"AROUND HIP HOP":

RETHINKING AND RECONSTRUCTING URBAN YOUTH IDENTITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

- A CASE STUDY OF FINGO VILLAGE, MAKHANDA

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED
BY
LUNIKO FUTSHANE

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
RHODES UNIVERSITY
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of a

MASTERS IN SOCIAL SCIENCE

SUPERVISOR: PROF. M. DREWETT
2022

ABSTRACT

The main objective of this thesis is to investigate how conscious hip hop culture is used to reconstruct and influence urban youth identities in South Africa, in the case of Fingo Village, Makhanda. In addition, it aims to understand how the South African conscious hip hop scene, appropriated from the West, can be used to shape the identities of the urban youth, instead of the materialistic commercial/mainstream gangsta rap that is currently dominating popular culture and media today. Kellner's (1995: 10) multicultural critical approach is appropriate for this thesis, as it "provides a critical multiculturalist politics and media pedagogy that aims to make people sensitive to the relations of power and domination which are encoded in cultural texts, such as those of television and film, or new technologies and media such as Internet, and social networking". Moreover, in the words of Cvetkovich and Kellner (cited in Dolby, 2010:11), this dissertation "investigates the increasing influence of global popular culture and its possibility to equip the urban youth with new sources of identification", as well as opportunities for social change.

In Makhanda, rappers, community activists, B-Boy crews, graffiti artists, spoken-word poets, photographers, and journalists all assembled in Fingo Village for the social event *Around Hip Hop*, at the multipurpose Fingo square, between 2011 and 2019. Today, *Around Hip Hop* is an arts based organization that produces hip hop mixtapes, short documentaries, and educational events aimed at creating a cross-cultural exchange and increasing awareness of South African politics. Around Hip Hop has hosted various events, dialogues, and performances where hip hop is used as a cultural expression, which continuously creates spaces for the urban youth to rethink and reconstruct their identities; not only as artists, but as audience members as well. Events, such as *The Return of the Cypher*, *Intyatyamo Elityeni*, and *Business beyond Fingo Festival* all form part of Around Hip Hop. The Return of the Cypher is an open music event, where rappers, usually gathered in a circular formation with one or more artists performing in the middle, showcase their skills. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight local hip hop artists in Makhanda, in order to investigate how conscious hip hop is used to rethink and reconstruct urban youth identities.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank all of my research participants for being part of this dissertation, especially during the COVID-19 Pandemic. I appreciate the time, effort and input each and every one of them has contributed during the interviews.

Secondly, I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Michael Drewett, for his continued support, guidance and patience throughout the course of this research paper. In addition, I would like to give thanks to Juanita Fuller and Professor Lucien van der Walt, for administration and other support related services.

Finally, I would like to thank my mother, Nomgcobo Perseverance Futshane, for caring and providing me with this great opportunity. Without her, this dissertation would not be possible.I also dedicate this thesis to all of my friends and family who have supported me throughout the course of this year.

CONTENTS PAGE

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 SOUNDS OF THE UNDERGROUND

"Deviation from the norm,

Is similar navigation in the storm,

This mainstream slave ship is sailing and, before long you will mourn when your individuality is gone"

(*Godessa – Social Ills, 2002)*

In spite of the commercialized mainstream hip hop music that South Africa has produced, a number of socially conscious hip hop artists are unwilling to compromise their art and political views. From underground hip hop pioneers Prophets of Da City, Emile XY, Black Noise, and Brasse van die Kaap, to all female rap group, Godessa, and contemporary artists such as Bongo Muffin, Dope Jude Saint, ProVerb, Tumi, Hip Hop Pantsula, Cashless Society, Skwatta Kamp, and Driemanskap – just to mention a few – 'conscious' South African hip hop music has provided critical insights into the politics of Apartheid, the inheritance of violence, gender and identity politics, and the struggles and the survival of the urban youth in this post-Apartheid South Africa era. According to Monaheng (2015: 1), "when speaking about hip hop in South Africa, it is important to consider the back-story of suffering and overcoming adversity, as it was against the dominant forces of Apartheid that hip hop gained its foothold in South Africa". In addition, Pietilä (2017: 25) states that hip hop in South Africa "was politically conscious and openly critical of the Apartheid system". Therefore, from its point of origin, South African hip hop was used as a vehicle of expression, a tool of resistance against dominant ideologies, and as a means of identity construction by which the audience used its content to shape their everyday lives, and provided them with ideas about their ethnicity and nationality, sexuality, age and power relations.

Hip hop emerged as a performance art in New York City, especially the Bronx, around the 1970s. At its foundation, it was largely dominated by an African American and Latino population who participated in breakdancing and graffiti. DJs used to loop the breakbeats of funk and disco songs, and MCs rapped over the music, in order to introduce the DJs or to "encourage everyone to dance and have a good time" (Errey, 2021: 1). As this culture grew, hip hop became an artistic cultural form of expression, which was later desired to be used as a vehicle to liberate the minds and identities of Black and other marginalized racial groups from economic, socio-political struggles and power relations they faced in their communities. Terms related to afro-ethnicity, blackness, police brutality, oppression and other social issues appeared

frequently in the lyrical content of MCs and rappers, as hip hop artists started to address and comment on the problems in their communities (Alridge & Steward, 2005: 196).

In the 1980s, the subculture called conscious hip hop gradually became aligned with the Black Consciousness movement, which was used as political commentary to reinvestigate and speak out about the historic practices of downgrading, disregarding and oppressing African American and Caribbean ethnicities, and other marginalized subordinate American identities and communities. According to Alridge & Steward (2005: 196), "political commentary is understood to consist of explicit or implicit descriptions or assessments of the social, economic, and political conditions of people of African descent, as well as the forces creating these conditions". At this time, hip hop continued to question dominant ideologies presented by those who have power. The genre developed to became more about rap skills and better produced instrumentals, new and complex dance moves, and importantly new ways of developing the art and culture, which created diverse styles within the genre. However, later that decade, the emergence of 'gangsta' rap created some artists who spoke about the social ills and crime stories in their communities as a means of political commentary, mostly against police brutality, while others glorified the lifestyle of gangsters. During this golden age of hip hop, the fundamental ideas of hip hop were still playing an important part in people's lives, which helped shape their urban youth identities.

In the 1990s, even though the culture originated as a desired vehicle of social change within urban black communities and for the reconstruction of urban youth identities, hip hop became ironically and inevitably subsumed into mainstream media culture. According to Kellner (1995: 1), "the form of mainstream culture attempts to attract private profit produced by giant corporations interested in the accumulation of capital". Therefore, mainstream hip hop became more absorbed with dominant ideologies that contained value systems based on "wealth and power, which were clearly defined by the capitalist mode of production that urban black youth of America in the 70s saw as the enemy" (Loots, 2003: 68). Mainstream hip hop became the strain of rap that primarily focused on monetary attainment, as well as sexist and misogynistic ideologies. Due to the effects of globalisation, hip hop was able to spread to communities around the world, carrying with it its capitalist ideas of power and misrepresentations of gender relations. However, there are hip hop cultures around the world who still believe in the authenticity or the "keeping it real" of conscious hip hop (Watkins, 2012: 65). For example, artists in African countries, such as Senegal, Tanzania, Kenya, and South Africa, still use the traditional ideas of conscious hip hop to speak out about their experiences of the

"commodification of people and ideas, disconnections, dictatorship, marginalisation, and urban youth identity construction" (Edelman and Haugerud, cited in Ntarangwi, 2009: 2).

Hip hop in South Africa emerged in the late 1980s. Watkins (2012: 65) states that the South African hip hop scene has come a long way in dealing with issues related to social realities, nationality and race, as well as its increased participation by women and urban youth across racial differences within the movement. According to Künzler (2011: 1), "rap music developed in the Cape Town area as a form of resistance to Apartheid". Recent literature on hip hop in South Africa is still focused heavily on hip hop rappers from Cape Town, although other studies have shown that the urban youth around the country use hip hop as a means to achieve their aspirations and dreams, as well as a sense of self in the post-apartheid world (Watkins, 2012; Schoon, 2018). Moreover, the South African hip hop culture inevitably spread to major cities like Johannesburg/Tshwane, Kimberly, Durban, as well as other places around the Eastern Cape, such as Gqeberha, East London/Mdanstane and Makhanda. According to Watkins (2012: 58), although seriously neglected, conscious hip hop has strong grassroots level forces in Fingo Village, Makhanda, as it has been used to renegotiate youth identities.

Fingo Village is the oldest black township settlement in Makhanda. The term 'township' refers to the "underdeveloped, urban, residential areas that during Apartheid were reserved for non-Whites (Africans, Coloureds and Indians) who lived near or worked in areas that were designated 'White only'" (Pernegger and Godehart, 2007: 2). This township was named after the amaFengu people, who are "from a Shaka-dominated Natal that came into the Transkei in the 1820s; and in 1835 Sir Benjamin D'Urban settled 17,000 of them on the colonial side of the Cape frontier" (Blumenfeld and Nutell, 1972: 15). According to Manona (1990, cited in Schoon, 2018: 7) "Grahamstown (which recently change to Makhanda) is somewhat unusual in that, in the 19th century, the amaFengu tribe were given title deeds to homes in Fingo Village by Queen Victoria in return for their assistance in Border Wars, and thus actually owned their homes". Once settled, other Black communities, such as Hlalani, Vukani and Phumlani, started to form in and around the area. However, township communities, such as Fingo Village, around South Africa were threatened by the establishment of the Group Areas Act, implemented in the 1950s during the Apartheid regime. According to Blumenfled and Nutall (1972: 16), the impact and the damaged caused by the Group Areas Act was immensely unquantifiable, and can still be seen today in Fingo Village and other areas of Makhanda. Due to this political history, the township side was situated and is known as the Makhanda East; while the former (Apartheid-era) White areas are referred to Makhanda West. Throughout the course of civil unrest in South

Africa, and in the post-Apartheid era, Fingo Village has been considered the socio-political assembly point for Makhanda's township communities. Situated at the corner of Dr. Jacob Zuma Drive, previously known as Raglan Road, is the multipurpose Fingo Square. This space is a historical protest meeting place and it is often considered the unofficial 'centre' of the whole Makhanda community. It is considered a place of struggle, a point of resistance against dominant hegemonic forces, and a space "where people can learn to discuss and love their community" (Madinda interview, 2021).

