

## Belonging and popular culture

### The work of Chilean artist Ana Tijoux

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#### Introduction

Current public debates on migration in the Global North often focus on issues of integration and multiculturalism, that is, questions surrounding the reassertion of national identity and definitions of the nation-state. In these debates, the figure of the embodied and imagined migrant can be seen as one that serves to condense »concerns with race, space and time and the politics of belonging« (Westwood and Phizacklea 2000, 3). However, these public debates tend to pay less attention to the experience of individual migrants and groups who move across national borders and the structural preconditions based on social issues such as race, culture, and gender they encounter and negotiate. In order to be able to discuss and theoretically frame such experiences, researchers have suggested moving beyond methodological nationalism by, for instance, identifying and analyzing different spaces in which individuals identified as the cultural or racial »Other« express experiences of marginalization and exclusion (Westwood and Phizacklea 2000; Anthias 2008; Amelina et al. 2012; Nowicka and Cieslik 2014; Vasilev 2018).

While hip-hop culture is often described as a platform through which marginalized youths are able to make such experiences of social exclusion visible, it is also a highly gendered space that, in its mainstream version, is filled with expressions of hypermasculinity and misogyny (Kumpf 2013, 207; Sernhede and Söderman 2010, 51). Such dominance of masculine-coded expressions, in turn, contributes to the marginalization of female and queer artists in mainstream hip-hop culture (Rose 2008; Pough 2007). Therefore, this article studies global hip-hop culture both as a platform

used to negotiate questions of (national and transnational) belonging and as a gendered space that activates questions of belonging. The term transnational is used here to stress the particular national frameworks within which such questions are activated. It specifically focuses on such issues in the artist identity and work of Ana Tijoux, a Chilean artist who addresses international, national, and gender issues through her music.

### **Hip-hop culture and belonging**

In the introduction to the anthology *Global Noise: Rap and Hip Hop Outside the USA*, its editor Tony Mitchell points out that as hip-hop became increasingly commercialized and popularized in the United States during the 1990s, it simultaneously developed into »a vehicle for global youth affiliations and a tool for reworking local identity all over the world« (Mitchell 2001, 2). This global spread of hip-hop culture nevertheless relies on the efforts of individuals to »reinscribe their own social world« through an »intensely mediated labor of making a culture one's own« (Maxwell 2001, 260). Ian Maxwell, who has studied white hip-hop artists in Australia, analyzes this process by tracing the way in which individuals set out to overcome the »disjunction« between their own experience and the narrative to which they want to belong, that is, in this case, hip-hop culture (Maxwell 2001, 262). More recent international studies have focused on issues of identity and authenticity in, for instance, Australian hip-hop, Arabic Rap, and the hip-hop scene in London (see Minestrelli 2016; Johannsen 2017; Speers 2017).

Much like other forms of popular culture, the mainstream version of hip-hop culture is largely male-dominated (Chang 2007; Beale Spencer et al. 2004, 234). In her book *Hip-hop Wars*, Tricia Rose provides a comprehensive overview over the public debate surrounding, among others, misogynistic tendencies in mainstream hip-hop (Rose 2008). Since the 1990s, a growing body of research in the United States has focused on the critique of the (hetero)sexism, capitalism, and racism that characterizes mainstream hip-hop culture (Pough 2007; McFarland 2008; Durham et al. 2013; Cooper et al. 2017). Although some research does focus on gender issues in international hip-hop, such as Sujatha Fernandes's study of women

rappers in Cuba who recognize that oppression on the basis of race, class, and sex are intertwined, research on hip-hop culture conducted outside of the US and available in English has given little attention to gender issues (Pough et al. 2007, 10; Beale Spencer et al. 2004, 234; Salvatierra Díez 2016; hooks 2004; Berggren 2014, 234).

