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The Analysis of Sample-Based Music

Some scholars have established typologies or taxonomies on practices of sampling but few have addressed the question of why artists sample.

Scholars from various disciplines have been analyzing sample-based music since the late 1980s. In doing so, they have categorized and classified practices of sampling in many ways: some through well-established typologies or taxonomies, others more incidentally when describing and analyzing sampling compositions. Often, these attempts have been isolated from the broader academic literature and made with a narrow focus on the study in question. Hence, we still lack a general overview of such analytical attempts. In this chapter, I will summarize a broad range of them, examining which aspects and parameters have been focused on. This detailed overview will, not least, help to identify gaps in the study of sampling practices.

Research Overview: Terminological and Typological Attempts

This section is structured around six main analytical approaches. They classify the most important parameters addressed in sampling analyses. On the one hand, these approaches arise through study of the existing literature. On the other, they are oriented towards the elements of the extensive typology of musical borrowing

compiled by J. Peter Burkholder (2001a).[1] Burkholder's system cannot be neatly applied here: sampling is a particular practice of musical borrowing, and the object of study shifts from classical to popular music. Nonetheless, it becomes clear that my approaches find their equivalents in the six main questions of Burkholder's typology:

Own Approaches	Approaches by Burkholder (2001a)
1. Sample source	1. What is the relationship of the existing piece to the new piece that borrows from it?
2. Appearance in the new composition	2. What element or elements of the existing piece are incorporated into or referred to by the new piece, in whole or part?
3. Tactics of sampling	4. How is the borrowed material altered in the new piece?
4. Relation to the source	1. see above
5. Relation to the new composition	3. How does the borrowed material relate to the shape of the new piece? 5. What is the function of the borrowed material within the new piece, in musical terms? 6. What is the function or meaning of the borrowed material within the new piece in associative or extramusical terms, if any?
6. Reasons for sampling	6. see above

Table 3.1: Approaches to the analysis of sample-based music

This table is neither exhaustive nor exclusive. Many analyses blend multiple approaches, and some terminologies or taxonomies cannot be exclusively attached to a single approach. However, the table is a useful matrix of orientation when reviewing the status of research on sampling practices. I will now continue with an introduction of all six approaches and a discussion of the research that has been done relating to each. Table 3.5, finally, provides a concluding overview and a short critique.

(1) Sample Source

The first approach when classifying samples is to ask about their source. Where are the samples taken from? What is the material quality of the sample? What kinds of sources are used as sampling material? A useful terminology for making general distinctions can be drawn from Paul Théberge (1997, 213). He distinguishes four basic categories of sound. Accordingly, a sound can be domestic or foreign, musical or natural. At least the first two could be

Where are the samples taken from? What is the material quality of the sample? What kinds of sources are used as sampling material?

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1   Based on Burkholder's typology, Thomas Burkhalter (2015b, 2016) has developed the catalog of analytical questions RAK, which was used as a guideline for analysis in this study.

applied to the categorization of samples: a sample can be <u>self-re-corded/internal</u> (domestic), or it can stem from an external source (foreign).

The latter two terms (musical and natural) need to be modified slightly. Natural sounds fit into the umbrella term of "environmental sounds." This term not only covers proper "natural" sounds, but also includes human-made sounds. Avoiding the term "natural" also acknowledges the critique of, for instance, musique concrète composer Michel Chion (2010, 43–44). Chion argues that sound that has been recorded by a microphone can never be "natural" as it is always shaped by the circumstances of recording. Returning to Théberge's terms, it is reasonable to define "musical" sounds as a separate category since this covers the most common form of sampling (i.e. the processing of the sounds of instruments or musical recordings).

It is necessary to add to "environmental" and "musical" a third category, which I call "media material." This category encompasses sounds that are neither environmental field recordings nor musical clips, such as bits and pieces from movies, or other video material. Many authors adhere roughly to these distinctions even if they occasionally alter their contours. Geoffrey Cox, for example, describes four types of musical quotation:

> "traditional" quotation from other composers' written scores; "performative" quotation via the sampling of other composers' recorded music; recorded environmental sound as quotation, and self-quotation from either written or recorded sources of my own material. (Cox 2007, 4)

The first category does not apply with regards to sampling, but we can adopt the other three. To apply our taxonomy, Cox describes the sampling of music from other composers (external, musical), of environmental sound (external, environmental), and of self-recorded material (internal, musical).

Mark Butler identifies two forms of sampling in the field of EDM. He distinguishes sounds that are "stored in electronic keyboards and drum machines" as "samples of acoustic instruments loaded into the [digital] instruments by their manufacturers" from "samples of discrete 'sound bytes': For instance, excerpts from speeches (…), lines from movies, and snippets of musical popular culture" (Butler 2006, 61). The first of his categories could be classified as "musical," while the second mixes "environmental," "musical," and "media material" and remains highly diffuse throughout. In summary, sampling material can be described using the following matrix of origin and quality:

Quality / Origin	external	internal
environmental		
musical		
media material		

Table 3.2: Matrix of origin and quality of sampling material

Sampling material can occur in all six possible combinations; even the more unusual internal-environmental and internal-media configurations are realistic. The recording of self-generated field recordings and the sampling of self-made media material would cover these two special cases. The case studies in this book cover a broad range of external source material. Lara Sarkissian's "kenats" and Vika Kirchenbauer's "STABILIZED, YES!" contain musical samples (a keyboard melody and a folk tune respectively), Ian McDonnell's "Perversas" and James Whipple's "Methy Imbiß" media material (video footage from YouTube), and Mauro Guz Bejar's "Libres" environmental sounds (chain and water sounds).