Today, Fingo Village is considered one of the creative hotspots in Makhanda, as it hosts the Fingo Festival and, most importantly *Around Hip Hop*. The Fingo Festival is "devoted to art and music, using them as a platform to promote social cohesion, social development and social transformation within the Fingo township and Makhanda" (Louw, 2014: 1). The idea of creating a festival in Fingo Village came from the founder of *Around Hip Hop*, Xolile Madinda in his attempts to protest against the 2010 FIFA World Cup being hosted in South Africa. However, from its conception in 2011, *Around Hip Hop* is defined as a local based social and political arts movement aimed at promoting conscious hip hop and Black Consciousness, creating short films and documentaries; as well as educational events primarily focusing on producing cross-cultural discussions and conferences. This organization's objective is to create a greater understanding of the political sphere of South Africa, and its history, by increasing the consciousness of the youth about their urban surroundings. In addition, it aims to connect diverse communities and encourages socio-political conversation through the hip hop and the arts movements.

1.2. THE CENTRAL CONCERN AIM OF THIS THESIS: RECONSTRUCTING URBAN YOUTH IDENTITIES WITH CONSCIOUS RAP

The main objective of this thesis is to investigate how conscious hip hop is used to rethink and reconstruct urban youth identities. It also focuses on how this global phenomenon has been used as a means of social change and community development in South Africa, by paying close attention to Fingo Village, Makhanda. Instead of examining the effects of commercial and mainstream rap that currently dominates popular media culture, this thesis investigates how conscious hip hop has influenced the identities of urban youth in post-Apartheid South Africa, making use of Kellner's (1995) Multicultural Critical Approach. The urban youth experiences hip hop, via various platforms: shopping malls, watching movies, and participating in other forms of social media culture. Therefore, this dissertation focuses primarily on how conscious hip hop music has influenced urban youth identities and to what degree conscious hip hop draws

on the socio-political aspects of society. In order to achieve this, it is important to shed some light on how this social, political and economic media culture of hip hop emerged and has transformed individuals around the world.

1.3. STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

In Chapter Two, Kellner's (1995) Multicultural Critical Approach is used as the theoretical framework in which one investigates the effects of conscious hip hop in Makhanda. This section includes a historical overview of previous social theories aimed at studying media culture, as it explores cultural studies proposed by the Frankfurt and British Schools. Chapter Three focuses on previous research and academic work conducted on hip hop in Africa, as it follows the genre's global trend from its point of origin to the local communities and diasporas. Chapter Four presents the research design and the qualitative methods and techniques used in this thesis. The data analysis, in Chapter Five, investigates the responses collected from the participants and consists of the findings from semi-structured interviews. Finally, Chapter Six is the conclusion and the overview of this research.

CHAPTER TWO: RETHINKING OF URBAN YOUTH IDENTITY WITHIN THE THEORETICAL CONTEXT OF A MULTICULTURAL CRITICAL APPROACH

Before I realized hip hop was all of us, I used to think hip hop was in the States, and the rest of us are followers
I was quite alarmed to discover how wrong I was, and quite relieved to discover that it belongs to all of us…
Without us there's no hip hop, hip hop lives in us"
(*Proverb - I am Hip Hop, 2006)*

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Early social theorists have come up with various ways to study media culture, and cultural studies. From the 1920s, theories of studying media have been developed, as well as amended, which allowed the space for new strategies to be created. This chapter primarily focuses on the development of theories on the wide-ranging topic of culture; more precisely media culture and cultural studies. To begin, it is important to briefly investigate the idea of cultural studies, in order to form a basis of understanding. This will be followed by a general exploration and critique of early schools of thought, namely Frankfurt School and the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. More importantly, this chapter explains why it is necessary to apply the theoretical framework of Multicultural Critical Theory to examine the rethinking and reconstructing of urban youth identities.

2.2. DEFINING CULTURAL STUDIES

By applying cultural studies to analyse media culture and identity construction in society, it is possible to examine and focus on "changes in culture, on shared understandings and social change, on whether the development of mass media has had any profound implications in the manner we create, share, learn and apply culture; and on how we create new perspectives to argue that media might have the power to intrude into and alter how we make sense of ourselves and our social world" (Rai and Panna, 2008: 1-2). It helps us to focus on how media culture constructs and influences peoples' identities, experiences, personal life, relationships and power in society. Cultural studies deal with artistic activities such as music, literature, painting, sculpture and film, and incorporate terms such as racism, globalization and self-reflection, which are associated with many forms of culture, including youth culture, popular culture, and subculture (Baker and Jane, 2016: 6). It also examines power relations in society, the power forced upon the powerless, as well as gender ideologies and cultural expression, as they are all informed by media. Many theorists argue that concepts like meanings/ideology and power/hegemony are closely related (Baker and Jane, 2016: 6). For example, Gramsci's concept

of hegemony can be explained as the influence, power, or dominance of one social group over another. In addition, Cox (1994: 366) states that "hegemony is a form in which dominance is obscured by achieving an appearance of acquiescence to this whole as if it were the natural order of things". Hall (1973: 59) argues that products of media culture carry certain codes that "operate within hegemony and serve to reproduce dominant definitions". Moreover, cultural studies also examine these forms of power that are "diverse and include gender, race, class, colonialism", and "seeks to explore the connections between these forms of power and to develop ways of thinking about culture and power that can be utilized by agents in the pursuit of [social] change" (Baker and Jane, 2016: 7). Therefore, Kellner (1995: 31) argues that cultural studies are also used to "analyse hegemonic, or ruling social and cultural forms of domination, and seek counterhegemonic forces of resistance and struggle". Earlier theories have used cultural studies to explore media and cultural texts, and believed that media culture is a weapon used by the dominant class and/or group. It is important to discuss these theories, as they give us the tools to analyse culture and society.

2.3. FRANKFURT SCHOOL

Contemporary theorists argue that without critical understandings provided by the Frankfurt School, it would be very challenging to analyse the study of media culture (Fraunhofer, 2009: 56). According to Strinati (cited in Ibe, 2019: 456), "the work of the Frankfurt School is argued to set the terms of debate and analysis for the subsequent study of popular culture". It primarily focused on the industrialisation of culture, capitalism, mass-mediated media culture and its effects. Founded at the University of Frankfurt am Main, the Institute for Social Research, was established post WW1. Jay (1973: 5) states that "the Frankfurt school became a major force of the revitalisation of Western European Marxism in post war years". It was concerned with rethinking Marx, and questioning to what extend his previous work is still relevant "as a means of understanding historical developments and as a vehicle for the achievement of human liberation" (Drake, 2009: xii). By doing so, the school developed "an aesthetic and political distaste for bourgeois society" (Jay, 1973: 9).

Thereafter, the school became "the engine room of Critical Theory: a brand of philosophy that seeks to drive social change through a critique of society and culture by meshing neo-Marxist philosophy with Freudian psychoanalysis [and] emerged to institutionalize critical methods of academic interests on popular culture in the social sciences and humanities" (Ibe, 2019: 456-7). According to Steele (2003: 225), in its investigation of the culture industries and mass communication during WWI and WW2 era, the Frankfurt school focused on the political context

produced in media culture and argued that the working-class' "integration into capitalist consumer society" was by a "means of mass manipulation", as the "mass consumer society depended on the manipulation of taste by the culture industry". Eventually when the Frankfurt school has gained its momentum, "western capitalism, with Germany as one of its leading representatives, had entered a qualitatively new stage, dominated by growing monopolies and increasing governmental intervention in the economy" (Jay, 1973: 6). Media content, produced and controlled by government and these culture industries, was set to enforce hegemonic ideologies that reproduced capitalist concepts of commodification, standardisation, and dominance, which overwhelmingly influenced the thoughts and actions of its audience (Kellner, 1995: 40; Ibe, 2019: 468). Therefore, the Frankfurt School was extremely critical of culture industries, as they analysed the products of culture industries, (i.e. highbrow and lowbrow), arguing that it was a way of creating legitimacy of existing capitalist society – of 'this is how things should be' – and introducing its members to mass media culture and society (Ibe, 2019; Rai and Panna, 2008; Kellner, 1995: 28). Highbrow culture refers to cultural texts such as literature, art, opera and classical music and lowbrow culture contains popular music, cartoons, and soap operas. Therefore, the Frankfurt school critiqued the view that highbrow culture as superior, as it shaped 'better' individuals, in comparison to low end culture, which was seen as inferior, therefore creating power inequalities within society.

Although the Frankfurt school, or Critical Theory, has pertinent grounds of critiquing dominant ideologies, there are a number of limitations that had caused an eruption of new theories to be developed. According to Kellner (1995: 41), "the Frankfurt school was excellent at tracing the lines of dominance within media culture, but was less adept at ferreting out moments of resistance and oppression". Hall (1973: 52) states the traditional model, presented by the Frankfurt school, is "criticised for its linearity – sender/message/receiver – for its concentration of the level of message exchange, and for its absence of a structured conception of the different moments as a complex structure of relations". Other theorists consider the Frankfurt approach to be too pessimistic and negative, because it offers limited focus on the audiences' reception, the contradictions and other effects of media culture (Baker and Jane, 2016: 7). In addition, Kellner (1995: 29) states that this approach is one-sided, as it fails to consider "culture as a spectrum", and should be replaced with a model that "applies similar critical methods to all cultural artefacts ranging from opera to popular music, from modernist literature to soap operas", not only consider high culture as "authentic". This approach was impeccable in clarifying the lines of domination in 'highbrow' cultural texts, but however did not properly address the issues of opposition and resistance within the subordinate groups. Furthermore, Kellner (1995: 33)

suggest that "one should reject the rigid high/low culture split that vitiated the Frankfurt School, which dismisses all forms of popular or mass culture as mere ideology". Holistically, this movement began to run its last leg as the structure and philosophy started to change. By the 1940s, the Frankfurt School shifted its "emphasis away from class struggles to conflict between man and nature, and the possibility of a historical subject capable of ushering in a revolutionary age disappeared" (Jay, 1973: 279). These limitations mentioned above called for new strategies and approaches, to order to create a more concise analysis and critique to media culture. By shifting their analysis to an audience-orientated study, a new school of thought examined audiences' ability to encode and decode cultural text against dominant ideologies. Unlike the Frankfurt school, the CCCS focused on youth cultures, as well as the possibly of giving way to new forms of opposition and social change.

2.4. BIRMINGHAM SCHOOL

The Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) "suggests that the audiences are not passive, cultural dopes but are active producers of meanings from within their own cultural context" (Baker and Jane, 2016: 428). One of the main themes at play is Gramsci's concept of hegemony, which deals with the dominant ideologies in society, and resistance. The school argued that ideologies created by media culture do not exist within cultural texts alone, but are also generated by an audience that interacts with them. Kellner (1995: 32) states that CCCS seeks to explain how media culture came to establish distinct forms of identity and social group involvement, as well as the way in which they created oppositional standpoints within various youth subcultures. It gives the audience agency to choose which cultural text they absorb or discard (Hall, 1973, 1980; Baker and Jane, 2016). They also questioned the social hierarchical structures which produced contemporary culture and explored the ways in which media culture affects society. In addition, this approach recognised that, against dominance, "an active audience often produces its own meanings and uses for the products of the culture industries" (Kellner, 1995: 30).