Hip-hop culture outside of the United States has instead been discussed mainly within a national framework, where, among other things, it has been defined as a space in which marginalized youths set out to negotiate and make visible their experiences of being identified as the national »Other« (Kumpf 2013, 207; Sernhede and Söderman 2010, 37). In other words, the main focus of such research has been to analyze hip-hop as a culture that provides a platform to negotiate national belonging. While transnational connections created and negotiated by individual hip-hop artists have received less attention, some studies do discuss hip-hop culture in connection to different diasporas, most prominently the African diaspora (see for instance: Kaya 1997; Osumare 2007; Ohadike 2007; Perry 2008; Spady 2013).

Instead of discussing hip-hop culture in a national or diasporic framework, this article focuses on the way in which issues of belonging are negotiated in the work of Ana Tijoux, a Chilean artist who addresses transnational, national, and gender issues in her artist identity as well as her music. After first mapping the different spaces in which Tijoux's artist identity and her work pose questions of belonging, it then discusses the answers she gives to these questions as a hip-hop artist.

### **The work of Chilean artist Ana Tijoux**

Ana María Merino Tijoux, commonly known by her artist's name Ana Tijoux, was born in 1977 in Lille, France to Chilean parents who fled the country following the military coup in 1973. Tijoux grew up in Paris and her family returned to Chile in the 1990s, where she became part of a number of successful hip-hop groups such as Makiza. She returned to France in 2001, to then move back to Chile in 2003, and rose to international fame

with the hit single »1977« as a solo artist.<sup>1</sup> Although she was not born in Chile, she repeatedly refers to it as »my country« in interviews, uses traditional Chilean musical instruments, and refers to Chilean singers and songwriters Violetta Parra and Victor Jara in her work. As a musician, she also refers to her experience of migration and exile, and sets out to make visible issues that are central for marginalized individuals and groups in Chile as well as the Global South. Her autobiography and work are thus interesting in this context, since they touch upon and address issues of exile and return as well as national belonging from the positionality of a female hip-hop artist.

In order to discuss questions of belonging in Tijoux's work, I watched and read a large number of interviews with her, read various articles, listened to Tijoux's song lyrics, and watched her videos that are available online. In that extensive material, I was able to identify a number of different answers to questions of belonging. For this article, I have selected the following interviews, articles, lyrics, and videos to represent these answers. Interviews: an interview conducted in connection with the Pachanga Latino Music Festival in Austin, Texas;<sup>2</sup> a short *New York Times* article on her work published in 2014 (Pareles 2014); an interview conducted by the Italian web TV station TelevisionetMusic;<sup>3</sup> an interview conducted in the context of the making of the song »Somos Sur« in 2014;<sup>4</sup> an interview with the US organization Democracy Now;<sup>5</sup> an article

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1 Nacional Records, »Ana Tijoux—1977,« YouTube video, 3:33, Feb. 19, 2010, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yiQ7S38nKog>.

2 Blastro2, »Ana Tijoux—English Interview—Entrevista En Inglés—La Bala,« YouTube video, 5:48, Aug. 9, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zh3F3GQcUFY>.

3 TelevisionetMusic, »Ana Tijoux: Una Rapper Cilena col Passaporto Francese,« YouTube video, 6:51, May 5, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vsGwaLGxTOU>.

4 Enlamakinita, »En La Makinita »Versos Migrantes« Ana Tijoux y Shadia Mansour, Capítulo #9,« YouTube video, 25:25, Sep. 11, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hDGsbGHddYU>.

based on an interview with Ana conducted for the *Harvard Gazette*,<sup>6</sup> and, finally, an interview with the Latin American internet site Tele Sur.<sup>7</sup> Songs and videos: Ana's cover version of Chilean singer and songwriter Violeta Parra's song »Santiago Penando Estas«; the song »Shock« that was featured on her 2011 album *La Bala*; as well as her songs »Antipatriarca« and »Somos Sur« featured on her 2014 album *Vengo*.<sup>8</sup> I transcribed the lyrics with the help of the website genius.com. All translations from Spanish are my own.

