

## BEYOND MAJOR AND MINOR? THE TONALITY OF POPULAR MUSIC AFTER 1960

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### Abstract

The article discusses harmony in popular music, considering several approaches within music theory and popular musicology. While in some genres of popular music after 1960 major-minor functional harmony, i.e., cadences including the progression from dominant chords to tonic chords, is still occurring, there are new approaches towards harmony including modal or cyclical chord progressions, presumably resulting from African American influences. Even within a modal framework, however, both chords and scales with major or minor thirds often seem to keep their connotations of brightness (major) and darkness (minor), respectively. Finally, two corpus studies are outlined which support and specify these findings on a large data set.