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A comparison of German and American listeners' extra musical associations with popular music genres

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Abstract

This causal comparative study examined the consistency with which listeners from two cultures (Germany and the USA) associate extra musical concepts with four popular music genres (German folksy, country, punk, and hip-hop). The results showed that for internationally recognized genres (country, punk and hip-hop), the two countries made similar association patterns for all eight concepts measured (ethnicity, rural vs. urban culture, age, trustworthiness, expertise, attractiveness, friendliness, and political ideology). The study also revealed instances where the countries differed, such as hip-hop's association with ethnicity and most of the German folksy associations. The results are discussed in light of models of musical meaning. Furthermore, an integration of societal-level and individual-level theories predicts these similarities and differences. The theories include massification, glocalization, and cognitive schemas.

Keywords

cognitive schema, global homogenization, glocalization, hybridization, intercultural, international, massification

Introduction

Popular music, as a prevalent element in international mass communication messages, is useful for creating affective responses and communicating meanings. Apart from and in conjunction with the words or visuals in a message, the music itself can communicate three dimensions

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of designative meanings: iconic (meaning emerging from musical patterns that are similar to other sounds such as laughter), indexical (meaning emerging from movement or prosody or other action-related patterns indicative of psychological states such as emotion), and symbolic sign qualities[1] (meaning emerging from explicit extra musical associations) (Koelsch, 2011). While the other dimensions are more strongly dependent on the inherent sound of the music, symbolic musical meaning can potentially form through the association of nearly any musical feature with a non-musical concept. This may make symbolic meaning particularly susceptible to shaping by culture. Through the use of short music recordings that minimize iconic and indexical meaning, the present study investigates how the symbolic meanings communicated through extra musical associations of four pop-music genres (German folksy, country, punk, and hip-hop) are retained or altered across cultures.

Genre is likely one of the most quickly perceived attributes of music (cf. Plazak & Huron, 2011), and it is also the attribute that is associated, perhaps more than any other, with extra-musical meanings. The sound of music from a particular genre, apart from other genre-oriented verbal or visual content, can communicate concepts of location, era, culture, lifestyles, and personalities as exemplified by its frequent use in films and advertising to establish settings. Rentfrow, Goldberg, & Levitin (2011) point out that while preferences for music are tied to various musical facets (e.g., loudness), they are also tied to social connotations of certain musical styles (e.g., sophistication of classical or jazz music) (cf. Abrams, 2009; Schwartz & Fouts, 2003). Furthermore, studies suggest that adolescents and young adults ascribe similar characteristics to fans of stereotyped genres (e.g., rap) (Rentfrow & Gosling, 2007; Rentfrow, McDonald, & Oldmeadow, 2009). Thus, genre information alone might activate a suite of traits tied to the representatives and fans of a particular musical style. Extra musical meanings activated by genre information can make certain elements of music more salient and alter message perception, comprehension, and attitudes (e.g., Hung, 2000, 2001; North, Mackenzie, Law, & Hargreaves, 2004).While genres have typically been the unit for assessing music preferences to date, they are broad and ill-defined categories. Rentfrow et al. (2011) point out that one methodological limitation of genre-based measures of musical preferences is that it is assumed that participants share a similar understanding of genres across cultures. Despite the frequent use of music in international entertainment, advertising, and other media production, there is little, if any, research investigating international comparisons of pop genre's semantic meanings for communication purposes. To initiate a response to this concern, this article presents a cross-cultural extension of the research by Shevy (2008).

Theoretical foundations for popular music genre schema construction

Shevy (2008) showed that popular music genres exist as cognitive schemas containing extra-musical concepts that can be primed by a brief exposure to the sound of the genre's music. The study examined the differences in American listeners' associations with country and hip-hop music for eight concepts. Three concepts are salient indicators of group membership and culture: majority/minority ethnicity, rural/urban culture, and age (e.g., Bell, 1992; Nagel, 1994; Paolini, Harwood, & Rubin, 2010; Soliz & Harwood, 2006). These concepts are also are commonly used when describing differences between pop music genres (particularly between country and hip-hop music in the USA) (Andsager & Roe, 1999; Armstrong, 1993; Borthwick & Moy, 2004; Mann, 2008; Petchauer, 2009; Peterson, 1997). Thus, not only are they relevant in what a genre might communicate, but they should serve as strong indicators in determining whether separate schemas exist for the genres. The study also examined five

concepts considered influential in persuasion and political communication. Perception of trustworthiness and expertise (being well-informed) are key factors in perceived credibility, which, along with friendliness and attractiveness has been shown to have effects in persuasive communication research (e.g., Caballero, Lumpkin, & Madden, 1989; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Perceived political ideology can influence selective perception and political attitude formation or reinforcement (Abramowitz, 1978; Holbert, LaMarre, & Landreville, 2009). The results of the study showed that brief audio excerpts of the genres (music only, no lyrics) differed significantly in their associations with all the concepts except expertise and attractiveness. Furthermore, when the excerpts were presented in an audio recording of a person making a persuasive appeal, they altered perception of the person's ethnicity, rural/urban culture, age, and expertise. The current study extends this research by using these same two genres (plus an additional two) and eight concepts to compare the genre associations of listeners in Germany to those of listeners in the USA.