Hall (1980) wrote about the audiences' ability to 'encode/decode' cultural texts. According to Davis (2004: 60), Hall was interested in the relationship between the creators of the media culture and the audience. Instead of audiences' uncontestably absorbing and accepting the ideologies and representations of hegemony, the audiences are considered to be producers of the own meanings and not just products of media cultural texts (Baker and Jane, 2016: 7). Hall (1980: 51) introduced a circular model by which the process of message exchange is a structure

that is “produced and sustained through the articulation of linked but distinctive moments – production, circulation, distribution/consumption, reproduction”. Within this ‘complex structure of dominance’, “meanings and messages in the form of sign-vehicles of a specific kind” pass through these distinctive moments “from source to receiver through the operation of codes” and are “at another level integrated into the social relations of the communicative process as a whole” (Hall, 1980: 51-52). In addition, Hall (1980: 53) argues that the messages, encoded within the production of cultural texts, are derived by “topics, treatments, agendas, events, personnel and images of the audiences within the wider socio-cultural and political structure”. Therefore, not only are audiences’ recipients of the meanings in productions of media texts, but they can reproduce their own meanings from media text, and can redistribute these meanings in their social groups. According to Davis (2004: 63), Hall claims that media culture, in particular television, should be understood as a mode of production, as it ‘encodes’ ideological discourses within its text. These ideologies are embedded into media texts and can be interpreted in many ways. Moreover, audiences share cultural texts with the producers/encoders and can also ‘decode’ the messages embedded within these cultural texts, depending on the audiences’ societal positions and cultural backgrounds (i.e. class, gender, ethnicity, etc.) (Baker and Jane, 2016: 430). For these encoded messages to take full effect, he argues, they first must be meaningfully decoded, in order to “influence, entertain, instruct, or persuade, with very complex perpetual, cognitive, emotional ideological or behavioural consequences” (Hall, 1980: 53). Therefore, these codes need to be translated or decode much like a language, before they can be recognized within social practices.

Hall (1980: 59) also speaks about how media culture influences power relations in society, by proposing three hypothetical positions in which the process of decoding may occur. The first stage is what he calls the *dominant hegemonic position*, which is when the audience engages with the direct message and “decodes the message in terms of the reference code in which it has been encoded”, meaning that the audience “is operating in the dominant code” (Hall, 1980: 59). Furthermore, he argues that within the position, hegemonic ideologies are created by the political and military elites, as well as the professionals who generate the products of media. Hall (1980: 60) states that “the professionals are linked with the defining elites not only by the institutional position of broadcasting itself as an ideological apparatus, but also by the structure of access, to serve to reproduce hegemonic definitions”, which occur at an unconscious level. The second stage is referred to as the *negotiated position*. This phase of decoding combines “a mixture of adaptive and oppositional elements: its acknowledges the legitimacy of the hegemonic definitions to make the grand significations, while at a more restricted level, it makes

its own ground rules" (Hall, 1980: 60). It is a position in which certain misunderstandings and contradictions occur between the encoded message and the decoded ones. Even though it acknowledges the hegemonic definitions, it reserves the right to make negotiated definitions. Thirdly, the *oppositional position* refers to the possibility that the audience has "to understand both literal and connotative inflection given by a discourse but to decode the message in a globally contrary way" (Hall, 1980: 61). If one is operating in this position, it is proposed that one adopts alternative or new decoded ideologies that go against, or oppose, the dominant hegemonic definitions.

This contribution by Hall (1980) is very significant and important to cultural studies. In fact, the CCCS gives a lot of insight to the study of cultural studies, but it also has its limitations (Kellner, 1995: 37). Kellner (cited in Steele, 2003: 225) proposes that the CCCS should "return to its older interest in the political economy of culture with its stress on production and consumption", in order to create a connection with some the arguments addressed by the Frankfurt school, as they share a lot in common. Unlike the Frankfurt school, which looks at historical developments within society, the CCCS is accused of being 'ahistorical', as it primarily only focuses on "contemporary readings of popular and mass media texts" (Baker and Jane, 2016: 8). Kellner (1995: 37) further emphasizes this argument by stating that "the focus of text/audience leaves out many mediations that should be of cultural studies, including analyses of how texts are produced within the political economic and system of production of culture, and fails to indicate how audiences are produced through their social relations and how to some extent itself helps produce audiences and their reception of texts".

2.5. CRITICAL MULTICULTURAL THEORY

Kellner (1995) developed a method of analysing contemporary film, television, identity politics and music; by combining the cultural studies traditions of the Frankfurt and the British school. Although earlier theories were vital in the development of cultural studies, Kellner (1995: 94) argues that the way forward should be towards more multicultural critical approaches. He states that instead of looking at these two theories as incompatible, the conjunction of the Critical Theory and the CCCS is where we can examine cultural studies in a holistic and multicultural way, which avoids the limitations from both schools, and ultimately develops an approach that "requires one to articulate the social constitution of the concepts of gender, class, race, ethnicity and sexuality, and the ways that representations of these phenomena produce identities in contemporary societies" (Kellner, 1995: 94). Furthermore, in developing his theory, he states

that such an approach requires one to examine “culture and society in terms of relations of power, domination and resistance, as well as articulating the various forms of oppression in a given society via multicultural perspectives” (Kellner, 1995: 94). Therefore, multiculturalism “focuses on celebrating diaspora and differences in society” (Nguyen and Benet-Martínez, 2010: 2). According to Baker and Jane (2016: 612), multiculturalism “influences how people see themselves and others, and how they organize the world around them” in order to create a “greater understanding of individuals and varying identities, knowledge and skills in issues of race, social class, gender, ability, sexual orientation and other social and cultural change”. Banks and Banks (cited in Yonezawa 2009: 22) defines the term multiculturalism as “one’s rights to be recognized as a person; in other words, multiculturalism has roots in the civil rights movement” and incorporates “the history and cultures of ethnic minority groups”. It is the social activities that primarily focus on cultural diversity and inclusion, but more importantly, talks about power relations and struggles in society. Multiculturalism aims to create social change and justice by not only understanding, accepting, and appreciating cultural differences, but also by ultimately transforming the existing social order to give underrepresented cultures and groups more voice and influence (Yonezawa, 2009).

In turn, Kellner (1995: 95) states that the term multiculturalism acts as a holistic standpoint for every position that attempts to reject stereotypes, distortions, and stigmatizing practices of dominant cultures. In doing so, it recognizes and validates the diverse cultural components of identity and the positive contributions made by diverse races, classes, and sexualities to the culture and society as a whole, empowering and elevating many new voices. In addition, this approach attempts to create an openness to examining cultural studies in order to analysis the expressions of domination and how these dominant ideological representations are hidden or legitimised in society. It is important to use Kellner’s (1995: 96) critical multicultural approach, in relation to this thesis, because it “takes seriously the conjunction of class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual preference, and other determinants of identity as important constituents of culture which should be carefully scrutinized and analysed in order to detect sexism, racism, classism, homophobia, and other tendencies that promote domination and oppression”. In order words, this approach focuses on the criticism the existing systems of hegemonic structures, attacks the dominant forces aimed at normalising misrepresentations of subordinate groups, attends to the forces of resistance for radical social change, as it aligns itself with the struggles of oppressed groups, and articulates the goals of emancipation and liberation in order to create and for the a freer and just society.

2.6. CONCLUDING SECTION

The reason why the Frankfurt school is not applicable to this study is because it does not consider the aspects of multiculturalism within the hip hop culture. It neglects the global cultural influences of audiences regardless of their class, sex, gender, and age. Even though their arguments about dominance and the manipulative powers of capitalism are relevant in media culture, they fail to consider the oppositional characteristics or social agency that audiences have to either accept or go against the dominant hegemonic ideologies set to oppress them. Although the Birmingham School focused on the oppression and resistance from subordinate groups and the reproduction of 'lowbrow' subcultures, it failed to point the historical descriptions that are necessary to examine culture and had little focus on highbrow (Kellner, 1995: 42). However, by combining Critical Theory and the CCCS approach, Kellner (1995) devised a method that is intrinsically multicultural, which attempts to look at the multiple variable of differences, cultural diversity and otherness; therefore, examining at all of the efforts to oppose stereotyping and misrepresentations in order to go against these ways of trying to legitimize or mask the ideological depictions created by the dominant culture. This is why it is important to use an approach that investigates media culture, i.e. hip hop, on the backdrop of all the multicultural differences such as ethnicity, nationality, identity politics, sex and gender, age, class and ideas "represented in the form of media texts" (Kellner, 1995: 93).

Today, it is also important to include how the vital role that social media has affected the hip hop culture on the ground. Online music streaming platforms, such Spotify, YouTube, SoundCloud and ReverbNation, have made it easier for some local artists to engage their audiences without the extensive work of going record labels. More vitally though, social media has changed 'the game' substantially in how artists engage with hip hop discourse, including discussions of gender politics and queer hip hop – with artists also taking the role of social advocates and activists for other marginalised groups. Moreover, not only has it changed how artists interact with the hip hop culture, audiences can also engage and interact with hip hop on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok, WhatsApp and Snapchat. As artists used these platforms to reach their audiences, audiences can also, share, retweet, repost and comment on these platforms, therefore also engage within the global hip hop dialogue. With social media being intrinsically embedded into people's lives, one can agree that these platforms affect how the urban youth constructs their everyday existence, as they reach through include multicultural factors such as sexuality, age, and ethnical background, which influence identities.

Therefore, using an appropriate critical social theory that investigates media culture (and social media) by creating a standpoint that deals with normative perspectives is vital. Moreover, it is relevant to review the rethinking and reconstruction of urban youth identities, through the scope of conscious hip hop, and the possibility of social change within specific multicultural communities.

CHAPTER THREE: FROM THE BRONX TO FINGO VILLAGE

"Rap music was born in Africa, grown in America and it went around the world to come back to Africa like boomerang"

- *(Faada Freddy, Senegalese Rap Group Daara J; cited in Tang, 2012: 79)*

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Conscious hip hop is a platform of artistic expression for individuals around the world, and it is used to commentate on the socio-economic and political unrest experienced in contemporary society. Levy (2001: 134, cited in Mateveke, 2013: 1) defines hip hop as "a global subculture that has entered people's lives and [has] become a universal practice among the youth the world over…a global practice, giving new parameters of meaning to otherwise locally and nationally diverse identities". According to Watkins (2012: 57), "African Americans claim the genre as an authentic expression of their roots and routes, as it reflects their place within the racialized economic and political system of the United States". Although hip hop and rap are often used in a reciprocal manner or as having the same meaning at times, it is important to draw a distinction between the two terms. Hip hop is the overall musical culture, whereas rap is the lyrical manifestation of the culture (Walker, 2011: 2). According to Loots (2003: 66-67), this socio-cultural movement comprised of four different elements:

- "Disc Jockey – DJ'ing which was created by Jamaican – American born Deejay Kool Herc, consisting of manipulation of a record by 'cuttin and scratchin' it to produce new sounds,
- Breakdancing - acrobatic physical movements of the body which includes headspins, backspins and 'pop – locking',
- Rappin', which is the speaking of rhymes to the beat of the music, also known as 'emceeing', originally dominated by men, and
- Graffiti which originated in the 60s as a way of gangs marking their territory with spray paint".