Beyond quality and origin, sampling material could also be distinguished in terms of the context of the source, with regards to genre, style, or ethnic or geographical origin, for example. Lothar Mikos (2003) lists five reference points (sampling sources) that he considers important within the area of hip hop: (1) Black music, (2) white rock music, (3) local popular music, (4) social reality, and (5) popular culture. Such a distinction relies substantially on the context in question and cannot be generalized without difficulty. Moreover, this categorization must be based on a high number of analyzed examples to be meaningful.

(2) Appearance in the New Composition

A second way of analyzing samples is by examining their appearance in the new musical artifact. First, samples could be distinguished by structural properties such as their length. On one end of the scale there are "small sonic chunks" (McLeod 2005, 68) or short, "isolated sound fragments" (Cox 2007, 16)—music producers and artists often use vocabulary such as "one-shot punctuations" or, in short, "one-shots" (Ableton 2018)—and on the other end there are longer, "more extended samples" (ibid.; Metzer 2003, 163), "entire choruses" (McLeod 2005, 68), or "central motifs" (Ableton 2018).

Based on this vocabulary, Robert Ratcliffe (2014, 98) proposed a "Typology of Sampled Material within Electronic Dance Music." He groups the material sampled in EDM into four main categories, with the first three categories taking length as the primary criterion: (A) short, isolated fragments, (B) loops and phrases, (C) larger elements, and (D) transformed material.[2] On a second level, he outlines several sub-categories "depending on the musical function

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2   Morey (2017) expanded Ratcliffe's model with two further categories: he suggested introducing the idea of "apparent mediation" (the sample becomes apparent as such through the manner of processing or its materiality; based on Brøvig-Hanssen 2010) and, second, the idea of the "sample as a meme" (Morey 2017, 212–13). Morey is not entirely clear on which level of Ratcliffe's model these additions should be made, presumably because they would affect all categories and subcategories. Morey's first addition is addressed later in this Chapter, while the second addition is ignored because it touches on the reception of the samples, an area not covered by this study.

and referential qualities of the material." These categories will be discussed further below.

On a similar scale, Justin Williams (2015, 209) applied concepts from Richard Middleton to sampling analysis. When discussing different types of repetition in popular music, Middleton (1990, 269) differentiated between two basic models: "musematic" repetition (the repetition of musemes, the smallest unit of musical meaning) or "discursive" repetition ("the repetition of longer units, at the level of the phrase, the sentence or even the complete section").[3] It is no surprise that sampling studies, with their emphasis on copyright in particular, consider this parameter to be crucial (McLeod 2005; McLeod et al. 2011). Counter to copyright law, which does not make a distinction between shorter and longer samples, these authors argue that there is a difference between the sampling of a small snippet or a longer hookline.

A PROPOSED TYPOLOGY OF SAMPLED MATERIAL WITHIN EDM

CATEGORY A:
short, isolated fragments
- Drum and percussion sounds
- Recontextualized to function as drum and percussion sounds
- Pitched elements used as a basis for new material
- Non-musical sounds recontextualized as individual notes or events within a phrase or sequence
- Ornamental sounds

CATEGORY B:
loops and phrases
- Self-referential musical elements
- Refential non-musical elements
- Transcontextual musical elements

CATEGORY C:
larger elements
- Multi-track parts and a capellas
- Extended excerpts
- Extensive, referntial non-musical material
- Complete tracks

CATEGORY D:
transformed material
- Short, isolated fragments
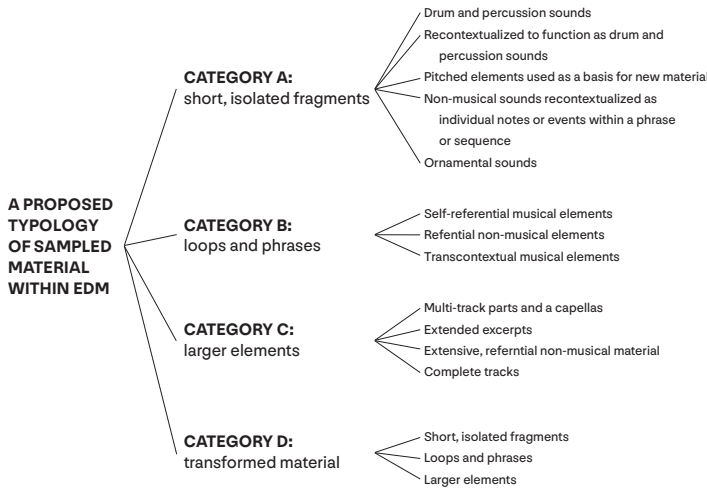- Loops and phrases
- Larger elements

Figure 3.1: A proposed typology of sampled material within EDM (Ratcliffe 2014, 99)

The case studies in this book will generally focus on the use of longer excerpts as sampling material. Except for the chain sound in Mauro Guz Bejar's track "Libres" (a short, isolated fragment) all samples could be categorized as "discursive" (Middleton) or "larger elements" (Ratcliffe). However, Vika Kirchenbauer's sampling of a U.S. folk tune could also be categorized as a combination of a great number of "short, isolated fragments," if one takes the individual sample-clip as a point of reference.