Massification and glocalization

Popular music is a global phenomenon. In a globalized world, theorists propose that media tastes gravitate towards uniformity, resulting in a normalized consumption mode. Also, less extreme media habits, with a certain degree of sameness, ensue from this normalized mode of consumption (cf. Fu & Govindaraju, 2010). The destruction of cultural diversity and the formation of uniform attitudes and meanings through mass communication has been called "massification" (Peterson & Di Maggio, 1975). From the extension of cultural convergence theory (cf. Barnett & Kincaid, 1983) to a theory of media dispersion, it follows that the convergence of the indigenous popular cultures of the world into a universal popular culture revolves around the culture of western societies, which are most central in the global popular culture communication system. Nonetheless, studies on local audience reception (see Lee, 2006 for a recent survey) inform that users can transform content as a function of cultural peculiarities, social norms, states preferences and aesthetic judgments.

Theorists in communication research and cross-cultural psychology propose that the degree of similarity between two countries determines the means of communication or exchange across their cultures (e.g., Gudykunst, 1997; Hofstede, 1980; Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck, 1961). As a starting point in intercultural pop genre schema research, the current study investigates two similar countries. Specifically, Kogut and Singh's (1988) cultural distance index[2] (CDI) for Germany and the USA is relatively low (0.4). Hence, when comparing Southern Germany (Bavaria) and the Midwestern USA (where the participants were selected), we expect a high level of cross-cultural similarities regarding cognitive associations with popular music genres. However, specific sociocultural differences between countries nurture distinct responses. To explore massification in genre schemas, the current study uses country, punk, and hip-hop music, three genres that have enough global presence to be somewhat familiar to both U.S. and German listeners. Country and hip-hop originated from different subcultures within the USA so they should differ in their extra musical associations, but both have enough adoption into mainstream media (e.g., Fox & Ching, 2008) that neither is expected to evoke strong unfamiliarity effects. UK-style punk was chosen to represent a mainstream genre that did not originate in either of the listeners' countries and was expected to yield similar associations across both samples.

In addition to similarities, we also expected differences. Motley and Henderson (2008) have characterized the hip-hop youth culture as a glocalized phenomenon, as it is malleable to local

politics and socioeconomic conditions, which makes the genre's local expression a hybrid form of original elements and local cultural elements. Thus, as hip-hop becomes part of the cultural fabric around the world, some of the associations, even central concepts such as ethnicity, may vary from country to country. In the USA, Blacks form one of the largest minority groups (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011) and, thus, race issues and multiculturalism have become part of national identity. Hip-hop had its genesis in the Black subculture within this larger context, and the subculture has maintained cultural ownership of the genre in terms of granting authenticity and credibility to performers and producers, which is valuable for marketing but limits the promotion of artists of other ethnicities. In contrast, German Nazism, which also addressed race, has led to public rejection of negotiating the particuliarism of Germanness and cultural relativism. The resistance to viewing multiculturalism in terms of national identity, plus the lack of a resident ethnic group having the right to claim the genre as its own, allows mainstream German hip-hop to consist of a diverse group of ethnicities. This raises the question of whether the ethnic associations in German listeners' hip-hop schemas will reflect the non-specific ethnic composition of their own country, or whether the minority-ethnicity association with the genre's roots will remain intact.

In light of genre schema, massification, and glocalization theory, the present research defines popular music genres as cognitive schemas formed largely through media exposure in a circumscribed cultural context. It supports the notions of global music genre schema formation (massification) while acknowledging that some aspects of the schemas will vary from culture to culture based on processes of glocalization (hybridization).

Selection of genres for the current study

In the current study, it is assumed that extra musical concepts associated with a genre are originally related to perceptions of the cultural and historical roots of the genre. These associations are then recreated or altered by representations of the genre through media and performers within listeners' own cultures. To explore the influence of a genre's cultural origin, the study includes the country and hip-hop recordings from Shevy (2008) plus two additional genres: punk and German folksy music. As mentioned earlier, country and hip-hop originate from different subcultures within U.S. listeners' national culture, and UK punk originated from a culture outside of Germany and the USA. German folksy was selected as a genre that originated within German listeners' culture.

The genres were also selected because of the apparent differences in their subcultural associations in at least some of the concepts measured. For example, although country music and punk tend to be associated with majority ethnicity, they may differ in how much they are associated with trustworthiness (e.g., country music media often promote honesty and traditional values, while punk media often portray images of violence and protest) (cf. Shevy, 2008; Shevy & Kristen, 2009). The patterns of such differences between the genres could be used to identify whether each culture has similar patterns.