Haupt (2008: 144) further argues that the expression 'knowledge of self', often considered to be the fifth element to hip hop, is important to hip hop artists as it alludes to "this form of self-reflexive consciousness, which has also been associated with the ideas of black consciousness". According to Blanchard (1999: 2), "rap itself began as a commentary on the skills, while a DJ was playing records at a hip hop event, as rap artists introduced DJs and their songs and often recognized the presence of friends in the audience at hip-hop performances". As the genre grew, rap was used to shape social ideologies, as it "emerged from the deinstitutionalization meltdown

where social alienation, prophetic imagination and yearning intersect" (Rose, 1994: 21). The role of hip hop shifted to create a social consciousness that was reinforced by political aspirations. Moreover, it is important to distinguish between various styles of rap in order to avoid a generalized idea of hip hop.

3.2. THE CONSCIOUS AND UNDERGROUND

Conscious hip hop is related to the need to make hip hop more appealing to the lives of the common people, as well as making hip hop more than just music, because the music addresses the issues that affected people (Upshall, 1999, cited in Zondo, 2008: 9). According to Haupt (2008: 144), conscious rap refers to "the belief that you need to engage in a serious amount of critical introspection before you can make a meaningful contribution to your political and social context as a hip hop artist, intellectual and activist". Therefore, conscious artists discuss social issues such as "violence, discrimination, and other societal ailments and it is propelled by the conviction that radical social change comes through knowledge of self and personal discovery" (Adaso, 2015: 1). This global youth subculture is used "as a potentially liberating and empowering force for oppressed minorities and poor people around the world" (Drissel, 2009: 121). Furthermore, it also "challenges the dominant cultural, political, philosophical, and economic consensus and aims to subtly inform the public of true political and social issues which are predominantly obscured by the mainstream media" (Fox, 2014: 1). Conscious hip hop addresses social turmoil in communities and disregards the commercialisation and materialistic components inserted into the genre (Adaso, 2015: 2).

Early examples of socially conscious artists are rappers or groups such as Grandmaster Flash and The Furious 5, Public Enemy, Afrika Bambaataa and the Zulu Nation, as well as other honourable mentions such as A Tribe Called Quest, Black Thought¸ Common, and KRS One. The conscious hip hop artists of the 1980s and 1990s "have been credited for affirming a black subjectivity in their work" (George, 1998; Rose, 1994, cited in Haupt, 2008: 144). There are several early rap examples of how conscious rap has been used to expose the problems and concerns of the African American community in the USA. Rap group Public Enemy use political messages, encoded into their conscious rap style, to discuss the social injustices in order to influence their audience and create black unity (Zondo, 2008: 9). In their song, *Fight the Power*, they encourage their audience to be more conscious about issues in their communities:

"It's a start, a work of art
To revolutionize, make a change, nothin's strange
People, people! We are the same, no—
We're not the same 'cause we don't know the game
what we need is awareness, we can't get
Careless! You say, "What is this?"
You gotta go for what you know
To make everybody see! In order to
Fight the powers that be ("Lemme hear you
say—")"

Dead Prez is a politically and militant aligned rap group who speaks on issues such as socialism and Pan-Africanism, as well as the ills of gangsta rap and mainstream capitalistic hip hop. In their song, *I'm an African*, released in the album *Let's Be Free* (2000), they encourage their audience to rethink and reconstruct their identities, as they expose issues of slavery:

"Camouflage fatigues and daishikis
somewhere in between N.W.A. and P.E.
I'm black like Steve Biko
Raised in the ghetto by the people
fuck the police you know how we do
I'm an African, never was an African-American
Blacker than black I take it back to my origin
same skin hated by the klansmen
Big nose and lips, big hips and butts, dancin,
what

Both of these conscious rap groups largely deal with issues such as "afro-centricity, aversion to crime & violence, culture, the economy, or depictions of the struggles of ordinary people and often seeks to raise awareness of social issues, leaving the listeners to form their own opinions, rather than aggressively advocating for certain ideas and demanding actions" (Adaso, 2015: 3). Socially political rap also inspires messages of hope, with the possibility that the urban youth can use it to shape their social behaviour, and the multiple ways of speaking and learning. Ibrahim (1999: 367) states that "hip hop is a site of identification and investment". Therefore, conscious hip hop creates new ways of negotiating ideas of dominant ideologies and the representation of identities, as it tries to question, reconstruct and rethink these ideologies, as well as creating opportunities for social change in various communities.

However, in later years, hip hop entered the commercialised music scene, as more male artists were willing to get signed to mainstream record labels. Adams and Fuller (2006: 939) state that

“commercially successful hip hop became increasingly saturated with caricatures of black gangstas, thugs, pimps, and ’hos”. In addition, Kellner (1995: 175) points out that “some rap glorifies a gangster lifestyle, drugs, and misogynist attitude”. Soon, gangsta rap, the spin-off genre of mainstream hip hop, was brought to life. The ideologies changed and painted a generally derogatory representation of women and promoted a gangster worldview. Therefore, the shift from conscious to mainstream rap songs and music videos, which the youth culture watches and listens to, established a change in ideologies as the messages embedded in them were aimed to oppress women and misrepresent the female body and carried dominant hegemonic ideas of capitalism.

3.3. THE MAINSTREAM

The commercialization of rap music amplified as capitalism grew in conjunction with the industry. As the genre grew, in its acceptance and attractiveness, the mainstream media culture became its home (Adams & Fuller, 2006: 490 – 491). According to Haupt (2008: 142), although mainstream hip hop is “the most visible and commercially successful form of hip hop”, it has “often been criticized for its misogyny and celebration of consumerism”. According to Forman and Neal (2004: 499), “the criticism that rap has become too commercialized stems from a similar criticism that the industrialization of music means a shift from active musical production to passive pop consumption, the decline of cultural traditions and community”. Therefore, the previous messages of socio-political and cultural expression of struggles in the community were being replaced by misogynistic and sexist lyrics, of Black and Hispanic women, in particular. Gangsta rap artists, in the mainstream media culture, presented blatantly stereotypical views of women, providing the “listeners with a derogatory view of women, and also which promoted, glamorized, supported, humoured, justified and normalized the oppressive ideas by these rappers” (Loots, 2003: 69). According to Drissel (2009: 121), this style of “rap music or hip hop tends to glorify narcissism, hedonism, intolerance, misogyny, and violence”. Loots (2003: 68) notes that “women are often referred to as ‘bitches and whores’ whose value lies in how sexually available they are to men; they are seen as objects that definea man’s wealth and power: the more famous and wealthy, it seems the more women you can get”. For example, the rap group 2Live Crew, were one of many perpetrators of these kinds of ideologies mentioned above. One of their popular songs called *We Want Some Pussy,* contains lyrics such as the following:

“You see, me and my homies like to play this game
we call it Amtrak but some call it the train

We all would line up in a single-file line

And take our turns at waxing girls' behinds

but every time it came to me, I was shit out of luck

Because I'd stick my dick in, and it would get stuck

The girls would say "Stop!" I'd say "I'm not!

That's enough, I quit, cause y'all are bustin' me out!"

So to all of you bitches and all you hoes

Let's have group sex and do the Rambo!"

According to bell hooks (1994: 116, cited in Haupt, 2008: 147), the "sexist, misogynist, patriarchal ways of thinking and behaving that are glorified in gangsta rap are a reflection of the prevailing values in society, values created and sustained by white supremacist capitalist patriarchy". In addition, the sexism and misogyny that exist in mainstream hip hop, largely signifies "extensions of normative patriarchal privilege", and "their reproduction in the music of male hip hop artists speak(s) more powerfully to the extent that these young men are invested in that privilege than it does to any evidence that they are solely responsible for its reproduction" (Forman & Neal, 2004: 247). Furthermore, "the glorification of material wealth and flaunting of financial success became commonly attributed to gangsta rap, and is a commonplace in rap music from destitute areas" (Haery, 2020: 8). Regardless of these negative perceptions and misrepresentations, rap music has been accepted and allowed to flourish, generating wealth for some of the artists and the music industry as a whole. It is this version of hip hop that occurs more frequently in mainstream media culture, as it plays on major radio stations, television programmes, and is promoted on social media file sharing sites, and occupies a dominant space in urban youth nightlife subculture. Hip hop around the world has mirrored the materialistic, commercialised version of American gangsta hip hop, which has influenced a large portion of the urban youth in many multicultural communities.

However, many micro-level communities still hold onto the traditional objectives that originated in the beginning of this cultural movement. As globalisation grew, so did the inevitable spread of hip hop. New technologies helped make rap music "an even more central part of media culture" (Kellner, 1995: 174). Contemporary globalisation had increased dramatically and can be seen as a "process that interacts with the local in complex and dynamic ways" (Ntarangwi, 2009: vii). Therefore, the transnational nature of hip hop spread throughout Africa's popular music scenes. African artists took this Western art form and created their own Africanised hip hop, which combines elements of local, popular musical traditional trends with mostly American and Jamaican music styles of rap and reggae, respectively (Samper, 2004:

37; Künzler, 2008: 12, Ntarangwi, 2009: xii). Samper (2004: 37) states that African rappers created a means of confronting important locally relevant social issues and messages to their peers and audiences.

In countries such as Senegal and Burkina Faso, some artists have used hip hop as a mouthpiece, expressing issues of unjust social relations, colonialisation and imperialism, poverty, and revolting against ill-governmental practices and corruption (Tang, 2012: 84). It has been used as "an analytical tool to respond to questions based on how African youth use hip hop to create spaces through which they enter a public domain that often excludes them in favour of those who wield social, political and economic power" (Ntarangwi, 2009: vii). Therefore, hip hop is also a force that is used by the urban youth to position themselves in an ever-changing and challenging world (Ntarangwi, 2009: vii). It is where hip hop artists rethink and reconstruct the "local cultural mediascapes to raise awareness of the inequitable conditions while attempting to mobilise resistance and practices of redress" (Hammett, 2010: 422).

