

Tracing the Growth of Hip-Hop and Poker in Germany



Wiz Khalifa is set to make the rounds in Berlin, Germany this [October](#). Hip-hop music in Germany is as hot as ever and droves are expected to show up at his shows; and not just because Wiz is popular in his own right, but also because he spent part of his childhood in the country.

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Poker-crazed Germany might also be interested to know that Wiz did a remix of Lady Gaga's signature Poker Face (albeit with his own twist on the lyrical content).

So the connection is probably a bit of a stretch. Still, it's worth noting that both rap music and poker in the country "while decidedly having their own German stamps" are imports from another culture entirely.

Mirrored Evolution of an Art Form

From its African-American ghetto experience roots, hip-hop music has become a worldwide phenomenon whose prevailing themes and styles have evolved to fit the changing times; and it's no different in Germany. German hip-hop's early days were tinged with reactionary concerns over the prevailing issues during and after the demolition of the Berlin Wall; but it still mirrored the development of the US hip-hop scene. Just as American hip-hop transitioned from The Sugarhill Gang to Public Enemy to Tupac to the aforementioned Wiz; so has German hip-hop evolved from [Die Fantastischen Vier](#) ("The Fantastic Four") to Advanced Chemistry to Bushido to Peter Fox. In other words, the American influence is still very much alive.

Adapting an American Pastime

Just like German hip-hop, the country's fascination with poker began with the Americans. Although poker was brought over by American G.I.s to the country during (and after) the Second Great War, it wasn't until the poker explosion of the mid-2000s that the sport started to catch fire worldwide.

Among the countries bitten by the poker bug more than most was Germany, whose present-day superstars grew up watching the various televised tournaments that featured more than its fair share of Americans. These players include some famous celebrities who were looking to increase their exposure and contribute to the global popularity of poker.

The game eventually became so popular in Germany that online poker tournaments sponsored by partypoker.com have now become officially sanctioned by the WSOP. Along with superstars like Pius Heinz and Sandra Naujoks, their online counterparts RedIceCap and [Fresh_Oo_D](#) are also getting high recognition in the country.

Cultural Transformations

Two American imports. One an art form, while the other a leisurely activity. But both fully embraced by the German people, and eventually given European identities of their own.

Hip hop and poker are testaments to the evolution of any pop culture phenomena spread far enough: Regardless of origin, and regardless of eventual transformations, the underlying essence will always remain the same.

In these cases, it's reactionary expression, and competitive amusement.