Country, hip-hop, and punk are representative of globally prevalent genres. Although hip-hop is mainstream in the USA, appealing to diverse audiences, its associated subculture is still primarily a minority ethnicity. Yet, on a global scale, it is considered susceptible to glocalization, making it a good genre for researching internationalization processes. German folksy, on the other hand, represents a genre closely associated with German national identity but may be viewed negatively by the young German participants in this study. It is a modern representation of German folk music that typically contains lyrics that promote conservative values and a love

for the mountains and wilderness. Additionally, its use of artificial instruments and lip-synched videos may make it seem inauthentic and give reason beyond ideals or musical taste for listeners to dissociate from it. If these connotations are culturally learned and depend on familiarity with the genre, we should see strong effects only in the German sample. U.S. participants should not be as familiar with the genre, and cultural identity should not impact their perception of the genre in the same way.

Hypotheses

We predicted that international media portray similar representations of globally prevalent genres (country, punk, and hip-hop) across western countries, which should result mostly in parallel patterns of associations for German and American listeners in regard to the measured concepts. We predicted cross-cultural differences in regard to hip-hop and German folksy music. It was hypothesized that hip-hop will show evidence of glocalization in ethnicity; causing a genre by culture interaction. For German folksy music, we expected strong, stereotypical ratings (e.g., conservative, rural, inauthentic) in German participants and rather unsystematic connotations with this genre in American participants.

Method

The study used a between-subjects causal-comparative design consisting of two cultures (German vs. American) × four music genres (country, hip-hop, punk, and German folksy), $N = 106$. Data collection occurred from the fall of 2007 to early 2009 via two online instruments, one using German students and the other using American students. Both instruments used the same music stimuli and questionnaire, except that the materials presented to the German students were translated from English into German.

Participants and procedure

The participants were recruited from courses at a university in Bavaria and a university in the northern U.S. Midwest. Both universities attract students primarily from local areas, and have student bodies representative of the cultural characteristics being considered in this study. Most of the participants (over 70%) from each university were communication majors, and the female-to-male ratios were similar, consisting of 46% female in the German sample and 44% female in the American sample. The German participants ($n = 61$) were slightly older ($M = 24.66$ years) than the American participants ($n = 45$, $M = 21.23$ years). Participants rated the extent to which they grew up in rural, suburban, and urban environments, and there was no significant difference between the German and American samples in these ratings, though the American listeners indicated that they were marginally more likely to come from suburban backgrounds. Concerning ethnicity, 89% of the American sample and 97% of the German sample rated themselves as white. Although consideration was given to create comparable samples, there will inevitably be differences (e.g., the German sample was drawn from a large university of over 49,000 students, while the American sample was from a medium-sized university of nearly 10,000 students). If significant differences are found between the schemas formed in each country, further research should investigate the possible influence of age, university size, or other confounding variables.

All participants received a link to the online instrument via email and were offered a small incentive as allowed by each university (two raffle drawings for 50 euros in Germany and course credit in the USA). After participants agreed to a consent statement, a test page ensured they could hear audio on their computer. Next, a PHP: Hypertext Preprocessor (PHP) program randomly assigned them to listen to one of four stimuli: country, hip-hop, punk, or German folksy music. After hearing the stimulus, participants answered a questionnaire concerning the music they heard, and, at the end, questions about demographics and their own music identity and preference.

Stimuli

Each condition presented a single music recording as an embedded MP3 file. Each recording consisted of five to six seconds of instrumental music (no lyrics or voices) that had been judged during informal pretesting to be representative of its genre. A manipulation check near the end of the questionnaire asked participants to name the genre of the music they heard, and most of them stated the correct genre, except for American listeners who heard German folksy. The music came from lesser-known artists and songs so participants would be less likely to have associations of prior experiences with them. An open-ended question asked for the name of the artist; only two participants offered a name (both in the country condition), and both were wrong. The recordings were edited to sound like the end of the song and were kept short so that meanings associated with the music would come primarily from the sound of the genre, and not from the chord progressions, dynamics, or other elements that occur as music unfolds over time. Brief exposure to the music should be enough to allow priming of symbolic extra musical associations of the genre, while minimizing indexical meanings from motion, tension, and other perceptions that occur over the duration of a piece. The authors determined that there were no musical events that would elicit strong iconic musical meanings in the recordings. In addition, the brief exposure helped simulate the type of cognitive activation that might occur when music plays at the onset of a film or commercial, creating a priming effect that influences meanings constructed from the rest of the production. The country music and hip-hop stimuli were the same recordings used by Shevy (2008): the last four notes from 'Sundown in Nashville' by Marty Stewart & His Fabulous Superlatives (Warwick, 2003), and a mid-section of 'A Prototype' by Anacron (2001) edited to sound like an ending. The punk and German folksy stimuli consisted of the endings of 'Summer of 69' by MxPx (Adams & Vallance, 1995) and 'Ein Strauss Von Melodien' by Maria and Margot Hellwig (Bauer, Fosberg, & Alpenland, 2007), respectively.