The following analysis is structured according to three spaces I identified in the material in which Tijoux negotiates belonging: first, exile and return (a transnational space); second, a Chilean past and present (a national space); and third, being a female hip-hop artist (mainstream hip-hop culture).

### Exile and return

In order to be able to discuss the significance of exile and return for Ana Tijoux's choice to become a hip-hop artist, I will start by providing a

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- 5 Democracy Now!, »Chilean Musician Ana Tijoux on Politics, Feminism, Motherhood & Hip-Hop As »A Land for the Landless,« YouTube video, 34:14, July 11, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EJ3Gr58dpWM>.
- 6 Liz Mineo, »For Ana Tijoux, Hip-hop Is Home: France-Born Chilean Found Her Place in Her Music,« *Harvard Gazette*, Apr. 21, 2016, <http://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2016/04/for-ana-tijoux-hip-hop-is-home/>.
- 7 Tele Sur Videos, »Ana Tijoux Remembers Victor Jara,« interview, Sep. 16, 2016, <https://videosenglish.telesurtv.net/video/591441/ana-tijoux-remembers-victor-jara/>.
- 8 U Man, »Ana Tijoux-Santiago penando estás,« YouTube video, 4:18, Oct. 20, 2009, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_9BKsK9J388](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_9BKsK9J388);  
 Nacional Records, »Ana Tijoux—Shock,« YouTube video, 3:48, Oct. 4, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=177-s44MSVQ>;  
 Nacional Records, »Ana Tijoux—Antipatriarca,« YouTube video, 3:15, May 29, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RoKoj8bFg2E>;  
 Nacional Records, »Ana Tijoux—Somos Sur (Feat. Shadia Mansour),« YouTube video, 4:10, June 12, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EKGUJXzxNqc>.

brief outline of the consequences of the military coup in Chile in 1973 as well as the emergence of hip-hop culture in Chile. In the immediate aftermath of the coup that led to the overthrow of the Chilean government under Salvador Allende on September 11, 1973, the military regime led by general Augusto Pinochet shut down the parliament and banned all unions and political organizations that were not in line with its political views. Between 1973 and 1990 the regime tortured, exiled, and killed thousands of civilians (Constable and Valenzuelo 1993, 21). Outside of Chile, the coup was broadly documented on radio, television, and by the written press. It was followed by an international wave of solidarity, and the human rights violations committed during the regime fundamentally influenced the development of an international language of human rights in the 1970s (Christiaens et al. 2014, 10). Those who were exiled and fled to countries such as the United States, Canada, Sweden, and France were often highly educated and continued their political activism in exile. Nine months after the coup, approximately 150,000 Chileans were living in exile, about half of whom settled in Western and Eastern Europe (Wright and Oñate 1998, 123).

In the mid- to late 1980s, as signs were increasing that the regime was slowly coming to an end, hip-hop culture emerged in Chile. Young men who lived in *poblaciones*, economically disadvantaged neighborhoods located at the outskirts of cities such as Santiago, Valparaiso, Temuco, and Viña del Mar, started to imitate the moves and styles of b-boys (breakdancers) they saw in US movies such as *Breakin'* and *Beat Street* (Quitow 2001, 21; Hardy Raskovan 1989, 101–2). Yet more information on hip-hop was hard to come by as the Pinochet regime had isolated Chile. In this context, the *retornados*, that is, individuals who had not lived in Chile during the dictatorship, but started to return to the country during the 1980s and 1990s, played a crucial role. Having encountered hip-hop in countries such as Italy or France, they had gained knowledge about its development and international character that was not available to the b-boys in Chile. The *retornados'* experience of exile thus contributed to keeping the culture alive.

Ana Tijoux was among these *retornados* as her family returned to Chile in 1993. However, life was not easy for these returnees, as Chilean society

was more focused on rebuilding a democratic order than on integrating former exiles. Returning was especially difficult for the children of exiles. Many of them had been born after their parents fled the country, which meant that they had grown up outside of Chile and had a hard time adjusting to what many of them perceived as a foreign country. In a 2016 interview with the *Harvard Gazette*, Tijoux mentions how, during the early 1990s, hip-hop culture became a platform to express her feelings of »frustration and anger« (Mineo 2016). In the interview, she also describes engaging in hip-hop culture as cathartic and »cheaper than therapy« (ibid.).