When focusing on the appearance of the sample in the new composition, there are two further crucial parameters: audibility and recognizability. The question of audibility asks whether a sample can be heard by the listener; the question of recognizability whether a sample is familiar to them. These two parameters are distinct, but they often overlap in terms of the vocabulary used. As the first

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3   For the sampling of very small snippets see also the practice of microsampling (Chapman 2008).

author to address these parameters on a general level, Joanna Demers (2010, 44) distinguishes between samples where the source content is "blatantly recognizable," and others where it is "totally obscure."

Still, it remains audible forms of sampling that are most often analyzed. David Sanjek (1994, 247), for example, suggests "four general areas" of possible forms of sampling. All areas concern sampling strategies on the audible end of the scale,[4] and the first two identify the parameter of recognizability as crucial:

> First, there are those records which sample known material of sufficient familiarity (...) [and] [s]econdly, there are those records which sample from both familiar and arcane sources, thereby attracting a level of interest equal to the lyrical content. (ibid.; the third form will be cited further below)

Aram Sinnreich (2010, 129–32) mentions that the question of recognizability was "one of the most contentious" among his interviewees: "Everyone I spoke to had a different take on the subject, and the opinions varied widely" (129). He or his interviewees used the terms "familiar" and "obscure" to describe the shades of recognizability of a sample. Geneva Smitherman directly addresses the parameter of recognizability and the degree of manipulation of a sample when proposing two types of sampling as a strategy of communication in hip hop. The first "triggers the cultural memory associated with a given musical work" and the second "simply duplicates that work" (Smitherman 1997, 16).

Another access point regarding the question of audibility is the framework for distinguishing between forms of imitation supplied by Richard Dyer (2007). In his model, Dyer introduces differentiations on three levels. The first asks whether an imitation is concealed or unconcealed. Speaking in terms of sampling, a sample could thus be either muted or audible. The second level asks whether an imitation is textually signaled or not. In the words of Christopher Tonelli:

> Textual signals are elements of an imitation perceived to encourage listeners to recognize the work as imitation. Textually signaled imitation is perceived to contain such elements; "not textually signaled" is thought to be absent of them. (Tonelli 2011, 10)

Translated to sampling, this would mean that the sample or other elements in the new composition draw attention to the fact that it is a sample, or that the new composition contains a sample(s). On Dyer's third level, a sample could be read as "evaluatively predetermined" or "evaluatively open," meaning that the reception of the sample is either open or predetermined. This brings us into the realm of reception analysis, which is beyond the scope of this study.

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4   This is also the case for most of the general categorizations of sampling by Goodwin, and partly for those by Großmann, discussed below.

The case studies in this book will, again, analyze a broad range of samples in terms of audibility (from audible to almost muted) and recognizability (from fully recognizable to totally obscured). Both parameters will be further addressed in the development of our first analytical tool, the FOV, <u>below</u>. There, I will also return to a discussion of Dyer's framework.

A final means of describing samples in the context of the new composition is through use of associative or informal language. Joseph Schloss, for example, describes samples by using a language directly drawn from his interviewees, including terms such as "off the wall," "upbeat and danceable," or "funky as hell" (Schloss 2014 [2004], 92–95).

(3) Tactics of Sampling

A third approach tries to distinguish between different strategies and compositional techniques, such as forms of sample processing, manipulation, and editing. Distinctions are typically made by addressing questions of quantity (how many samples have been used?) or process (how did the process of sampling evolve?). In theory, there are an infinite number of possible sampling tactics. This approach thus assembles qualitative descriptions of sampling strategies. This book will provide further descriptions of this sort, presenting additional sampling tactics in detail.[5]

Paul Harkins (2020, 119–32), for example, examines how musicians and producers use the sampler in a variety of genres and describes a set of basic, typical sampling tactics. An "appropriation-based approach" starts by using a sample in a non-referential way before revealing its identity towards the end of the song or track. In a second, "additive" approach, a whole track is built around a particular sample, after which the sample may disappear from the project. Among the case studies in this book, Ian McDonnell's "Perversas" will be most conducive to a discussion of elements of both approaches. Harkins further describes "accidental sampling" as part of the process of recording, a practice that will inform the discussion of reasons for sampling below (ibid.). Finally, Harkins discusses the practice of microsampling. In this sampling tactic, "small samples from sound sources such as recordings and radio are identified, extracted and rearranged to create new melodies and textures within musical compositions" (Harkins 2010b, 180).[6]