Measures

The dependent variables were measured by having participants rate the stimulus they heard on the 10-point semantic differential and agree–disagree scales used by Shevy (2008). Ethnicity, urban vs. rural culture, trustworthiness, and attractiveness were measured using the following single questionnaire items: Majority race/ethnicity–Minority race/ethnicity, Rural–Urban, Trustworthy–Untrustworthy, and Unattractive–Attractive. The other variables, performer age, expertise, friendliness, and political ideology, were measured with aggregate variables consisting of the mean of multiple questionnaire items that factored together in principal component analysis. As a complication, items factored together in different combinations in different conditions. For example, in the German data, all five items measuring age loaded onto a single

dimension with high reliability in the country music condition, while only two of the age items factored together in the German folksy condition. To provide as much reliability as possible for each condition, the aggregate variables were constructed individually for each condition within each country using as many items as would factor together. Concern was given for the face validity of the combinations to ensure that the different combinations measured similar underlying dimensions. Age was measured with items such as "Performer likely to be Age 50–59" (agree–disagree); variance explained in each condition ranged from 72.74% to 97.90%, and Cronbach's alpha ranged from .76 to .97. Expertise was measured with only the item "Unintelligent–Intelligent" in the German listeners' German folksy condition and the Americans' punk condition. In the other conditions, this item was combined with one to two additional items; explained variance ranged from 72.12% to 86.64%; Cronbach's alpha ranged from .68 to .84. Friendliness was measured with the single item "Unfriendly–Friendly" in all conditions except in the Germans' (variance explained = 79.39%, Cronbach's alpha = .74) and Americans' (variance explained = 88.07%, Cronbach's alpha = .86) hip-hop conditions, where it factored together with "Scowl–Smile." Liberal ideology was measured with the single item "Liberal concerning social issues–Conservative concerning social issues" in both countries' punk and hip-hop conditions, and the Americans' country conditions. This item factored together with one or two additional items in the other conditions, with explained variance ranging from 72.23% to 88.83%; Cronbach's alpha ranged from .75 to .86.

Using this approach for creating indices improved reliability by allowing concepts to be measured by as many questionnaire items as possible. It raises the question, though, of whether it is valid to compare variables consisting of different items in different conditions. The face validity of the items used in each condition suggests that the indices tap approximately the same conceptual dimension despite alterations in the specific items used. To test this face validity, we repeated the hypothesis tests by using only items that were consistent across all the conditions. This resulted in the same significance of effects as those reported in the results section below, except that the main effect of music preference/identity (a control variable) dropped below significance.

Controlled variables: Music preference and identity and perceived mood

Dependent variables in this study could be influenced by music preference and identity with the music, or by perceived mood in the music stimulus. For example, a listener who dislikes German folksy might rate it negatively on multiple indices regardless of the culturally shared genre schema. Likewise, a stimulus that communicates a happier mood than the other stimuli might also cause the respective genre to be rated more positively on valence-related items. To account for these, participants' identification with the stimulus and perceived mood of the stimulus were measured. As with all the dependent variables, these measures did not mention any genre by name; they merely asked participants to rate the music they heard. All four items measuring music preference/identity (e.g., "How would you feel if other people assumed you were a big fan of this music?") factored together in each condition, variance explained ranged from 56.31% to 81.86%, and Cronbach's alpha ranged from .71 to .92. Valence and intensity of the mood perceived in the music were each measured by a single 10-point item: "How positive or negative was the music's mood?" and "How intense was the music's mood?" Music preference/identity, mood valence, and mood intensity were included in hypothesis testing as covariates. If they had significant effects, they remained in the analysis; if not, the test was repeated without them.

Results

The means and standard deviations for each extra musical concept for each music genre within each country are reported in Table 1. As a reliability check and to provide some context, the applicable results from Shevy's (2008) study of Midwestern U.S. college students are provided as well. For all hypothesis testing, the level of significance is set at $p < .05$.