Being a *retornado*, Tijoux decided to move back to France, where she had encountered hip-hop culture and music, in the early 2000s. Born in Lille, she had spent her adolescence in Paris, where her mother worked as a social worker with immigrant families from Senegal, Morocco, Algeria, and other parts of Africa. In an interview with the Italian web TV station TelevisionetMusic published in 2014, she recalls how these multicultural influences profoundly influenced her, as she became exposed to different kinds of music from different parts of the world (TelevisionetMusic 2014, 01:30). In this context, she also started listening to hip-hop. In her 2016 interview with the *Harvard Gazette*, Ana argued that, »for children of immigrants in France, hip-hop became a sort of land for those of us who felt landless [...] we felt displaced, but hip-hop made us feel restored« (Mineo 2016). However, Tijoux's description of the roots of hip-hop in multicultural France does not include any reference to the US roots of hip-hop, which are often mentioned by researchers studying hip-hop outside of the US (see, for instance, Mitchell 2001, 2); from the position she is speaking from in the 2016 interview, its roots are »elsewhere.«

As Avtar Brah points out, experiences in diasporic communities can differ depending on gender, class, and ethnicity (Brah 2002). Individual migrants can also have conflicting feelings surrounding concepts such as »home« and »belonging,« and it is possible to feel at home in one place and still have feelings of social marginalization that make it impossible to call that place home (Kumarini 2009). In other words, these experiences of social marginalization and exclusion activate questions of belonging that, in this

case, are answered by seeking refuge in a form of popular culture that provides a platform to express such experiences: global hip-hop culture. Using hip-hop culture as such a platform, Tijoux became able to express the disjunction between her experience of marginalization or »being out of place« in, and in between France and Chile. However, as I will discuss in the following, as an artist, Tijoux also sets out to answer the question of belonging in a Chilean, that is, a national context in which she was not automatically included.

### **Belonging to a Chilean and transnational past**

Before returning to Chile in the mid-2000s, Tijoux released a cover of Chilean singer and songwriter Violetta Parra's song »Santiago Penando Estas,« which was featured on a tribute album. In 2016, she also released a remake of Chilean songwriter Victor Jara's song »Luchin.« Both Violetta Parra and Victor Jara were part of the *nueva canción* (new song) movement, a folk-inspired genre of socially conscious protest music with origins in Chile (Foxley 1988; Torres Alvarado 2004). Violetta Parra had died in 1967, and Victor Jara was killed in the immediate aftermath of the 1973 coup in a stadium in Santiago that today is named after him. As the members of the *nueva canción* movement in general were outspokenly critical of Pinochet, they were forced to flee the country together with thousands of other Chileans who had supported president Salvador Allende (Svensson 2009, 11). During the exile period, Violetta Parra and Victor Jara, whose records were seized in Chile, became symbols of resistance. At the same time, other exiled *nueva canción* groups such as Inti-Illimani and Quilapayun that were created by leftist middle-class university students introduced *nueva canción* music to international audiences (Cervantes and Saldaña 2015).

In their analysis of Ana Tijoux's work, Antonio Cervantes and Lilliana Patricia Saldaña outline parallels between her music and the music of Violetta Parra, who popularized indigenous instruments from the Andean highlands of Bolivia and Peru, and the lyrics of Victor Jara, who denounced the colonial legacies of race, class, and gender hierarchies. As Tijoux pointed out in an interview with Tele Sur published in 2016, Victor Jara opened



up »a box of a deep silence of injustice« that, according to her, still prevails today, which is why her aim is to »make a connection between fights for injustice in the world« (TeleSur 2016, 00:20 and 01:25). As a solo artist, Tijoux also uses Chilean musical instruments and defines herself as a musical descendant of Violetta Parra, whom she calls a rapper because »being a rapper means speaking your mind through poetry« (Cervantes and Saldaña, 2015).