Justin Morey and Phillip McIntyre illustrate how producers of contemporary dance music use the constraints of sampling as a compositional tool. The authors identify three tactics that were

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5   To a certain degree, this parameter might be considered a "meta-parameter." By describing sampling tactics, the scholars blend various parameters discussed in this section (mainly 1, 2, 4, and 5). It is thus not appropriate to exclusively classify these tactics in one or the other category.
6   See Chapman (2008) for further discussions on the practice of microsampling.

consistently mentioned in interviews they conducted. The first involves chopping samples "by hand" instead of using automated software processes to cut samples into slices. This tactic is motivated by the aim to retain a "human element" in the sampled material (Morey and McIntyre 2014, 52). A second tactic overlaps with Harkins' "additive approach," while the third involves treating one's own recordings as samples (self-sampling; 53–54). Morey (2017, 128–29) further identifies a tactic which he labels a "scattergun approach to sample collage." In this sampling practice, "part of the point seems to be to cram as many different samples as possible, from as many different sources as possible, into one track."

In his frequently quoted article "Plunderphonics," Chris Cutler reviews five "applications" of sampling. The first he calls "there it is." Making reference to John Cage's *Imaginary Landscape* numbers 2 and 4, he identifies this tactic as random in approach: the "practice implies that music picked randomly 'out of the air' is simply there." Cutler considers this tactic to be "more a kind of listening than a kind of producing" (Cutler 1994, 107). The other applications surveyed by Cutler encompass the relation of the sample to the new composition ("partial importations" and "total importation"), the recognition of samples ("sources irrelevant"), or the traceability of the processed material ("sources untraceable"). They will be discussed further below.

xtine burrough and Frank Dufour distinguish between two different practices of sampling (Navas, Gallagher, and burrough 2018, 92–103). The first operates with "homogenous samples, which are identical in kind and acquire meaning only in the process of substitution or combination," while the second uses "heterogeneous samples (different in kind, sizes, and qualities) [that] rely on their attachments to intrinsic individual meanings" (95).

Two further tactics are identified by Kembrew McLeod, whose study is informed by legal trials relating to copyright infringements in U.S. hip hop during the early 1990s. Focusing once again on the quantity of the processed samples, McLeod's first sampling approach uses "hundreds of fragmentary samples" or "individually sampled and sliced beats," while the second only loops one "main hook" of the source song (McLeod 2005, 81).

(4) Relation to the Source

The next approach to sample analysis investigates the multiple relationships that a sample establishes with its source. How do the sample and the new composition refer to the source? This might be one of the most widely discussed issues in the analysis of sampling practices. According to Chris Cutler (1994, 108–9), sources can appear "irrelevant" or "untraceable." The former means that recognition "is not necessary or important," but possible in theory. The latter refers to

How do the sample and the new composition refer to the source?

sounds that are highly manipulated to the extent that recognition is impossible. Cutler then establishes two ways in which a recording can deal with meaning. Following Michel Chion's (2010) manifesto on the art of fixed sounds—one of the central texts of musique concrète—and his description of sounds that are completely separated from their sonic source, Cutler (1994, 97) introduces the notion of a non-referential, purified sound stripped "of its origin and memories," contrasting it with "an instance of a text that cannot exist without reference."[7]

With these two categories, Cutler defines the two extremes of the continuum under discussion. Other authors use different terminology or add further nuances to it. Guillaume Kosmicki outlines a spectrum running from unknown sources to direct references (Kosmicki 2010, 101); Owen Chapman uses the word "indexical" to describe samples that refer to something (Chapman 2011, 255); and Robert Ratcliffe distinguishes between different stages of referentiality (self-referential, referential, transcontextual).[8] Georg Fischer (2020, 51–58), finally, speaks of "50 shades of referentiality" when describing a continuum of referentiality of samples. Between the poles of the one-to-one reference (a reference that can be identified by the recipient without problems) and the inconclusive reference (where the sample is not even recognizable as a sample) there is the unique reference, which is clearly identifiable as a sample, but its source remains recognizable to insiders only.[9] These authors tend to ignore that the status of a referential sample can change over the course of a song or track. For instance, a sample could be treated as non-referential at first before becoming "indexical" later.[10]

> **A sample could be treated as non-referential at first before becoming "indexical" later.**

They are also mostly concerned with the question of whether a sound is referential or not. Dietmar Elflein (2010) offers a brief model focusing on the question of *what* is referred to. In an essay on the hybridity of genre in hip hop, he counterposes the "quotation of context" ("Kontextzitat"), where a particular sample and its context can be recognized by the listener, to the "sound building block" ("Klangbaustein"), where no precise source is recognized. (Elflein mixes aspects of referentiality and recognizability here.) Between these two poles, Elflein introduces the "quotation of sound"

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7   Chion (2010, 31) himself distinguishes between a non-narrative and a narrative, that is to say an anecdotic, sound.

