug durch zehn Jahre Conne Island. CEE IEH newsflyer, 78, June 2001, <http://www.conne-island.de/nf/78/10.html> (10/04/2004).

Bennett, A. (2000) *Popular Music and Youth Culture: Music, Identity and Place*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Bundesverband der Phonographischen Wirtschaft e.V. (2002) *Phonographische Wirtschaft Jahrbuch 2002*. Starnberg: Keller.

Burns, R. and van der Will, W. (2003) German cultural policy: an overview. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 9, pp. 133-152.

Christgau, R. (2002) Planet Rock: the world's most local pop music goes international. *Village Voice*, (May 2nd), <http://www.villagevoice.com/issues/0219/christgau.php> (10/04/2004).

Cohen, S. (1995) Localizing sound, in Straw, W. *et al.* (eds.) *Popular Music: Style and Identity*. Montreal: The Centre for Research on Canadian Cultural Industries and Institutions, pp. 61-67.

Connell, J. and Gibson, C. (2003) *Sound Tracks: Popular Music, Identity and Place*. London: Routledge.

Elflein, D. (1998) From Krauts with attitudes to Turks with attitudes: some aspects of hip-hop history in Germany. *Popular Music*, **17**, pp. 255-265.

Forman, M. (2002) *The 'Hood Comes First: Race, Space, and Place in Rap and Hip-Hop*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

Freytag, T., Hoyler, M. and Mager, C. (2002) Soziokultur und ihre Einrichtungen, in Institut für Länderkunde (ed.) *Nationalatlas Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Band 6: *Bildung und Kultur*. Heidelberg: Spektrum Akademischer Verlag, pp. 118-119.

Fuchs, T. (1996) HipHop in Deutschland: Das Beispiel Braunschweig und Magdeburg, in Karrer, W. and Kerkhoff, I. (eds.) *Rap*. Hamburg: Argument Verlag, pp. 155-167.

George, N. (1998) *Hip Hop America*. New York: Viking.

Glaser, H. (2003) Document: joys and sorrows of a utopian cultural administrator (Copeland Lecture at Amherst College, April 1976). *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, **9**, pp. 185-194.

Glaser, H. and Stahl, K.H. (1974) *Die Wiedergewinnung des Ästhetischen: Perspektiven und Modelle einer neuen Soziokultur*. Munich: Juventa.

Goodbody, A., Tate, D. and Wallace, I. (1995) The failed socialist experiment: culture in the GDR, in Burns, R. (ed.) *German Cultural Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 147-207.

Göschel, A., Mittag, K. and Strittmatter, T. (1995) *Die befragte Reform: Neue Kulturpolitik in Ost und West*. Berlin: Deutsches Institut für Urbanistik.

Griffiths, R., Bassett, K. and Smith, I. (2003) Capitalising on culture: cities and the changing landscape of cultural policy. *Policy & Politics*, **31**, pp. 153-169.

Groschopp, H. (2001) Breitenkultur in Ostdeutschland: Herkunft und Wende – wohin? *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, **B11**, pp. 15-22.

Jacob, G. (1993) *Agit-Pop: schwarze Musik und weiße Hörer: Texte zu Rassismus und Nationalismus, HipHop und Raggamuffin*. Berlin: Edition ID-Archiv.

Jäger, M. (1995) *Kultur und Politik in der DDR: 1945-1990*. Cologne: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik.

Jobs, R.I. (2004) Building community and reconstructing citizenship in the youth and culture houses of post-war France. *Young – Nordic Journal of Youth Research*, **12**, pp. 205-220.

Kaya, A. (2001) *‘Sicher in Kreuzberg’: Constructing Diasporas: Turkish Hip-Hop Youth in Berlin*. Bielefeld: Transcript.

Knoblich, T.J. (2001) Das Prinzip Soziokultur – Geschichte und Perspektiven. *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, **B11**, pp. 7-14.