Ana Tijoux thus answers the question of belonging in a Chilean context by linking her work as a hip-hop artist to the *nueva canción* movement, a connection that evokes both national and international dimensions. On a national level, such a connection refers to a specific time in Chilean history: the time before the dictatorship of general Augusto Pinochet. As *nueva canción* artists became symbols of resistance outside of Chile during the Chilean exile period, Tijoux also refers to an international level as well as her own experience of exile by mentioning them as role models for her music. Here, the question of national belonging is answered through popular music, as hip-hop culture provides Tijoux with a platform to claim belonging in Chile. She is no longer a *retornado*, that is, a potentially estranged newcomer, but a Chilean artist. Hip-hop culture enables her to claim belonging in a Chilean context by referring to a Chilean past.

### **Belonging to a Chilean and transnational present**

In her work as a hip-hop artist, Tijoux also sets out to make current issues of marginalization and exclusion visible on a national and transnational level. Such issues become especially apparent in three of her songs released after 2010: »Shock« from the 2011 album *La Bala* and »Antipatriarca« and »Somos Sur« from the 2014 album *Vengo*. The album *La Bala* was her first solo album published after the international success of *1977*. It features the song »Shock,« which was released as a single and for which she recorded a video.<sup>9</sup> According to Tijoux, the video was intended to be a »miniature documentary« of what was happening in Chile in 2011 as traditional student organizations started to protest inequalities

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9 Nacional Records, »Ana Tijoux—Shock.«

in the education system (TelevisionetMusic 2014, 03:30). The students demanded the end of profit-making in higher education and a reform of the school system, which had not been reformed since 1990. The movement evolved into one of the biggest protest movements in the post-Pinochet era and set out to »challenge [...] the authoritarian character of political institutions, sharing similar goals with protests elsewhere around the world,« including radical economic and political democratization (Guzman-Concha 2012).

The video features students who had barricaded themselves inside their schools during the protests. In an interview with Televisionet Music in 2014, Tijoux calls their actions a »lesson for other Chileans in terms of how to organize« (TelevisionetMusic 2014, 03:55). The video is filmed entirely in black and white and shows barricades consisting of chairs, young people in corridors with masks over their mouths, as well as graffiti, banners, and other images used by the protesters. While her voice is audible throughout the video, the other participants perform the following lyrics:

Al son de un solo coro Marcharemos con el tono Con la convicción que basta de robo	To the sound of a single choir We will march in lockstep With the conviction that the theft has to stop
Tu estado de control Tu trono podrido de oro Tu política y tu riqueza Y tu Tesoro, no La hora sonó, la hora sonó	Your state of control Your rotten golden throne Your politics and your wealth And your treasure, no The time has come, the time has come
No permitiremos más, más tu doctrina del shock	We will not allow any more, any more of your shock doctrine

Three years later, Tijoux released the album *Vengo* that features the song »Antipatriarca,« for which she also recorded a video.<sup>10</sup> In its lyrics she defines the concept of »Antipatriarca,« that is, anti-patriarchy, as follows:

Pero no voy a ser la que obedece porque mi cuerpo me pertenece	But I won't be the one who obeys because my body belongs to me
Yo decido de mi tiempo como quiero y donde quiero	I use my time how I want to and where I want to
Independiente yo nací, independiente decidí	I was born independent and I decided independently that
Yo no camino detrás de ti, yo camino de la par aquí	I do not walk behind you, I walk alongside you
Tu no me vas a humillar, tu no me vas a gritar	You will not humiliate me, you will not yell at me
Tu no me vas someter tu no me vas a golpear	You will not subjugate me, you will not hit me
Tu no me vas denigrar, tu no me vas obligar	You will not denigrate me, you will not force me
Tu no me vas a silenciar tu no me vas a callar	You will not silence me, you will not shut me up
No sumisa ni obediente Mujer fuerte insurgente Independiente y valiente Romper las cadenas de lo indiferente	Neither submissive nor obedient Strong, rebellious woman Independent and brave Breaking the chains of indifference
No pasiva ni oprimida Mujer linda que das vida Emancipada en autonomía Antipatriarca y alegría A liberar....	Neither passive nor oppressed Beautiful woman who gives life Emancipated in autonomy Anti-patriarchy and happiness Let's liberate...