3.4. A SELECTIVE OVERVIEW OF PREVIOUS WORK ON HIP HOP IN AFRICA

3.4.1. African Hip Hop

According to Perullo and Fenn (2003: 19), "artists and fans around the world filter North American hip hop styles through their own local musical, social, and linguistic environments, making hip hop a highly visible (and audible) example of the intersection of global and local youth cultures". A considerable amount of research on global hip hop cultures has emerged in recent years. Alim and Pennycook (2007:93) believe that numerous "ethnographies thatexplore particular communities such Tanzania, Senegal, and even other parts of the world including Berlin, Tokyo, and Sydney" have started to become more available and accessible. These are written by scholars and academics within these environments to assess how hip hop affects people in a local situation. According to Samper (2004: 37), "rappers have consciously placed themselves between tradition and modernity, and many rappers feel a sense of responsibility to promote the relevant African heritage in young people's definition of self". Therefore, it is important to show how conscious hip hop can help us rethink and reconstruct urban youth identities and how it largely depends on the local context of the community, ethnography and/or country in a multicultural context.

In African hip hop communities, the connection between languages, identity, and hip hop takes place on a more complex set of social implications in multilingual, multi-ethnic and multicultural contexts (Alim and Pennycook, 2007: 93). A mixture of Western and traditionally African elements is used to form something new, which creates new perspectives and shares new experiences. A vernacularization occurs in global/local hip hop structures, where the urban youth use Western values while rooting themselves in local dominant cultural ideologies (Ntarangwi, 2009: 12). This is linked to how urban youth construct and negotiate their identities and how hip hop as a "hybrid cultural form is deeply implicated in the definition and negotiation of youth identity" (Samper, 2004: 37). Most parts of Africa, such as Senegal, Tanzania, Kenya, and South Africa, are largely influenced by global hip hop culture. However, there are various ways that the urban youth use it rethink and reconstruct their identities differs in these local contexts.

The Senegalese capital, Dakar, is home to an urban hip hop youth culture that "questions young people's creativity and commitment to social change" (Niang, 2006:167). It arrived, with initial hostility and resistance, on the shores of Senegal around 1984, in the form of "the break dance craze and recordings of rappers such as *Grandmaster Flash* and *Sugarhill Gang"* (Herson, 2000: 18; Tang, 2012: 83). Some of the first and most popular Senegalese rappers were the "oldest and most internationally renowned *Positive Black Soul*, formed in 1989", *Daara J* rap group, and *MC Solaar* who used Pan-Africanist and philosophical visions to promote a positive image for Africans (Tang, 2012: 83). Regardless of the local claims that hip hop was a threat to traditional values, as people saw it as a representation of North American youth, Senegalese rap burst on to the music scene in the 1990s (Niang, 2010: 2; Niang, 2006: 167). One of the main assumptions as to why Senegalese hip hop music exploded onto the popular music scene was the fact that its rapping was similar to the early musical and spoken traditions of Senegalese culture, practiced by so-called griots.

According to Tang (2012: 79), griots played a significant role in cultures through West Africa, were best known as oral historians, storytellers, and crafters of spoken word. Hip hop soon became a medium for youth expression, as they released views of frustration with many socio-economic and political problems occurring in the country. The music genre *mbalax*, which is a famous Senegalese music genre "played with the sabar, a small instrument used by percussionists from the Wolof ethnic group", was well established at the time but was surpassed by rap when it "exploded due to sudden proliferation of new groups, the establishment of older groups and a heady socio-political climate" (Lo, 2016: 1; Tang, 2013: 83). According to Niang (2010: 1), most artists partook in the Senegalese hip hop movement, which possesses a mixture

of both local and global configurations; appreciate its 'revolutionary' positioning with native principles. Moreover, the Senegalese hip hop movement has been one of the most active and increasingly important civil-society movements that aimed at mobilizing the urban youth to engage with campaigns against AIDS, malaria and illegal migration, and "advocating political change", which led to the election and termination of Abdoulaye Wade's presidency (Tang, 2012: 83). The hip hop movement in this Francophone part of Africa is a primarily masculine domain. Even though the Dakar hip hop movement possesses female conscious rappers such Sista Fa, Alif and Black Sista, for example, it still leans toward male rappers (Niang, 2001: 79-80; Car-Rap-Id, 2005: 1-6; cited in Niang, 2006: 167).

Kenyan hip hop incorporates various sounds and has been an active genre since the beginning of the 21st century, alongside gospel (Kidula, 2012: 173). Gospel rap emerged in Nairobi due to the success and popularity of gospel and reggae music, while rap was publicly displayed through films, videos, radio, and television (Kidula, 2012: 173; Kellner, 1995: 3). Ntarangwi (2009: 20) states that various "East African artists use hip hop to represent Africa and an African identity that contrasts with the European and the Western ones, which were both culturally and politically using vernacular and tradition that embraces the transnationalism and transcultural realities". This multicultural universe is created by means of a more hybrid version of hip hop, is what the urban youth uses to rethink and reconstruct their identities. Calvert (1994: 274; cited in Ferrari, 2007: 108) reinforces this view by stating that rap music and the hip hop movement is seen as a "result of the quest for identity by the urban youth who find themselves in cultural interstitial and producing qualities of their own". An increasing number of the urban youth in Nairobi are partaking in the East African hip hop movement, which is based on rejecting persisting injustices, oppression, marginalization and exploitation (Ferrari, 2007: 109). Kenyan hip hop did not receive any attention in the music scene as some artists tried to mimic American rappers. However, the emergence of the movement began with the rap group *Kalamashaka*, which became the "most important watershed for the appropriation of rap as a Kenyan expression" (Kidula 2012: 174; and Ferrari, 2007: 110). Other artists who embrace the 'vernacularization' of hip hop are *GidiGidi MajiMaji*, *Poxi Presha*, and *Darlin'P.* These artists combine and make use of Sheng and Kiswahili. Today, "there is a new rap show on Kenyan television that features local artists, and a Nairobi-based radio station, Nation FM, which plays more local artists" (Samper, 2004: 39). Samper (2004: 42) also states that rappers in East Africa, especially Kenyan, are "multilingual culture brokers who use all the linguistic resources available to them; as they confer symbolic power and cultural capital on all the languages used by young people in their identity project".

Tanzanian hip hop, also known as *Bongo Flava*, comprises a number of different genres such as rap, rhythm and blues (R&B), *zouk* (based on African drum rhythms with fast-paced heavy synth riffs) and reggae (Perullo, 2012: 187). Bongo Flava has progressed from its American-influenced beginnings into many local disparities. Since the mid-1990s, with the rapid rise of the Bongo Flava into the local music scene, new trends, artists and traditions arose. Much like other countries in Africa, the local interaction with global flows of cultural ideas and practices created dichotomies of global/local, Western/African, traditional/ modern (Perullo, 2012: 189). This produces a youth hybridity, "a process of cultural interactions between the local and the global, the hegemonic and the subaltern, the centre and the periphery" (Nilan & Feixa, 2006: 2). Many Tanzanian rappers, as well as other Africans, have been and still are localizing foreign sounds, and that further emphasises how important a part hip hop plays in shaping the urban youths' experiences. Not only do they use the hybrid 'beats' of Western and local, the urban youth uses *bongo flava* as a fashion aesthetic – dress and clothing styles (Perullo, 2012: 188). Bongo Flava in Dar es Salaam has increased East African youth participation in social, political, and economic exchange of ideas on a local, nation-state and global level. Clark (2012: 23) states that "this participation is seen in the lyrical content emanating from hip hop music all over the continent, providing for rich social commentary in the form of socially conscious hip hop". Artists such as the most popular Mr II (2 Proud) and Prof. Jay educated their audience about the need to eliminate social problems such as drugs, prostitution, and robbery. Other rappers use hip hop as a means to challenge authorities about "political topics and other difficulties in connection to the music industry" (Hanzi, 2016: 1). The lyrics of the songs mainly revolve around a few central topics and are utilized to respond to the conditions in their respective countries (Clark, 2012: 30). The 1980s constituted the development stage for rap and hip hop in Africa, via a cultural exchange between North America, Europe and the Caribbean. The genre was placed in the 'underground', bubbling under the mainstream popular taste of the time. South Africa was no different.

3.4.2. SOUTH AFRICAN HIP HOP

Cape Town

According to Jeffrey Louis Decker (1993; cited in Haupt, 2001: 173), "hip hop nationalists are organic intellects to the degree that their activities are directly linked to the everyday struggles of black folk, and that their music critically engages the popular knowledge of which they are a part". As mentioned above, in relation to this quote, it is evident that African hip hop artists'

activities are reflected in their music, and vice versa. Similarly, in the case of South Africa, underground non-commercial rap music was developed in the Cape Town area as a form of resistance to Apartheid (Künzler, 2011:1). Like other parts of Africa, much of hip hop and rap in South Africa is a hybrid mixture of western instruments and influences combined with localized taste, rhythms and vernacular. Rosenberg (2007: 2) argues that "South Africans have incorporated aspects of American culture into their own identity as a means of rejecting the racial hierarchy, with whichthey were confronted on a daily basis". Watkins (2012: 57) believes that hip hoppers were involved with political campaigns during Apartheid. Moreover, Künzler (2011: 27-30) states that young 'coloured' people easily related to and identified with Afro-American hip hop, "sharing an experience of socio-economic and political marginalisation and oppression", as hip hoppers and rappers used the "counter hegemonic potential of rap music" which was "informed by black consciousness thought and its position in relation to questions of identity and commodification". In the last two decades, the development of hip hop as a musical, cultural and social movement for the urban youth, in South Africa, has changed dramatically. At its point of origin, South African hip hop was developed as a means of entertainment around events of political mass mobilisation, as some activists considered it as a distraction from the political struggle, until itwas transformed into urban youth expressions of resentment toward the Apartheid system (Künzler, 2011: 28). These artists engaged with the socio-political experiences of the city, "seeking to address challenges relating to gender, race, identity, poverty, development, social justice, economic inequality, ethnicity, class and social consciousness" (Hammett, 2012: 421). Therefore, they used hip hop music to question these issues and as a public space for expression, as well as providing materials for audiences to engage with, which helps them rethink and reconstruct their identities.

Prophets of da City (POC)

According to Künzler (2011: 29), the counter-hegemonic ideologies of resistance against Apartheid oppression set the tone for the first hip hop crews, like POC, to "committed to black consciousness ideals such as liberation, justice and equality". With their music, POC "attempts to interrogate assumptions about racial identity", as they used hip hop as "a tool for raising critical consciousness of their audience", which "played a significant role in ensuring that the country's disenfranchised youth found ways of accessing the public space" (Haupt, 2008: 152; 184). Even though the group had been active in the local music scene since 1985, Prophets of da City's release of *"Our World"* (1990) created a new dimension to the South African music industry (Discogs, 2016). According to Haupt (2001, 173), POC potentially faced early

criticism for "being perceived as a coloured group addressing coloured issues for coloured audiences". However, in conjunction with some prominent Kwaito artists, a genre which is highly influential and popular amongst black urban youth, this body of work was considered to one of the first prominent South African rap albums released (Cohen, 2008: 26). This collaboration enabled POC to perform in a "range of languages and different rap styles", so that "a larger national audience could be reached" (Haupt, 2001: 178). Not only did the rap group address issues revolving around the injustices of the political system, they played an important part in community upliftment projects, crime and violence in the major cities, and what it means to be South African. Haupt (2008: 158) states that POC "have long been involved in a number of national education tours, such as voter education titled *Rapping for Democracy* and a drug awareness campaign during the early 1990s". Moreover, the group were involved with a community feeding scheme, Rhyme Unite Feed the Needy Organisation (RUFTO), and ran HIV/AIDS awareness projects through a local radio station, Bush Radio 89.5fm (Watkins, 2012: 59). Therefore, POC helped raise socio-political awareness amongst the urban youth, using their lyrical creativity to form a positive musical style and identity.

