

Don't Give Up The Fight

HipHop as a Means of Sustainability Communication and Environmental Protest

Is hip-hop culture with its undeniable transformative potential and social impetus a sounding board for environmental protest and sustainability communication? At least political actors like NASA (*Take Aim at Climate Change*, 2009) and Greenpeace Germany (*Let's Save the bees*, 2014) believed in the possibility to utilize hip-hop strategically in order to draw attention on environmental conflicts. Since 2007, eco hip-hop pioneer DJ Cavem clads environmental concern in rap aesthetics, protesting against environmental pollution, and at the same time campaigning for sustainable lifestyles (*Cool To Live*, 2015). Here, hip-hop is intended to serve as a medium of collective empowerment, ecological self-determination, and environmental justice.

Apart from these cases, which rather grow on the margins of the global hip-hop panorama, the genre for its most part still seems driven by value-conservative, performance-oriented and male-dominated norms, rather than by ecological protest. However, already in 1992, Arrested Development (*Children Play With Earth*) makes the case for combining black power, emancipation and political ecology. In 2008, Bliss n Eso (*Sea Is Rising*) work on a change of consciousness, pleading to fight against environmental irresponsibility. As Beastie Boys (*It Takes Time to Build*, 2004), Public Enemy (*Don't Give Up the Fight*, 2012), and Prinz Pi (*2030*, 2008) show, hip-hop does popularize climate communication and messages of environmental protest. However, the analysis of lyrics and sound regimes is not just a mirror of public debates on environmental conflicts; it also uncovers "latent structures" (Luhmann 2005) of social systems by unveiling the subconscious of Western societies. From this perspective, hip-hop is not only an example of cultivating environmental protest in terms of politainment (Riegert/Collins 2016). Rather, as an expression and agent of power, it is a decisive factor within ecological crisis dynamics.

References

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Riegert, Kristina, and Sue Collins. 2016. Politainment. In *The international encyclopedia of political communication*. Eds. Gianpietro Mazzoleni et al., 974-984. Chichester: Wiley Blackwell.

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