10 Nacional Records, »Ana Tijoux—Antipatriarca.«

In this excerpt, Tijoux describes a woman who will not be silenced in her criticism of oppression and indifference. The video that accompanies the song features women in different geographical locations performing the lyrics. Once again, Tijoux does not place herself in the spotlight as an individual artist, but rather depicts herself surrounded by other like-minded individuals whose experience of marginalization she makes audible and visible through the song.

A similar approach is used in the lyrics and video of the song »Somos Sur« (We Are the South), a collaboration with UK-Palestinian hip-hop artist Shadia Mansour featured on the same album.<sup>11</sup>

Tu nos dices que debemos sentarnos, Pero las ideas solo pueden levantarnos	You tell us to sit down, But the ideas can only lift us up
Caminar, recorrer, no rendirse ni retroceder,	Walking, ranging, not surrendering or retreating,
Ver, aprender como esponja absorbe	Seeing, learning by absorbing like a sponge
Nadie sobra, todos faltan, todos suman	Nobody is left, everyone is missing, everyone adds up
Todos para todos, todo para nosotros	Everyone for everyone, everything for us
Soñamos en grande que se caiga el imperio	We dream big that the empire will fall
Lo gritamos alto, no queda mas remedio	We shout it loud, there is no remedy left
Esto no es utopía, es alegre rebeldía	This is not utopia, it is a joyful rebellion
Del baile de los que sobran, de la danza tuya y mía,	Of the dance of those who are left, of a dance that is yours and mine,
Levantarnos para decir »ya basta«	Standing up to say »enough is enough«

11 Nacional Records, »Ana Tijoux—Somos Sur (feat. Shadia Mansour).«

Ni África, ni América Latina se subasta,	Neither Africa nor Latin America is auctioned,
Con barro, con casco, con lápiz, zapatear el fiasco	With mud, with a helmet, with a pencil, pounding the fiasco
Provocar un social terremoto en este charco.	Provoking a social earthquake in this pond. <sup>12</sup>
Todos los callados (todos), Todos los omitidos (todos), Todos los invisibles (todos), Todos, to, to, todos,	Everyone who is quiet (everyone), Everyone who is left out (everyone), Everyone who is invisible (everyone), Everyone, everyone, everyone, everyone.
Nigeria, Bolivia, Chile, Angola, Puerto Rico y Tunisia, Algeria, Venezuela, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Mozambique, Costa Rica, Camerún, Congo, Cuba, Somalia, México, República Dominicana, Tanzania,	Nigeria, Bolivia, Chile, Angola, Puerto Rico and Tunisia, Algeria, Venezuela, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Mozambique, Costa Rica, Cameroon, Congo, Cuba, Somalia, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Tanzania,
Fuera yanquis de América latina, franceses, ingleses y holandeses, yo te quiero libre Palestina.	Out with the Yankees from Latin America, French, English and Dutch, I want you freed, Palestine.

This excerpt voices the historical experience of marginalized and colonized individuals in the Global South. There are numerous historical references to European colonialism (by France, England and Holland), the exploitation of the Global South, as well as the political and economic interference of the United States in Latin America during the twentieth century. These latter issues are famously addressed in Eduardo Galeano's book »The Open Veins of Latin America,« which Tijoux mentions as an inspiration for the album *Vengo* in an interview with Democracy Now in 2014 (04:50).