During the transition from Apartheid to democracy, POC was one of the first groups to reject the notion of a Rainbow Nation. They argued that this "new master narrative of reconciliation replaces the old one (Apartheid)", and refer to the shift of ideologies as "the 'conning' of the people with reconciliatory rhetoric of the 'rainbow nation', with its all-encompassing nationalism celebrating diversity as wealth" (Künzler, 2011: 30). According to Haupt (1996: 57-58, cited in Haupt, 2001: 179), "on songs such as Dallah Flet 2, off *Age of Truth,* they went to great pains to persuade Cape Town's largely coloured electorate not to vote for the National Party (NP)". In doing so, they challenged the hegemonic discourses of the political establishment and older generations, with what could be interpreted as 'counter discourses' (Künzler, 2011: 30). Due to their political content their albums and songs being banned by the South Africa Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). According to Monaheng (2015: 6), "POC would carry on carving a niche for themselves on the South African hip-hop landscape, performing overseas in the 90s, as well as at Nelson Mandela's inauguration in 1994". However, in later years due to the departure of one of leading members, POC "marked a shift in the way hip hop was being employed as a vehicle for global affiliations, education, and debates about local identities" (Haupt, 2008: 159).

Black Noise

At around the same time as POC, another prominent rap group emerged in Cape Town. Black Noise, which was formed in 1990 by *Emile YX*, became one of the more politicised hip hop groups. Their music directly addressed local and social development, social justice, economic inequality, race and identity (Watkins, 2012: 60; Hammett, 2012: 421). This rap group were instrumental in empowering urban/township youth workshops and development initiatives, such as anti-racism and anti-crime campaigns (Haupt, 2008: 158). For example, the group constructed a platform for expression, a non-benefit association called Heal the Hood that propelled prominent hip hop events, such as, the yearly Hip Hop Indaba, African Battle Cry and Shut Up and Dance (Watkins, 2012: 61). Hammett (2012: 421) states that, through their music, Black Noise "critically engages with capitalism, history, social justice, identity and materialism", as the group aims to bring together the urban youth "to develop artistic skills, tackle xenophobia and developing social responsibility".

Brasse Vannie Kaap

Another hip hop group hailing from the Cape Flats, a township on the periphery of the Cape Town metropolis was *Brasse Vannie Kaap* (or BVK). The crew consisted of MCs and DJs, and performed in Afrikaans (Cohen, 2008: 25). According to Haupt (2001: 176), "BVK raps exclusively in the Cape Flats dialect of Afrikaans and, much like POC, attempts to at address social, political and economic issues in ways which would engage its audience". In addition, their explicit use of *gamtaal* is employed as a "counter-discursive voice, which signals their refusal to be co-opted into conservative and essentialist reading of colouredness" (Haupt, 2001: 179). *Gamtaal* has been "stereotypically been associated with notions of the 'authentic' working-class coloured"; however, POC and BVK use this voice to "problematize hegemonic representations of black subjects" (Haupt, 2001: 174). The crew also focused on inclusion inside the Cape Flats and the South Africa, taking an interest in various workshops and outreach projects in the community. According to Watkins (2012: 61), the group was also accompanied by B-Boys, namely Marlon, Brandon and Dmitri. BVK handled South African issues, rapping about the experiences in the Cape Flats. Through their songs, they also addressed issues related to child abuse and domestic violence. In 2000, BVK was one of the groups to break onto the mainstream stage, performing to white South African audiences and "key festivals such as OppiKoppi, KKNK, Splashy Fen, Up the Creek and North Sea Jazz Festival" (Haupt, 2008: 158). Moreover, they enjoyed international success involving their

performances in countries in Belgium and the United Kingdom, as well as participating in "a month-long youth workshop in Netherlands" (Haupt, 2008: 159).

Godessa

The all-female rap group *Godessa*, formed in 2000, represented and addressed women's issues and concerns in a patriarchal society; as women "inhabit the lower rungs of social empowerment in spite of the many rights they are supposedly guaranteed by the constitution" (Watkins, 2012: 61). The group's entry in the South African hip hop community "presented an anomaly to a largely male-dominated genre of political and artistic expression", which therefore provided "artists and consumers the opportunity to explore alternative representation and values" (Haupt, 2008: 166). This group, much like POC, BVK and Black Noise, was actively involved in "educating young people in the tradition of black consciousness" (Künzler, 2011: 36). Loots (2001: 13) argues that "in challenging ideas around how the media and the music industry prescribe to women", female artists use the music/performance form to oppose patriarchal hegemony. In this way, conscious hip hop challenges "misogyny in both gangsta rap and mainstream media representations of female sexuality" (Haupt, 2008: 142). Watkins (2012: 67) also states that Godessa "makes it clear they have no desire to be marketed as sex objects; neither do they consider themselves on par with the men in the movement, as various genders have different experiences in society". Therefore, Godessa challenged dominant hegemonic ideologies and the misrepresentations of women in mainstream media, as they "have engaged critically with gender politics in the media as well as the role of global capitalism in the construction of consumer desire" (Haupt, 2008: 173; 179).

One of their singles, *Social Ills*, addresses the globalising effects that not only entraps us into the capitalist system; in terms of the how society, mainstream trends, music, globalisation "conditions you to be a clone", but also entraps individual identities and ethnicities (Godessa, 2002; cited in Haupt, 2008: 167-168). Since Godessa's entry into the South African hip hop community, as an all-female outfit, more female rappers have emerged and are continuing to give audiences opportunities for new voices and perspectives to be heard, artists such Kanyi Mavi, Nadia Nakai, Sho Madjozi. Gender political discourse, in South African hip hop, are now becoming more recognised in the industry with queer hip hop surfacing from artist's such as Dope Saint Jude and Andy Mkosi. Queer hip hop artists identify themselves as members of the LGBTQ+ community, as they turn hip hop into a subgenre which is solely based on their sexuality. Abroad, artists like Lil Nas X and Angel-Ho, continue to drive this narrative within the hip hop culture.

Other contemporary Capetonian conscious artists such as Driemanskap, Jitsvinger, Cream, Youngsta CPT, just to mention a few, have also played a crucial role in Cape hip hop identity construction with their cutting edge lyricism. In as much as South African hip hop started in Cape Town, in the late early 1990s, hip hop hit other major cities in South Africa, and continued to spread through the country.

Johannesburg

Johannesburg's hip hop music scene started with Gauteng-based regional radio station, YFM, which was an important catalyst in the rise of the culture. The station launched the *Sprite* Rap Activity Jam, an hour-long radio show aimed at creating a "platform for emcees to showcase their music", hosted DJ Oskido and Rudeboy Paul, towards the end of 1997 (Monaheng, 2014: 9). According to Phakathini (2019: 2), "the Rap Activity Jam became a dandelion with the youth whisking its seeds to scores of radio stations across the country". Eventually, hip hop artists and rappers had the opportunity to express themselves and more admirers of the genre started to participate in cyphers and began to accept the music and culture. In the 2000s, "a club called Rippingtons in the city of Johannesburg was the only performance venue for hip hoppers", and on alternating Saturdays "there were open mic sessions and DJs displayed their skills on the turntables" (Watkins, 2012: 62). Soon, Soweto's (the biggest township in Gauteng and South Africa) hip hop scene grew immensely and spread to other suburban areas in and around Johannesburg. Phakathini (2019: 2) reflects on the numerous activities and radio station shows that contributed to the emergence of Johannesburg the hip hop community:

> "With shows like Harambe (Bad Boy T, Lee and Sanza), Open Mic Set (Zak Dakile), Rhyme & Reason (TBo Touch), The Essence (Kamza), The Joint (AK), etc, Le Club seemed to have birthed a flooding litter of sessions that hounded club owners in every major city. There was Black Sunday, Slaghuis, 1808, Splash Jam, Forefront Movement, EvoLokxion, Heavy Hitters, Inqaba at the Bat Centre and Puppet Masters".

The new styles, voices and experiences emerged and created a rift within the culture, as hip hop shifted from the Capetonian-style to the developments in Johannesburg. Due to the concentration of the music industry in Johannesburg, more opportunities for lucrative record label deals occurred, and artists were pressured to soften messages of counter-hegemonic political protest (Watkins, 2008: 74). This shift was important to "increasing assimilation of rap music into the commercial world", which "happened in the context of the Black Economic Empowerment Act, itself a new landmark of the economic policies of the post-apartheid

government" (Künzler, 2011: 39). More record labels emerged to accompany the large influx of hip hop music being produced. Therefore, "rap in South Africa is no longer a vehicle of expression but also a means of earning a significant income" (Watkins, 2012: 70). In addition, "the same culture that was embedded in conflict, acted through resistance and evasion, and rooted in a conflictual ideology by youth to develop a critical common voice during Apartheid, has in recent years evolved into a less defiant, aesthetic and popular urban youth culture of all races" (Bodunrin, 2014: 3). One of the earlier groups formed through this venture is Skwatta Kamp.