The first hypothesis predicted that German and American listeners would have similar patterns in the distinctions they make between country's, punk's, and hip-hop's extra musical associations. The hypothesis was supported by a two-way General Linear Model (GLM) (genre × culture) for each of the dependent variables, resulting in few significant genre × culture interactions. Only the internationally familiar genre (country, punk, and hip-hop) conditions were included in this analysis. Within cultures, the GLMs showed significant differences between the genres' associations with ethnicity, $F(2,64) = 7.15$, $p = .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .19$; rural-urban culture $F(2, 69) = 30.07$, $p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .47$; age, $F(2,67) = 17.53$, $p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .32$; trustworthiness, $F(2,68) = 8.83$, $p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .34$; friendliness, $F(2,68) = 20.03$, $p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .55$; and liberal ideology, $F(2,68) = 12.25$, $p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .26$. The genres did not significantly differ in their association with expertise (power = .05) and attractiveness (power = .27). No genre × culture interaction was found for associations with age (power =.15), trustworthiness (power = .09), expertise (power = .30), attractiveness (power = .25), friendliness (power = .06), and liberal ideology (power = .12). A culture × genre interaction in rural–urban culture approached significance because of Americans' high association of punk with urban culture, but the interaction was still less than marginal ($p = .11$, power = .45). There was a culture × genre interaction for association with ethnicity, $F(2,64) = 4.79$, $p = .01$. As expected, this was caused by hip-hop; see hypothesis 2 below. Overall, the differences in associations that German listeners made between genres paralleled those made by American listeners (see Figure 1.) Although the graphs in Figure 1 are from GLM analyses that included German folksy (see hypothesis 2), the plots for country, punk, and hip-hop still closely represent the statistics reported here.

The second hypothesis predicted that American listeners would associate hip-hop more with minority ethnicity than German listeners would. This hypothesis was supported. The two countries differed in the way they rated hip-hop relative to the other genres, as evidenced by the culture × genre interaction caused by hip-hop in hypothesis 1. A GLM with all four genres and only American listeners showed significant differences between genres' ethnicity ratings, $F(3,41) = 7.11$, $p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .29$, whereas a GLM with only German listeners showed no differences between genres, $F(3,48) = 1.41$, power = .35. Bonferroni post-hoc tests revealed that Americans rated hip-hop as more highly associated with minority ethnicity than punk ($p < .001$), German folksy ($p < .01$), and country ($p < .01$). Additionally, a *t*-test showed that American listeners associated hip-hop marginally more with minority ethnicity than German listeners, $t(21) = 2.03$, $p = .05$.

The third hypothesis stated that Germans' extra musical ratings would be more extreme for German folksy than for the other genres, and they would differ from the Americans' ratings of the genre. This hypothesis was supported. Germans' ratings of German folksy differed from other genres in more ways than the other genres differed from one another. Bonferroni post-hoc tests for GLMs involving only the German participants revealed that German listeners associated German folksy more with rural culture than country ($p < .01$), punk ($p < .001$), and hip-hop ($p < .001$). They associated it more with older age than the other genres at these same respective levels of significance. They associated it with less expertise than punk ($p < .01$),

Table 1. Association of extra musical concepts with music genres for German and American participants.

Concept	Genre	German		American		American (prior study)	
		N	*M* (SD)	*N*	*M* (SD)	*N*	*M* (SD)
Minority	German folksy	13	3.692 (2.250)	14	3.643 (2.061)		
	Country	11	4.818 (1.779)	14	3.643 (1.984)	51	3.080 (1.809)
	Punk	12	5.000 (2.629)	10	3.200 (1.619)		
	Hip-hop	16	5.313 (2.056)	7	7.286 (2.360)	51	7.290 (2.411)
Urban	German folksy	16	1.313 (.479)	14	5.000 (2.481)		
	Country	15	3.933 (2.463)	14	2.929 (2.495)	50	2.920 (2.078)
	Punk	12	6.167 (2.406)	10	7.700 (1.829)		
	Hip-hop	17	8.529 (1.663)	7	7.714 (2.498)	51	8.180 (2.295)
Older Age	German folksy	16	7.469 (1.607)	14	4.762 (2.537)		
	Country	15	5.053 (2.029)	14	3.929 (2.502)	50	3.267 (1.866)
	Punk	12	2.306 (1.439)	10	1.500 (1.240)		
	Hip-hop	16	1.792 (2.207)	7	1.714 (1.075)	50	1.307 (.942)
Trustworthy	German folksy	15	6.333 (1.915)	14	7.429 (1.910)		
	Country	15	7.800 (1.014)	14	7.571 (1.950)	51	6.941 (1.468)
	Punk	12	5.417 (2.503)	10	5.500 (1.716)		
	Hip-hop	17	5.235 (2.166)	7	5.857 (3.485)	51	4.892 (1.877)
Expertise	German folksy	16	4.000 (1.317)	14	7.357 (1.732)		
	Country	15	5.767 (1.387)	14	6.119 (1.641)	50	4.860 (1.568)
	Punk	12	5.750 (1.994)	10	5.300 (1.636)		
	Hip-hop	17	6.059 (1.530)	7	5.429 (2.644)	51	4.814 (1.892)
Attractive	German folksy	15	4.133 (2.066)	14	7.214 (2.359)		
	Country	15	5.600 (2.028)	14	6.429 (1.555)	50	6.200 (1.498)
	Punk	12	6.250 (2.454)	10	6.100 (1.663)		
	Hip-hop	17	6.588 (1.873)	7	6.429 (1.813)	50	6.560 (2.251)
Friendly	German folksy	16	8.063 (1.289)	14	8.286 (2.016)		
	Country	15	8.067 (1.033)	14	7.929 (1.940)	51	7.510 (1.521)
	Punk	12	5.333 (2.103)	10	5.000 (2.000)		
	Hip-hop	17	5.324 (1.879)	7	5.714 (2.841)	51	4.775 (2.057)
Liberal ideology	German folksy	16	3.594 (1.800)	14	4.810 (2.049)		
	Country	14	6.679 (1.782)	14	5.500 (1.990)	50	4.460 (2.196)
	Punk	12	8.917 (.793)	10	7.900 (1.370)		
	Hip-hop	17	7.824 (1.912)	7	7.571 (1.902)	51	7.977 (1.412)
Covariates							
Stimulus	German folksy	16	3.625 (1.794)	14	5.756 (1.902)		
preference/identity	Country	15	5.433 (1.627)	14	5.214 (2.775)	49	5.029 (2.491)
	Punk	13	5.263 (2.208)	10	3.975 (2.938)		
	Hip-hop	17	4.775 (1.797)	7	5.214 (2.114)	51	5.534 (2.258)
Mood valence	German folksy	16	8.563 (.814)	14	8.500 (1.092)		
	Country	14	7.857 (.864)	14	7.214 (1.847)		
	Punk	10	5.600 (3.062)	10	5.100 (2.757)		
	Hip-hop	17	4.775 (1.797)	7	7.429 (1.592)		