8   Writing on remixes, André Doehring, Kai Ginkel, and Eva Krisper observe three equivalent ways in which a remix can relate to its original track. The first preserves the "acoustic trademark" of the original; the second still bears relation to it but "concepts of authorship and the work's identity" begin to blur; while in the third case, relations to the original no longer play an important role, and the product is considered "artistically independent" (Doehring, Ginkel, and Krisper 2019, 291).

9   The original text in German uses the terms "eineindeutige Referenz," "uneindeutige Referenz," and "eindeutige Referenz" (Fischer 2020, 51–58). Own translation.

10   See the "appropriation-based approach" by Harkins (2020, 119–32) introduced above

("Klangzitat"), where a sample refers more generally to a certain sound or genre rather than to a particular sample and context. Describing this continuum with another terminology, he distinguishes between a proactive ("offensiv") and a hidden ("versteckt") approach (16).

Due to the focus of this study on political sound material, the case studies will mostly cover sampling strategies operating on the referential end of the spectrum. Obviously, the parameter of referentiality (does the sample refer to something?) and the parameters of recognizability (is the sample recognizable; is it familiar to the listeners?) and audibility (is the sample audible?) are closely linked. But they allow for nuanced distinctions to be made.[11] For example, a recognizable (as well as an audible) sound might be indexical as well as non-referential, or an audible sound might be recognizable or not recognizable. These nuances will be addressed when developing the fader of visibility FOV later.

Taken as a whole, this approach illustrates that sampling establishes a transtextual relation between two sound sources (texts).[12] Based on the literary theory of Gérard Genette, Serge Lacasse (2007, 36) defines transtextuality as "the ensemble of any type of relation, explicit or not, that may link a text with others." He considers sampling to be "intertextual," a sub-category of transtextuality. In intertextual relations, a text contains elements from a previous text (38). Lacasse further adds the category of "hypertextuality," in which a new text (the hypertext) is built using a previous text (the hypotext) as a foundation. Hypertextual practices can also contain sampling, as in the case of the remix, John Oswald's plunderphonics, or cento.[13] Lacasse further understands sampling mainly as an "autosonic quotation." He defines "autosonic" practices as reproducing an original sound, in contrast to the "allosonic," which *imitates* a source.

While the distinction autosonic/allosonic is not hugely helpful for describing sampling practices—all forms of sampling are, by definition, autosonic—the pair of concepts syntagmatic/paradigmatic could potentially be useful. According to Lacasse, a transtextual practice either "deal[s] mostly with subject or content" (syntagmatic) or else involves a "transformation or imitation of a style or system" (paradigmatic) (55–56). Lacasse argues that sampling as autosonic quotation is a syntagmatic practice. However, the

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11   Similar vocabulary is used for all three parameters in the academic literature. For example, the non-visible (or audible) ends of these scales are described as obscure, hidden, concealed, transparent, or arcane.

12   In this book, I try to avoid the notion of the "text" in relation to musical compositions. As others have argued (Wicke 2003, 121; Just 2019), I believe that this vocabulary, taken from literary studies, is inaccurate and in the worst case even misleading. However, in Chapter 5, when establishing the "contextual approach" as a category of the spider of sampling reasons SSR, the terminology returns through the back door. For want of convincing alternatives, I will use the term here as a strategic necessity.

13   Lacasse applies this term from literary theory—once again borrowed from Gérard Genette—to musical works in which an "unusually large number" of samples build a new composition.

case study of Lara Sarkissian will illustrate that sampling could be considered paradigmatic as well: in her track "kenats," she transfers a particular style of keyboard playing from a male musical practice into female authorship by means of sampling.

(5) Relation to the New Composition

The fifth analytical perspective focuses on the relation of the sample to the new composition. In other words, this approach examines the function(s) of the sample within the new musical artifact. Often, sampling researchers touch on this issue only superficially. McLeod and DiCola (2011, 30), for example, briefly differentiate between samples that "provide a texture" and others that become the "central hook" of the new composition. Cutler (1994, 108) is more systematic when he identifies two sampling applications, "partial importations" and "total importation." The former uses samples as "important voices" and constructs "the rest of the material [the new composition] (…) around them," while in the latter, "existing recordings are not randomly or instrumentally incorporated so much as they become the simultaneous subject and object of a creative work" (ibid.).

This approach examines the function(s) of the sample within the new musical artifact.

Felicia Miyakawa describes four different functions of samples in rap music. According to Miyakawa, samples provide structure or formal functions (Miyakawa 2005, 108–9); they produce intertextual meaning (111); they create an atmosphere (ibid.); or they contribute to some sort of "historical dialectic" to "reinforce ties between rap's past and present" (121). In identifying these key functions, Miyakawa simultaneously addresses reasons for sampling, which will play an important role in the development of the analytical tool SSR below.

The most thorough studies on the question of the functions of samples were conducted by Robert Ratcliffe and Amanda Sewell. Sewell investigates the treatment of sampled sounds by hip hop producers in order to develop a typology. She describes "three main types of samples: structural samples, surface samples, and lyric samples" (Sewell 2013, 1). According to this schema, the sample can be responsible for the rhythmic foundation and appear throughout the new track in a looped form (the structural sample); it can further "decorate, enhance, or emphasize the groove of the track" (the surface sample); or it can provide "words, phrases, or even entire verses of text" (the lyric sample). This text and its meaning are further "essential to the role and character of a lyric sample" (67, 26). Sewell offers a range of subcategories that can be used to effectively describe the function of a sample in a track. Her typology is based on hip hop tracks, using information gained from online databases of sample sources, such as whosampled.com.