Krekow, S. and Steiner, J. (2000) *Bei uns geht einiges: Die deutsche HipHop-Szene*. Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf.

Leyshon, A., Matless, D. and Revill, G. (1998) Introduction: music, space, and the production of place, in Leyshon, A., Matless, D. and Revill, G. (eds.) *The Place of Music*. New York: Guilford Press, pp. 1-30.

Loh, H. and Güngör, M. (2002) *Fear of a Kanak Planet: HipHop zwischen Weltkultur und Nazi-Rap*. Höfen: Hannibal.

Mager, C. (2003) '1, 2, 3... from New York to Germany': Raum, Repräsentation und Rap-Musik, in *Frontiers of Geography*. Budapest: Department of Regional Geography, Eötvös Loránd University, pp. 199-212.

Massey, D. (1998) The spatial construction of youth cultures, in Skelton, T. and Valentine, G. (eds.) *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Cultures*. London: Routledge, pp. 121-129.

Mitchell, T. (2001) Another root: hip-hop outside the USA, in Mitchell, T. (ed.) *Global Noise: Rap and Hip-Hop Outside the USA*. Middleton, CT: Wesleyan University Press, pp. 1-38.

Mitscherlich, A. (1965) *Die Unwirtlichkeit unserer Städte*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Niemczyk, R. (1999) *Die letzte Besatzermusik: Die Fantastischen Vier: Die Autobiographie*. Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch.

Phipps, A. (1999) Cultural policy: FRG, in Sandford, J. (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Contemporary German Culture*. London: Routledge, pp. 116-119.

Regev, M. (1997) Rock aesthetics and musics of the world. *Theory, Culture & Society*, **14**, pp. 125-142.

Rose, T. (1994) *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America*. Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press.

Schäfer, S. (2003) Popmusik in der DDR: eine Chronik. *Testcard: Beiträge zur Popgeschichte*, **12**, pp. 24-30.

Schulze, G. (1993) *Die Erlebnisgesellschaft: Kultursoziologie der Gegenwart*. Frankfurt am Main: Campus.

Smith, F. (1998) Between East and West: sites of resistance in East German youth cultures, in Skelton, T. and Valentine, G. (eds.) *Cool Places: Geographies of Youth Cultures*. London: Routledge, pp. 289-304.

Terkessidis, M. (1991) Kingsize Terror: Breakbeats und Klassenkampf im Zeichen der Burg: South Central Gostenhof. *Spex Magazine*, September, pp. 38-40.

Toop, D. (2000) *Rap Attack: African Rap to Global Hip Hop*, 3rd ed. London: Serpent's Tale.

Verlan, S. and Loh, H. (2000) *20 Jahre HipHop in Deutschland*. Höfen: Hannibal.

Wagner, B. (2001) Soziokultur West – Soziokultur Ost. *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, **B11**, pp. 3-6.

Wagner, M. (1999) Rap is in the house: HipHop in der DDR, in Galenza, R. and Havemeister, H. (eds.) *Wir wollen immer artig sein ...: Punk, New Wave, HipHop, Independent-Szene in der DDR 1980-1990*. Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, pp. 314-325.

Wallace, I. (1999) Cultural policy: GDR, in Sandford (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Contemporary German Culture*. London: Routledge, pp. 119-122.

Wicke, P. (1992) The times they are a-changin': rock music and political change in East Germany, in Garofalo, R. (ed.) *Rockin' the Boat: Mass Music and Mass Movements*. Boston, MA: South End Press, pp. 81-92.

Wilkins, C.L. (2000) (W)rapped spaces: the architecture of hip hop. *Journal of Architectural Education*, **54**, pp. 7-19.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Robert Kloosterman and Tracey Skelton for their helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper. All interviews were conducted by Christoph Mager while on a scholarship grant from the *Landesgraduiertenförderung Baden-Württemberg*. We are most grateful to the hip-hop artists who gave their time to participate in the research.