(Continued)

Table 1. (Continued)

Concept	Genre	German		American		American (prior study)	
		N	*M* (SD)	*N*	*M* (SD)	*N*	*M* (SD)
Mood intensity	German folksy	16	6.625 (2.156)	14	5.929 (1.940)		
	Country	14	6.286 (1.637)	14	5.071 (1.639)		
	Punk	10	7.500 (1.080)	10	7.800 (1.735)		
	Hip-hop	17	5.412 (2.238)	7	6.214 (1.729)		

Note: The German and American columns display the *N*, mean, and standard deviation for each concept in each genre without controlling for covariates. Ratings are based on 10-point scales. The "American (prior study)" statistics (Shevy, 2008) are offered as a comparison, but were not used in further analyses.

country ($p < .01$), and hip-hop ($p < .01$). They rated it as less attractive than hip-hop ($p < .01$) and friendlier than hip-hop ($p < .001$) and punk ($p < .001$). They also rated it as more conservative than the other genres (all at $p < .001$). The two exceptions were that German folksy did not significantly differ from country and punk in ethnicity, nor did it significantly differ from the other three genres in its association with trustworthiness.

Germans' associations with German folksy also differed from Americans' associations with the genre. In the first hypothesis GLMs, which excluded German folksy, there were no significant culture × genre interactions other than the hip-hop interaction regarding ethnicity. If German folksy is added to the GLMs, culture × genre interactions appear in rural–urban culture, $F(3,97) = 7.68$, $p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .57$; expertise, $F(3,90) = 5.85$, $p = .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .40$; attractiveness (marginal), $F(3,89) = 2.21$, $p = .09$, adjusted $R^2 = .33$; and liberal ideology, $F(3,91) = 3.393$, $p = .021$, adjusted $R^2 = .505$. Additionally, *t*-tests of differences between the cultures' ratings of the genres for each of the eight concepts plus preference/identity (9 × 4 genres = 36 tests), revealed nine significant differences. Of these nine differences, six were for German folksy music. Compared to Americans, German listeners associated German folksy with more rural culture, $t(1,13.89) = 5.47$, $p < .001$; older age, $t(1,28) = 3.55$, $p = .001$; less expertise, $t(1,24.12) = 5.91$, $p < .001$; less attractiveness, $t(1,27) = 3.75$, $p = .001$; and being marginally more conservative, $t(1,28) = 1.73$, $p < .095$. Germans also had less preference/identity for the German folksy than Americans, $t(1,28) = 3.16$, $p = .004$. Of the remaining three significant differences, two were for punk music ethnicity (marginal), $t(1,20) = 1.884$, $p = .07$, and political ideology, $t(1,20) = 2.18$, $p = .04$; and one was for hip-hop ethnicity (marginal), $t(1,21) = 2.03$, $p = .05$.