The models provided by Sewell and Ratcliffe have both proven

inadequate to describe my own case studies. Their categories do not map precisely onto the tracks under study, meaning several categories have to be combined to explain them. As a result, the typologies lose their accuracy. Both models remain valid for their respective fields of research, but they need to be revised and expanded for other fields; not only to account for sample-based music from other stylistic contexts, but also to consider hidden sampling strategies in particular.

Structural: looped (repeated end-to-end in sustainable patterns throughout a track)
　　Percussion-only: borrowing only non-pitched rhythmic instruments from the source
　　Intact: borrowing drums and various combinations of bass, keyboard, guitar, or other instruments, all of which sounded simultaneously in the source
　　Non-percussion: using original bass, keyboards or other instruments, but lacking any sampled drums
　　Aggregate: using drums and various combinations of instruments, but each sampled from a distinct source
Surface: decorate or emphasize the structural samples
　　Constituent: only a beat long and appearing at regular intervals atop the groove
　　Emphatic: appearing at the beginning or end of a track
　　Momentary: appearing only once in a track but in an unpredictable place
Lyric: spoken, sung, or rapped text
　　Singular: heard once during a track
　　Recurring: heard repeatedly during a track, usually in the choruses

Table 3.3: A typology of sampling in hip hop (Sewell 2014a, 304)

(6) Reasons for Sampling

The question of *why* artists sample represents one of the largest gaps in the research on sampling practices. This is where this book steps into the breach. Joanna Demers is one of a handful of scholars who has tried to answer this question on a more fundamental level. Focusing on experimental music, she distinguishes between two forms of sampling.[14] The first she calls utilitarian. This form of

> sampling broadens an artist's palette and allows for sonic combinations impossible to re-create in live performance. Many musicians do sample for precisely this reason, and there is no deeper significance to their actions. (Demers 2010, 52)

The second form "regards sampling as a means of intertextual commentary between one work and another" (ibid.). Beyond Demers, further attempts to explore reasons for sampling have been undertaken by, for example, Andrew Goodwin and Rolf Großmann. Both suggest three "strands" (Goodwin 1990, 270) or "rough scopes

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14　Demers bases her understanding of the term "experimental" on the tradition of high arts, while this book follows a popular interpretation, see own definition in Chapter 2.

of creative strategies" (Großmann 2005, 322) of sampling. Both authors first address the sampling of (mainly) instruments as a means of studio production. The often-quoted Goodwin calls this "hidden sampling" and regards it as "motivated largely by economics rather than aesthetics" (Goodwin 1990, 270), while Großmann (2005, 322) uses the term simulative to describe it. The motives behind this strategy would be, firstly, to simulate a particular instrumental sound, and secondly, to save money.[15]

Goodwin's second "strand" relates to the practice of making remixes and edits of previously released songs and tracks. For Goodwin, these remixes amount to a "refusal to settle for the pleasures of pop formula offered in the original" (Goodwin 1990, 270–71).[16] Großmann, meanwhile, refers to DJ culture as one of the most influential lineages of the sampling tradition. In this instance, sampling is about the appropriation and redefinition of media material through different means (Großmann 2005, 324). When conceptualizing these second forms of sampling, Großmann and Goodwin do not articulate well-defined motives. Behind these strategies I thus assume a conglomerate of key motives, such as appropriation, reference, the search for fresh and new sounds, and the intent to simultaneously follow and break with musical traditions.

The third forms of sampling outlined by the two authors are the most open and least defined. Großmann describes "experimental strategies" (325), which use sampling extensively to develop a self-contained aesthetic. The attainment of a "new aesthetic" is the crucial parameter for this definition; the same goes for Goodwin's final category. He refers to artists who use sampling as a central compositional element, and who have "made an aesthetic out of sampling… and in some cases a politics out of stealing" (Goodwin 1990, 270). With "quilt-pop," David Sanjek (2001, 248) describes his third form of sampling in similar terms.

Finally, based on Goodwin and Großmann, musicologist Malte Pelleter and media and communication scholar Steffen Lepa try to bring together three distinct types of sampling usage in hip hop:

> – Simulation/Composition: *"Sampling" as a musical tool that is used in order to appropriate and control all kinds of sounds and hence empowers the artist to the production of new compositions.*
> – Quotation/Reference: *"Sampling" as an intertextual reference-making practice that is used in order to appropriate meanings and contexts.*
> – Historicity/Materiality: *"Sampling" as a transparent technique of musical production that self-reflexively reveals its own relation to material and history.*

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15   In the present day, the latter has lost much of its significance as a primary motive, since sampling has become a ubiquitous studio practice.
16   Sanjek (2001, 248) also refers to remixes as a particular form of sampling.