In a national context, Tijoux thus also answers the question of belonging by using hip-hop culture as a platform to make the experience of

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12 »Pond« is here probably referring to the Atlantic Ocean.

marginalized groups and individuals in general and the gendered body in particular audible and visible. Thereby she once again creates a connection to the work of *nueva canción* artists who also set out to critique marginalization and oppression on a global scale. The *nueva canción* movement itself has been studied as a platform used by different artists to unite the peoples of South and Central America in an anti-capitalist critique (Tomas Serna 1992; McFarland 2017). In Tijoux's case, this unity is based on a narrative that includes remembering the *nueva canción* movement of the 1960s and, at the same time, the shared experience of being colonized and marginalized.

However, it must be said that Tijoux releases these songs and stresses such connections at a specific historical moment, a moment that is more vulnerable to such critique. In the immediate aftermath of the 1990 elections, as Patricio Aylwin Azócar became the first democratically elected president since 1970, it was almost impossible to criticize the Pinochet regime as the elections did not bring an end to military influence on Chilean politics (Sjöqvist and Palmgren 1990, 20). Different generals kept threatening to take over the government throughout the 1990s, and Pinochet remained in his position as commander-in-chief of the military until 1998 (Sorensen 2011, 3). In such a political climate, media outlets did not dare to be openly critical of the regime, especially since Pinochet had been granted immunity for all crimes committed between 1973 and 1978. As a result, the media rarely mentioned the regime or provided a platform for artists who criticized the government, and if they did, they only discussed it in hushed tones. However, since Pinochet's death in 2006 and the communications revolution of the Internet, it has become easier to criticize both the regime and the Chilean government.

### **Gender and hip-hop culture**

Ana Tijoux became an internationally known artist in the wake of the release of her 2009 album and eponymous single *1977*. The song was featured in the popular US television series *Breaking Bad* and instantly became a huge success, thereby introducing her to an international audience. As the media attempted to describe her music to this international

audience, she was often compared to other female artists who had given their work a socio-critical tone, such as US rapper Lauryn Hill or Spanish rapper Mala Rodriguez. In 2014, an article in the *New York Times* called her »South America's answer to Lauryn Hill.«<sup>13</sup> Ana received invitations to perform at music festivals in the United States and other countries and was interviewed by media outlets such as Democracy Now (2014). In all of these publications and interviews, Tijoux both identified herself and was identified as an outspoken and »political« Chilean artist who was initially very reluctant to travel to the United States due to the country's political and economic interference in Latin America in general, and its involvement in the coup d'état in Chile in 1973 in particular (Blastro2 2012, 01:40).

In these interviews, Tijoux does not specifically define herself as a hip-hop artist nor discuss why she, as a non-US artist has a place in hip-hop culture, nor even mention that the culture originated in the United States. Instead, she is outspokenly critical of US policy. Tijoux also resists being compared to other female artists such as Lauryn Hill or Mala Rodriguez, adding that hip-hop is not a form of youth culture, but »music of life« (Enlamakinita 2014, 03:40 and 04:28). Describing her individual style as a musician, she points to her own individual experience and claims that making an album is an assembly of conversations, experiences, and impressions (TelevisionetMusic 2014, 05:05). Her resistance against being compared to other artists can be seen as an attempt to create an individual, marketable artist identity that sets her apart from other internationally known artists. Her remarks on age and hip-hop can also be seen as a means to justify that she, as someone who was born as early as 1977, is working as a hip-hop artist (Fogarty 2012, 53).

In his 2001 study on Chilean hip-hop, Rainer Quitzow claimed that Tijoux lacked a specific connection to the hip-hop community, which he saw as

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13 Jon Pareles, »A Beating Heart, a Social Conscience and a Deluge of Ideas,« *New York Times*, Mar. 16, 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/16/arts/music/new-music-by-ana-tijoux-tunde-olaniran-and-the-bad-plus.html>.

evidence of »how, in a world influenced by global communication and travel, the identification with specific cultural practices loses its importance« (Quitow 2001, 74). Studying Tijoux's work and her artist identity in terms of issues of belonging from the vantage point of 2018 however, allows for a different reading. Although, as discussed above, hip-hop culture provides a platform to voice her own and others' experience of marginalization, the male-dominated networks of mainstream hip-hop culture nevertheless evoke questions of belonging for female hip-hop artists (Rose 2014). Tijoux's answer to this question is to create a space that is located both within (making marginalization visible and defining herself as Chilean) and outside hip-hop culture.