Skwatta Kamp

Formed in 1994, Skwatta Kamp still has an on-going presence as some of the members continue to pursue individual careers, "the rap crew signed up to a major local music label, selling well over 40,000 copies" (Künzler, 2011: 39). According to Segalo (2006: 29), "Skwatta Kamp is a rap group consisting of seven members", and "was the first rap album to go gold in South Africa". Before their commercial fame, Skwatta Kamp was also known for their political rap style, as they released a 15 track album entitled, *Skwatta Kamp-pain*. This body of work comprises song titles such as, Skwatta Revolution, Indus-Try, and Drug-Users, which, one can argue, draws on the socio-political aspects of society. Moreover, according to Coplan (2005: 22), the group recorded "some of the most outrageously subversive political lyrics currently on offer", which led to the banning of "their songs from the radio". Their song *Politics*, released from their *Khut En Joyn* album (2001), attempts the redefine urban youth identity politics from the viewpoint of the youth in post-Apartheid South Africa (Khan, 2010: 151). Forexample, the lyrics consisted of the following:

> "If I have to travel back through the quest of time,
> all the brothers that fought so we can reconcile.
> The Steven Biko's, the Hector's, the Mandela's.
> Now black on black oppression is on the rise
> Government is taking us for every penny we got"

In addition, Coplan (2005: 22), states that Skwatta Kamp's goal was to expose how "black South Africans [felt] towards what they regard as a self-serving, wrong-headed ruling black political elite", and "to express them in song over the radio is a powerful indication that the state president's and ruling party's honeymoon is over, at least among urban black youth". However, after signing to major record label Gallo, "other hip hop heads (hip hoppers who

adhere to the fundamental principles of hip hop), [felt] that Skwatta Kamp had compromised the authenticity of the movement" (Watkins 2012: 62). More rappers started following the trend of securing record deals, and "mainly focused on commercial goals" (Künzler, 2011: 39). Artists such as Pitch Black Afro, Pro Kid, and others, became successful within the mainstream media and paved to way for others to shadow their effects. While other hip hop artists were placing a lot of emphasis on delivering a political message to their audiences, others were "creating music for dancing, believing that people may resent songs where the political message is too strong" (Watkins, 2012: 64).

Cashless Society

This rap group, formed in 1998, argued that their 'street hop' music represented the largely marginalised and poorer communities and wanted to promote hope and progress (Watkins, 2012: 62). The 'Hard Cashless Society' (or THC Society) plays on some double entendre as it refers to "cashless, as in the plastic economic future of the modern world, and cashless, as in Africa, presently the poorest of the poor continents" (ReverbNation, 2021: 1). With origins in Johannesburg and Gaborone, Cashless Society, in their song *Hottentot Hop Bantu 12 (2003)*, question the issues of heritage and identity in South Africa against the ever-changing influences of globalisation and modernity:

"Electronic clout support for remote control sound guards
Khoisan with a Walkman using hertz memory cards
Digital accents for CD language
Perceptions managed by a modern day savage
Eating food for thought processes of elimination
Real time rhymes versus artificial insemination
Visions in DVD technological landscapes"

Cashless Society "asserts their social responsibility of educating the public on how knowledge acquisition is spiritually empowering and absolutely vital in creating consciousness of the world we live in" (ReverbNation, 2021: para. 3). Not only have they used their music to comment on the effects of modernisation and globalisation, they have commented to some the social issues that affect South Africans in post-Apartheid society. For example, in their song entitled *Taxi Wars* (2004), the crew addresses the issues surrounding the territorial conflicts between taxi commissions in Johannesburg. Although the lyrical content in these two examples is not explicitly political in nature, the crew critically engaged and challenged media culture and the mainstream music industry, and raises some level of social consciousness for

audiences. The mission of Cashless Society was to bring Africa's unique culture to our sound to give Africa a voice in this globally influenced society. Rap groups and crews were still prominent, even at this stage of South African hip hop. Similarly, to the likes of POC, Black Noise and BVK, the Johannesburg scene has included the likes of Capital O, H2O, Verbal Assassins, as well as contemporary crews like Entity, Teargas, Morafe, and Jozi. Although, some rappers in these crews break out to manifest their own solo careers, other solo acts and band create collaborations to further develop the style of this urban youth subculture.

Tumi and the Volume

Headed by Boitumelo Molekane, Tumi and The Volume is a popular and modern musical act from Johannesburg, recognised for combining jazz and hip hop with complicated and tremendously politicized lyrics. According to Haupt (2008: 157), "artists such as BVK, Godessa, and Tumi and the Volume remain true to the concept of knowledge of self, which continues to inform the messages produced by what many call underground hip hop". This group consists of rapper and spoken word poet, Tumi and core members of 340ml (the Volume), a Mozambiquean-South African-based indie band (Discogs, 2021: 1). Much like Cashless Society, Tumi and the Volume uses their music to draw references to the socio-political issues that still affects the urban youth, that is built on the legacy of Apartheid. For example, "their popular song *'76* keeps South Africa's history of youth struggle against apartheid in the popular consciousness, while *Yvonne* keeps gender on the agenda" (Haupt, 2008: 202).

ProVerb

ProVerb started his rapping career in 1999, and is also considered one of the most iconic socially conscious contemporary artists. He became notorious as one of the few rappers who does not use sexist and misogynistic language in his songs, and he has continuously released albums that out sell each other (Last.FM, 2016). The rapper has a commercial, but socially conscious style of rapping, verbalising the 'truth' in a commercial way, which enables him to release his underground conscious music on the mainstream markets. On his album, *The Manuscript*, he criticises the perceptions of commercialised hip hop. One of his latest verses on hit song *Now or Never*, by DJ Switch (2016), he addresses the 'selling out' concept that exist in hiphop:

"Whatever happened to clever rappin', the heads is askin'

Now instead of passion, the level is trash to get the cash in

The question I'm asking: Did it die with the veterans back then?

Or does it live residing inside irrelevant has-been

Nothing wrong with that

But their songs is wack and we learning what?

Hands have gone higher

If like me you've heard enough

Then we should build a bonfire of all their tracks and burn 'em up"

The split between commercialised and conscious hip hop has caused problems within the culture. According to Watkins (2008: 68), "underground hip hoppers are in conflict with hip hoppers who they believe have sold out, and they contest the legitimacy of the music industry that has always been associated with repression and exclusion". The notion of "keeping it real" and "knowledge of self" are key elements to the traditions of hip hop (Watkins, 2012: 65) (Haupt, 2008: 157).

3.4.3. CONCLUDING SECTION

Haupt states (2008: 143), by referencing Hardt and Negri (2000), that hip hop "artists use the very strategies of Empire, (music production, music performance, music videos, the Internet, and digital technology) to issue challenges to Empire's use of media to develop its own language of self-validation". Throughout the course of this chapter, we have seen several examples of how conscious rap, from its point of origin to other parts of the world, has been used as a vehicle for cultural expression for the urban youth population, which uses counter-hegemonic discourses to challenge dominant hegemonic ideologies in mainstream media culture. This version of hip hop creates opportunities for self-reflection, and is often connected to the traditions of black consciousness which artists and audiences use to rethink and reconstruct their identities. It has also been used as a platform for new voices, perspectives and experiences to enter the public space, and has created opportunities for social changes within global and local communities.

With the help of modern technology, improvements in global communication, and the spread of globalization, a large majority of urban youth across the globe have gained access to this music and spend large amounts of time listening to popular radio stations and watching music-based television programmes. Undoubtedly, African American culture has played a crucial role in influencing and shaping youth identities around the world (Rosenburg, 2002: 2). In Africa, hip hop has been around since 1985 and since the early '90s; it has shaped the lives of African

people. African hip hop, infused within other traditional musical genres, has been used as a powerful tool, as socio-political movements encouraging social change. For example, Ntarangwi (2009: 5) examines how the "socioeconomic processes that produced hip hop in East Africa mirrored those that produced hip hop in the Bronx, USA, and other expressive forms". There has been significant evidence that displays how hip hop is effective in influencing global urban youth identities because it is considered a significant portion of cultural fabrication and urban youth identification both in North American and abroad (Alim and Pennycook, 2007: 90).

According to Haupt (2008: 184), "Cape Town based hip hop, during the 1990s, issued challenges to neo-colonial discourses, such as apartheid, in its exploration of the politics of identity, history and location". Hip hop pioneers across the country have paved the way for other socially conscious hip hop/rap artists and groups to emerge on the music scene. Groups, like POC and BVK "employ codes and speak to experiences that are specific to everyday black South African experiences" (Haupt, 2001: 173). In a similar way to how Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five, Public Enemy, Dead Prez, and Queen Latifah, for example, used hip hop as a tool to mobilise and educated the urban youth in America, crews like POC, Black Noise, BVK and Godessa employed hip hop to "attempt to engage critically with South Africa's political reality in order to construct black nationalist narratives that rely on the notion of a global black experience of oppression and resistance" (Haupt, 2001; cited in Haupt, 2008: 145-6). Therefore, "South African hip hoppers identified with the struggles of African Americans, claiming that hip hop is African and that these elements entitled them to use their sounds" (Watkins, 2012: 70). Moreover, what seems to connect their "music with the work of 'old school' artists', such as KRS-One, is their continual commitment to Black Consciousness ideals of spiritual and intellectual upliftment" (Haupt, 2001: 173-4). Rap artists have used hip hop as a means of political protest to encourage social change and development, especially amongst the urban youth. Even though some South Africans used hip hop as a means of social development and social change, a tool of resistance, a voice against Apartheid, and as a vehicle for identity construction in the post-Apartheid era, other versions of the genre have also been used to promote sexist, misogynistic, misrepresentations and false replications of women and their bodies which have been normalized and glamorized by media culture and internalized by the urban youth culture through the hip hop culture. This is evident because "rap is a contest terrain of between different types of rap with competing voices, politics and styles" (Kellner, 1995: 175). It is also important to note that use of an African American art form, such as rap music, shows the reliance that black artists' have on African American or Caribbean material in their

"attempt to construct Black Nationalist narratives that rely on the notion of the global black experience of oppression and resistance" (Haupt, 2001: 176).

The shift from Cape Town to Johannesburg has seen South Africa's hip hop music scene and "lyrical content moved from revolutionary rhymes to gangsta rap to swagger" (Nyamz, 2017: 7). The appeal of fiscal accumulation, by signing to major record labels, has somewhat overtaken the initial traditions set in place by conscious rap. Haupt (2008: 147) states that "conscious artists do not receive much airplay in the mainstream media", because "they do not serve the interests of white supremacist patriarchy". Therefore, the effect of commercial, capitalist hip hop is to blind not only the urban youth identities of the audiences, but the artists as well; which is aided by "the role of globalising pressures as well as our socio-political history" and continues to contribute to the socio-economic inequalities that exist in our townships (Hammett, 2016: 424).

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PARADIGM

This chapter explores how a qualitative research paradigm was employed when undertaking this research, in order to investigate how conscious hip hop is used to rethink and reconstruct urban youth identities and its ability to create social change, in Fingo Village. This approach allows one to attain a more in-depth understanding of human perceptions and how people make sense of our natural world. In addition, it has been deliberately used because it is best suited to understand the perspectives of individuals about the phenomenon under study. Unlike quantitative research, qualitative methods focus on the use of words rather the standardization of numbers. In order to understand how hip hop is used to rethink urban youth identities, it is important to utilise this model because it attempts "to study human action from the insiders' perspective, with the goal of finding understanding and prediction of human behaviour" (Babbie and Mouton, 2002: 53).