(Pelleter and Lepa 2007, 203; italics original)[17]

While the first two categories clearly describe motives and intentions behind sampling, the third category both combines these preceding two and describes a consequence of sampling: sampling in hip hop produces authenticity and historicity. In a similar way, Miyakawa (2005, 120–21) conceptualizes "sampling as historical dialectic" and Jennifer Lena describes the practice of "symbolic distinction": "the practice of linking a sense of history and historical accomplishments to rap songs through the use of particular genres, artists, and songs" (Lena 2004, 305). Lena compares "symbolic distinction" with "pragmatic distinctions": "samples that are chosen for inclusion because there are pragmatic reasons for sampling" (304).

A further distinction between two forms of sampling has been proposed by Russell Potter. More than proper motives and intentions, Potter describes two kinds of attitudes behind sampling. Borrowing from literary theorist Henry Gates Jr.'s conceptualized verbal strategy of "signifying," he identifies a "motivated" and an "unmotivated" form of sampling. The former uses sampling material in a "parodic and agonistic" way and the latter in an "empathetic and reverential" way (Potter 1995, 28). Regarding intention, Potter notes that the "unmotivated" mode does not mean "the absence of a profound intention but the absence of a negative critique" (162–63, n7).[18] The analyses provided in this book's case studies will show that Potter's distinction is insufficient when applied to the field of this study. While the tracks by Lara Sarkissian and Vika Kirchenbauer could adequately be characterized as "motivated" forms of sampling, the other three case studies (Ian McDonnell, James Whipple, and Mauro Guz Bejar) do not fit into any of Potter's categories. Further terminological nuances are needed.

What to do with this mishmash of thoughts and attempts at classification? As we can see from this section, a mix of intentions, motives, and attitudes behind sampling, as well as consequences of sampling, have been identified in the academic literature. To make things more confusing, they combine perspectives of production and reception. Nevertheless, for my purposes it is helpful to summarize these attempts.

What to do with this mishmash of thoughts and attempts at classification?

17   Own translation. Original quote: "*Simulation/Komposition*: 'Sampling' als musikalisches Werkzeug, welches der Aneignung und Kontrolle jedweder Art von Geräuschen dient und damit zur musikalischen Werkproduktion ermächtigt. *Zitat/Referenz*: 'Sampling' als eine intertextuelle Verweisungspraxis, welche zur Aneignung von Bedeutungen und Kontexten dient. *Historizität/Materialität*: 'Sampling' als eine transparente Technik der Werkproduktion, welche die eigene Materialbezogenheit und Geschichtlichkeit offen legt und selbstreflexiv zum Thema macht."
18   Potter's categorization recalls Dyer's distinction between "predetermined" and "evaluatively open" modes, as discussed at the beginning of this chapter.

1. utilitarian and pragmatic

- broaden an artist's palette of compositional tools (Demers; Pelleter and Lepa)
- utilitarian sampling: using sonic combinations, impossible to recreate live (Demers)
- motivated by economics (Goodwin)
- simulation of instruments (Großmann; Pelleter and Lepa)
- control of sounds (Pelleter and Lepa)
- samples chosen due to pragmatic reasons for sampling (Lena)

2. intertextual and meaning-related

- intertextual commentary between one work and another (Demers)
- quotation and reference as intertextual practices (Pelleter and Lepa)
- following the tradition of DJ culture (Großmann)
- remixes and edits as a refusal to settle for the pleasures of pop formula offered in the original (Goodwin)
- producing authenticity and historicity (Pelleter and Lepa)
- sampling as historical dialectic (Miyakawa)
- symbolic distinction: the practice of linking a sense of history and historical accomplishments to rap songs through the use of particular genres, artists, and songs (Lena)
- possible attitudes: motivated or unmotivated (Potter)

3. aesthetic

- developing a self-contained aesthetic (Großmann)
- attaining a new aesthetic (Großmann)
- "quilt-pop": recordings constructed wholesale from samples to create a new aesthetic (Sanjek)
- artists that made an aesthetic out of sampling and a politics out of stealing (Goodwin)

4. accidental

- combination of the digital sampler and laws of unintended consequences to create interesting juxtapositions (Harkins)

Table 3.4: Reasons for sampling discussed in the academic literature

I have assembled the reasons for sampling identified by sampling scholars into four rough categories. The first encompasses reasons that are utilitarian and pragmatic; the second summarizes reasons that relate to intertextual relations and that focus on layers of meaning in the processed material; while the third centers on the aesthetic qualities of the sampled material. Finally, the fourth category describes the accidental sampling of sounds. I have not yet introduced this category as it is ignored by the featured authors. It is only Harkins (2010a, 10) who describes a particular sampling tactic whereby "the digital sampler and laws of unintended consequences [are] combine[d] to create other interesting juxtapositions."

To be precise, sampling by accident means the absence of intention. However, it does not mean the absence of motivations or motives: a producer can consciously allow these accidents to happen, or can consciously create an environment where accidents might happen. Moreover, if we are interested in reasons for sampling in general (why has a particular sound been sampled?) we need to include accidental sampling as a separate approach, as chance could be a significant reason behind a particular sampling process.