### Conclusion

Studying the artist identity and work of Ana Tijoux in terms of questions of belonging makes the continuing importance of both the nation and transnational connections visible as frames of reference. As exclusion and marginalization are experienced on a national level, questions of belonging are also evoked within national contexts. In both interviews and her lyrics, Tijoux claims that her experience of exclusion and marginalization in France and Chile prompted her to become a hip-hop artist. Her subsequent attempts to claim belonging in a Chilean context by creating a connection to a specific time in Chilean history, the time before the Pinochet regime, and referring to *nueva canción* artists such as Violetta Parra and Victor Jara, also attests to the importance of a national framework. Claiming continuity with the socio-critical tone of the *nueva canción* movement, Tijoux also sets out to criticize contemporary Chilean politics through her work. Such attempts must be understood within a specific historical context, since outspoken criticism of the Chilean government could not be voiced in mainstream media following the 1989 elections. This historical context also includes the fact that Tijoux's work is published on the Internet, a platform unavailable to artists who attempted to criticize the government in the 1990s. Tijoux also negotiates belonging through her work by voicing a collective experience of marginalization and exclusion in her lyrics. Here, hip-hop culture becomes a platform on which artists »speak for« or represent the voiceless and marginalized (in



the Global South) through popular culture, and thus give voice to what Marco Antonio Cervantes and Liljana Saldaña call »a political and aesthetic expression against empire« (Cervantes and Saldaña 2015, 86; see also McFarland 2017)

Transnational connections, networks, and movements also play a pivotal role for the negotiation of belonging through popular culture. However, it is also important to take into account the types of transnational networks and positionalities from which questions of belonging are answered, as the term »transnational« is often used for people »who have the freedom, legally and economically, to move across borders and between cultures, doing business on their way« (Westwood and Phizacklea 2000, 2). Tijoux has a middle class background and a successful career as a musician that enables her to travel outside Chile on a regular basis, an opportunity that remains unattainable for a large number of Chileans. It can thus be argued that she speaks from a privileged position that, among other things, allows her to create and sustain connections outside of the male-dominated networks of hip-hop culture. Although male artists dominate hip-hop culture in Chile, Tijoux is one of the internationally most visible contemporary artists from Chile, which in turn provides her with a privileged position within the country's music scene.

Tijoux's artist identity also draws on several established images and definitions, such as the common assumption that hip-hop culture represents the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups, or the notion of representation and consciousness-raising, which has been used as a tool in various feminist movements (Phillips et al. 2005). On an international level, those aspects of Tijoux's work that are based on a socio-political critique of global capitalism and sexism also fit well into the description of an intellectual, often expressive Chilean or Latin-American political activist and revolutionary created in the aftermath of the 1973 coup d'état. The coup had a profound impact on the international community, as the human rights violations during the Pinochet regime led to the development of an international language of human rights and the creation of new rules and strategies at the level of the United Nations (Christiaens et al. 2014, 10).

Studying popular music in connection to identity and belonging thus entails focusing on the way in which artists create their work with respect to and within different transnational and national frameworks, as well as their multiple situated and contextualized positions and belongings. As sociologist Floya Anthias points out, it is important to relate the notion of belonging to the different locations and contexts »from which belongings are imagined and narrated« (Anthias 2008, 6). However, research on popular culture in general, and hip-hop culture in particular, should also take into account the highly gendered and commercial nature of popular culture that makes certain identities and belongings possible while excluding others. These aspects can ultimately be used to shed light on the connection between belonging and representation in popular culture.

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