Discussion

This is the first study systematically comparing extra musical associations triggered by musical genre information across two different western countries (Germany and the USA). Brief recordings of country, punk, and hip-hop music differed from one another in their associations with concepts related to genre, culture, and communication. The direction and magnitude of those differences were generally consistent regardless of whether listeners were from Germany or the USA. Hip-hop exhibited an exception to this intercultural homogeneity in its association with ethnicity. U.S. listeners associated minority ethnicity significantly more with hip-hop than the other genres, while German listeners did not make this distinction. German folksy, the fourth

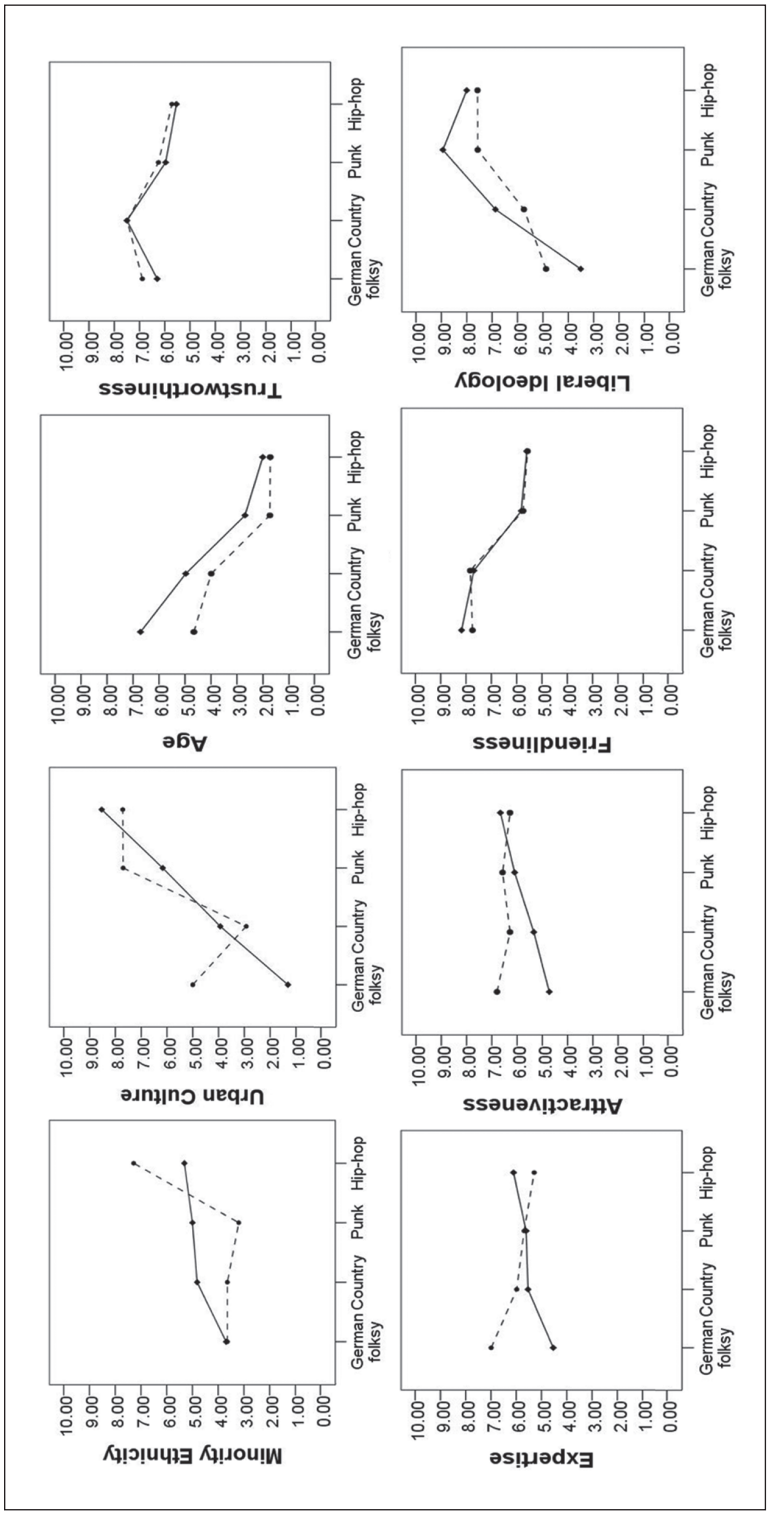

Figure 1. German and American listeners' associations of eight extra musical concepts with German folksy, Country, Punk, and Hip-hop music. All associations are rated on a 10-point scale. The graphs show the mean ratings after controlling for stimulus preference/identity, perceived mood valence, or mood intensity of the stimulus if these were significant covariates. The solid lines with diamond markers depict German ratings; the dashed lines with circle markers depict American ratings.