I will rely on this summary, with its four rough categories of reasons for sampling, when developing the spider of sampling reasons SSR below.

■

1 Sample source	2 Appearance in the new composition	3 Tactics of sampling
Origin – domestic/foreign (Théberge) – internal/external **Quality** – environmental – musical (Théberge) – media material **Context** – genre, style, geographic, ethnic, … (Mikos)	**Length** – short, isolated fragments (Cox/Ratcliffe), or one shot punctuations – loops, phrases, larger elements (Ratcliffe), or central motifs – discursive (longer phrase) and musematic (riff-based) repetition (Middleton) **Audibility / Recognizability** – from audible to concealed/muted – from textually signaled to not textually signaled (Dyer) – from familiar/ recognizable to obscure (Demers/ Sinnreich) **Description / Denotation** associative or informal language	**Process-Related** – appropriation-based, additive, accidental (Harkins) – chopping by hand, start and discard, self-sampling (Morey/ McIntyre) – "there it is"/random importation (Cutler) **Related to Quantity** – microsampling (Harkins) – many fragmentary samples vs. looping one main hook (McLeod) – homogenous and heterogeneous samples (burrough and Dufour) – scattergun approach to sample-collage (Morey)
4 Relation to the source	5 Relation to the new composition	6 Reasons for sampling
Referentiality – from referential/ indexical (Chapman) to non-referential (Cutler) – sources irrelevant or untraceable (Cutler) – from one-to-one to unique to inconclusive (Fischer) – from proactive to hidden (referring to context, sound, or nothing) (Elflein) **Transtextuality (Lacasse)** – autosonic – intertextual/ (hypertextual) – syntagmatic/ paradigmatic	**Function** – various functions (Ratcliffe) – structural/surface/lyric (Sewell) – formal/intertextual/ creating atmosphere/ historical dialectic (Miyakawa) – partial importations or total importation (Cutler) – providing texture vs. central hook (McLeod and DiCola)	**utilitarian and pragmatic** (Demers, Goodwin, Großmann, Lena, Pelleter and Lepa) **intertextual and mea-ning-related** (Demers, Goodwin, Großmann, Lena, Miyakawa, Pelleter and Lepa, Potter) **aesthetic** (Goodwin, Großmann, Sanjek) **accidental** (Harkins) *cf. Table 3.4*

Table 3.5: Approaches in the analysis of sampling practices

Table 3.5 summarizes the broad range of categorizations, descriptive terminologies, and fragments of typologies and taxonomies that have been attempted by researchers since the beginning of scholarly attention on the production technique of sampling. The table compiles the distinctions and categorizations that have been developed to describe and to analyze sample-based music and

the particular practices behind it.[19]

The most systematic investigation has been undertaken within approaches 1, 2, 4, and 5. In these areas, scholars can rely on useful terminologies and taxonomies. Depending on the field of research and the research questions, these attempts certainly need further consideration, adaption, and expansion.

This book will contribute a few individual sampling tactics to approach number 3; they are exemplary rather than systematic. From approach 1, I will borrow the introduced terminology without developing it further. Finally, as the discussion on Felicia Miyakawa's sampling functions has shown, an investigation into reasons for sampling always touches on the question of the functions of sampling (approach number 5), as a particular function can be a reason for sampling, or, conversely, a reason for sampling can become a function. However, a more general, systematic examination of the functions of sampling is still an open task, and would require additional quantitative methods.

Based on the discussed terminology, I will now develop two tools that facilitate the analysis and interpretation of sampling strategies. The first tool, the <u>fader of visibility FOV</u>, combines the parameters of audibility, recognizability, and referentiality from approaches 2 and 4. It allows us to analyze how a particular sampling strategy treats a sample in terms of its visibility. This is one key instrument enabling a thorough description of sampling strategies.

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The second key instrument is the <u>spider of sampling reasons SSR</u>, which focuses on the reasons behind sampling. The discussion of approach 6 above has shown that this is one of the greater gaps in research on sampling. When we want to analyze reasons behind sampling strategies, the broadly reviewed categories introduced by Cutler, Goodwin, Großmann, Pelleter and Lepa, and Sanjek are, firstly, too general and fragmentary and, secondly, focused on other genres of popular music.[20]

Both tools will be developed with the aim of providing flexible models that allow for continuous categorization instead of dichotomous classification. Therewith, I favor this approach due to the tendency of classification systems to neglect liminal spaces between categories and to oversimplify complexity. Moreover, the FOV and the SSR are offered as a suggestion for further studies on sample-based music in various musical fields. They will be applied and tested in the case studies in Chapters 6–10.

19   Where I have not noted an author in brackets, the terms were developed by me, or else are simultaneously used by various authors and thus cannot be attributed to particular authors.
20   Pelleter and Lepa, Potter, Sanjek, and Smitherman focus on hip hop, Cutler on John Oswald's plunderphonics, and Großmann on sound art and hip hop, while Goodwin remains on a general level. Furthermore, Goodwin's thoughts date from the early 1990s and are thus partially outdated (see n15).