genre tested, showed the most effects of cultural influence on its associations. German listeners' German folksy ratings were consistently more extreme than their ratings of the other genres, and their ratings of this genre differed from the Americans' ratings more often than not. The study provides evidence that, similar to what has been found in semantical priming paradigms (e.g., Banaji & Hardin, 1996; Lepore & Brown, 1997; Segalowitz & Zheng, 2009; Steinbeis & Koelsch, 2008), the sound of a popular music genre has the capacity to trigger symbolic extra-musical schemas, even when musical format information is presented very briefly. Furthermore, the infrequency of genre by culture interactions for globally prevalent genres provides strong statistical support for massification/homogeneity. This consistency is likely to be stronger across closely related western countries (Kogut & Singh, 1988) than western and eastern cultures, but it is still a testament to the power of global media to establish uniform cognitive constructs across large geographic and social spaces. More research should be done to examine the industrial, technological, and cultural mechanisms through which music genres reach listeners and influence these constructs at an individual level. Also, more research is needed to compare other genres, concepts, and cultures that vary in cultural distance.

In contrast to unconditional massification, there was a strong cultural difference in hip-hop's ethnicity ratings. The ethnicity ratings help address a question raised by Shevy (2008) that asked whether some of the concepts that Americans associated with hip-hop (such as relatively less trustworthiness, less friendliness, and more liberal ideology in the current study) resulted from activated ethnic or racial schemas rather than constructs of the genre itself. In the current study, both cultures have many of the same associations with hip-hop, despite the fact that the German listeners did not associate the genre with minority ethnicity. This is consistent with research by Johnson, Trawalter, & Dovidio (2000), where exposure to violent hip-hop musicians, and not merely Black musicians, activated stronger stereotypical judgments toward a Black male. The evidence indicates that associations with hip-hop are not merely activated racial or ethnic schemas, although it is likely that ethnicity and hip-hop are closely related in certain cultures, such as the USA. We suggest that racial membership has a greater relevance and salience in the American culture, possibly because of different immigration histories (c.f. Entman & Rojecki, 2001). Heightened awareness and personal relevance have been shown to render a stereotypical trait into a more accessible dimension (e.g., Mullen, Brown, & Smith, 1992). Within this context, hip-hop originated within the USA's Black subculture, creating a strong association between the music and the ethnicity in U.S. listeners' minds. These results are consistent with the literature suggesting that the hip-hop genre is composed of both localized (or culture-dependent) and global (or culture-independent) aspects, turning it into a glocalized construct (e.g., Motley & Henderson, 2008). Future research should further explore which aspects of music genre schemas can be described as global versus local. For example, while ethnic minority status might not be a universal aspect of hip-hop, an assertive, anti-establishment attitude seems to be.

Moreover, as an increasing number of cultures produce music and other media content for international distribution, it is increasingly important to study how biases and perceptions in the country of origin shape the globally disseminated schema. German listeners' ratings of German folksy were strongly consistent with a stereotypical representation of the genre. They associated it with being rural, older, conservative, not exceptionally attractive or well-informed, but somewhat friendly. The stereotypical ratings could be a result of listeners' perception that the genre is inauthentic because of its use of artificial production features (e.g., artificial smiles). It is also worth noting, however, that the analyses controlled for music preference/identity. Thus, the German folksy differences may not be entirely the result of a negative personal attitude

toward the music. Additionally, in two additional questionnaire items, "Just for show-Genuine" and "Natural–Artificial," Germans' ratings of German folksy did not differ from their ratings of other genres. Perhaps the cultural origins of German folksy are truly more extreme than the other genres, or other psychological and social processes are at work in the formation and cultural dissemination of a genre stereotype. In a global context, it would be useful to measure the extent to which these local perceptions shape the schemas of new listeners outside of Germany.

The effects of varying levels of familiarity with a genre should also be studied. The American ratings of German folksy suggest that U.S. listeners were unfamiliar with the genre, resulting in less stereotypical extra musical meaning making. This is evidenced by Americans' ratings that ran contrary to the genre's typical cultural and thematic associations in media portrayals (e.g., Americans' high urban, expertise, and attractiveness ratings). Also, when asked what kind of music they heard, Americans' answers varied from classical and waltz, to swing and polka. It would be interesting to investigate what musical attributes and psychological processes led to the cognitive activation of these particular genres. Answers to these questions could help reveal processes that underlie other types of miscommunication.

In conclusion, this study shows the potential of a closer and more systematic analysis of the cross-cultural similarities and differences in music listeners' symbolic extra musical schemas. It reveals instances where music genres in global media can be relied upon to communicate consistent meanings across certain cultures and cases in which factors such as glocalization prevent them from doing so. It also offers deeper insights into music genre perception and shows ways in which societal-level and individual-level media processes are interrelated. There are many more countries, conceptual associations, and genres to explore, and music, as a basic form of cultural expression and communication, is engaging new combinations of these factors at a fast pace through global media.

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Note

1. Note that Dowling & Harwood, 1986, also use these three terms but provide different definitions of indexical and symbolic meaning.
2. CDI is based on Hofstede's (1980, 1983) cultural model.

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