Aliaga and Gunderson (2000, cited in Muijs: 2011) state that "quantitative research is explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analyzed using mathematically based methods (in particular statistics)'. These kinds of research methods would not do justice to understanding the topic of the research; neither would they be sufficient for necessary data collection, with regards to this thesis. According the Silverman (2013: 10), it is important to "choose a method that is appropriate to what you are trying to find out". Therefore, a qualitative approach aims to "be more critical in nature and can be used when we need to penetrate the deeper layers of a message" (Wigston, 1995: 152). According to Babbie and Mouton (2001: 85), qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally-specific information about the values, opinions, behaviours, and social contexts of particular populations. In terms of this research, the strength of a qualitative approach provides complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue (Dicks, Henwood, Housley, 2016: 35). Therefore, to provide a detailed and precise account of how conscious rap in Makhanda influences youth identities for social development; qualitative research methods of data collection were applied.

4.2. METHODOLOGY

The following techniques were used in this research. Firstly, participant observation was appropriately used for the collection of data. Ever since my first official interaction with Madinda in 2012, when I was the president on the *RU Hip Hop* society, I have participated in numerous activities in Fingo Village, Makhanda, and with Around Hip Hop, such as assisting the organiser/s with music during cyphers – as a DJ, on-campus advertising, and events co-ordination. According to Taylor and Bogdan (1998: 45), participation observation "involves inoffensive social interaction, putting the informants at ease and gaining their acceptance", and where "collecting data is secondary to getting to know the setting and people". Most recently, I participated in Around Hip Hip's event called *The Return of the Cypher* as a photographer, in order to capture artist performances, in addition to collecting data. Warren and Rasmussen (1977, cited in Taylor and Bogdan, 1998: 55) state that "age, gender and other features of personal identity can have a powerful influence on how informants react with the observer". With this said, it is vital to include the importance of positionality where undergoing this type of research style. According to Holmes (2020, 1), positionality "reflects the position that the researcher has chosen to adopt within a given research study". This position influences how research is conducted, its outcomes, and results; as it speaks to an individual's values and beliefs that are shaped by their political allegiance, religious faith, gender, sexuality, historical and geographical location, ethnicity, race, social class, and status, (dis)abilities and so on (Sikes, 2004, Wellington, et al. 2005 and Marsh, et al. 2018, cited in Holmes).

Secondly, semi-structured in-depth interviews were also utilised in this research. This method consisted of interviewing a number of conscious hip hop artists, as an ideal way for collecting data based on the individuals' personal histories, perspectives, and experiences. According to Taylor and Bogdan (1998: 88), "qualitative interviewing is flexible and dynamic", and "has been referred to as non-directive, unstructured, non-standardized, and open-ended interviewing", that "relies extensively on verbal accounts of how people act and what they feel". By compiling a list of 10-12 research questions, I was able to attain a deeper understanding of how artists, in Makhanda view the role of conscious hip hop in their community, i.e. Fingo Village. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of methods had to be used in order to capture all the necessary data, especially with regards to the semi-structured interviews. By strictly adhering the COVID-19 protocols (1,5-meter social distancing and wearing a face mask covering the mouth and nose), some of the interviews were conducted face to face, whilst others had to be telephonically recorded.

4.3. SAMPLING

According to Taylor and Bogdan (1998: 93), "theoretical sampling is the number of cases/informants". Sampling is the process of seeking out "groups, settings, and individuals where and for whom the processes being studied are most likely to occur" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000: 370). In the case of this research, the selection of conscious hip hop artists that were interviewed are from Fingo Village, have performed at the Fingo Festival, as well as having been involved in any Around Hip Hop social events. Initially, the plan was to acquire 10-12 local hip hop artists to interview, but unfortunately some artists demanded financial compensation for their contribution, others refused to participate and others opted to remain reclusive because of the current COVID-19 lockdown situation. As a result, only 8 research participants were interviewed. In addition, the "decisions about the selection of the sample were not pre-set, but have been conceptually driven by the theoretical framework underpinning the research from the start" (cf. Curtis et al., 2000, cited in Silverman (2013: 22). Therefore, the qualifier for urban youth identities, in this dissertation, included individuals aged between 18 and 35.

According to Taylor and Bogdan (1998: 93), "you can locate potential informants through the same sources the participant observer uses to gain access to private settings: checking with friends, relatives, and personal contacts; involving yourself with the community of you want to study; approaching organisations and agencies; advertising in media source; and announcements through the Internet". In order to locate these research participants, I advertised my research topic on social media, i.e. Facebook, to order to attract willing artists, as well as using personal contacts I had collected through the years I had worked with Madinda. Snowball sampling was also used in this paper. This method is how the researchers get to know certain participants who refer the researcher to other further potential participants. After several interviews, artists were willing to introduce me to other individuals they thought could contribute to this research. Through the collaboration of all these methods, I was able to attain my sample group.

4.4. ETHICS

A code of ethics has been applied to this research. When compiling this paper, I have been fully aware of ethical principles underlying this research and the ethical standards of Rhodes University, and have abided by these at all times. Extra caution has been taken to ensure the

safety, anonymity, and confidentiality of people involved in this study. Prior to conducting my research, I had submitted the appropriate Rhodes University Ethical Standards Committee documentation to the Sociology Department's Ethic Committee. In the process of data collection, informed consent was issued by the artists participating, after a detailed explanation and objectives of the research and how the interview data will be used. To ensure anonymity, the use of their hip hop aliases, instead of the artists' biological names, have been used, in order to protect the participants' identities. No fiscal incentives were given, in spite of a number or artists wanting to get paid for their participation. The data collected and analysed, in the following chapter, has only been gathered from willing and consenting individuals.

CHAPTER 5: DATA COLLECTION AND PROCESSES

5.1. RETHINKING AND RECONSTRUCTING URBAN YOUTH IDENTITIES

This following chapter consists of the data collection process, which comprises 8 hip hop artists in Makhanda between the ages of 18-35, residing in Fingo Village and surrounding township areas. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the following artists: MindSkillz, Bee Mayne RSA, Epic the Scriptwriter, uBhut' Illy, Ecalpar, uTamkhulu Wakho, Azlan, and Xolile Madinda (also known as X-Nasty). The chapter also analyses the responses of how conscious hip hop has helped them reshape and renegotiate their urban identities. In addition, using the theoretical framework of the multicultural critical approach, this chapter investigates how these artists got involved with the Makhanda hip hop community, what kind of subject matter they generally focus on, how hip hop helps them express themselves, their perceptionsof the current wave of South African hip hop and how they think conscious hip hop can be used to create opportunities for social change.

Born in Fingo Village, and currently residing in the neighbouring township of Vukani, **MindSkillz** discovered the local hip hop scene in 2008. Although his talents also include drawing, video editing and photography, MindSkillz identifies himself as a Battle rapper. According to Edwards (2009, cited in Diallo 2015: 41), battle rap is the art of rapping that consists of "bragging and boasting", and is "combined with put downs, insults, and disses against real or imaginary opponents, makes up the form known as battle rhyming". The side of hip hop has found its place in Makhanda, as many events have been hosted by Jungle East Cape Rap Battle.

Originally from Peddie, **Bee Mayne RSA** is a former East Cape Midlands College student and rapper, who has participated and performed at the Fingo Festival in 2019. **Epic the Scriptwriter** is a Makhanda-born MC, currently staying in Gqeberha, who started rapping under the popularlocal group ***Supremacy***.

UBhut' Illy identifies himself as a rapper, musician and comedian, and he is a part of an up and coming multi-genre rap duo, ***Bad Decisions***. Creative writer, poet and MC, **Ecalpar,** has been involved with the Makhanda hip hop scene for nearly two decades, and resides in the surrounding areas around Fingo Village.

UTamkhulu Wakho (which is roughly translated to 'your grandfather/your elder') also lives in Vukani, and started rapping at an Around Hip Hop social event. **Azlan** considers himself asa rapper and a media practitioner; as he has been involved with audio-visual and graphic design,

radio and writing, as well as new media.

Officially known as Xolile Madinda, **X-Nasty** is an artist, creator, former MC, and the founder of Fingo Festival (previously known as the Fingo Revolutionary Movement) and Around Hip Hop. As a "senior well-respected leader in the hip-hop community of Makhanda", X-Nasty, with his "knowledge of Makhanda history, music, Black Consciousness and politics, started the ***Def Boyz***, Makhanda's first hip hop crew" (Schoon, 2018: 38). Under the Fingo Revolutionary Movement and politically-minded local rap group, Def Boyz, X-Nasty and his colleagues started rap collectives and hip hop movements in Makhanda which trained and recruited the youth, introducing them the hip hop community through initiatives such as the Rat Race Army, Def Camp, Bionic Breakers, and 360 Black. Rat Race was based on recruitinga different audience from the coloured community. The backyard room/studio that X-Nasty used to teach young MCs how to write was called Def Camp. According to Schoon (2018: 128), a backyard studio is a place, usually a bedroom, where urban youths gather to engage in"studio-based practices such as recording, mixing, beat-making, digital image manipulation and video production". A large majority of rappers, who have entered the Makhanda hip hop community, have interacted with X-Nasty in some way. Moreover, there are various other forms and ways artists used to infiltrate the rap community in Fingo Village and Makhanda.

5.2. ENTERING THE MAKHANDA HIP HOP COMMUNITY

Some of the participants recall their first interaction with the Makhanda hip hop community when the rap group Def Boys and the Fingo Revolutionary Movement conducted hip hop workshops at the local schools in and around Fingo Village, since 1996. Others, however, attended social events, such as cyphers and performances hosted by Around Hip Hop at the Fingo Festival. According to Watkins (2012: 67), a cypher is when rappers stand in a circle and test out their rapping skills, by either freestyling or by an "exchange between two rappers standing in the middle of the circle and 'killing each other off'". In addition, local radio stations, such as Rhodes Music Radio (RMR) and Radio Grahamstown, played an important role in promoting the content of already established local artists, which inspired a new generation of rappers. In remembering how he got involved with hip hop, MindSkillz stated:

> "I used to go the cyphers in Fingo…there used to be a cypher every Sunday at KwaJackie (formally known as J Chan Henry Wholesalers, across the road from the Fingo Square). That is when I thought: 'you know what? I think I can do this as well…let me try it out'. It worked out at the end" (MindSkillz, interview, 2021).

From there, he was able to meet other aspiring rappers of a similar age to him, which enabled him to attain local radio interviews and a chance to perform with already established Makhanda conscious artists, such as X-Nasty, Spliff the Shepard and Macabre. Unlike MindSkillz, UTamkhulu Wakho first heard Makhanda hip hop through a local radio station, which aired songs from Azlan and Macabre. Moreover, similarly to MindSkillz, UTamkhulu Wakho got involved with the local scene by performing at an Around Hip Hop Youth Day event on June 16th. He stated that:

> "There was a show that happened in Fingo Village. My cousin knew all these guys involved with hip hop. So, the older guys saw us perform, and from there, I got to meet a lot of the other artists. I'd say the older hip hop artists introduced me to manyother local artists" (uTamkhulu Wakho, interview, 2021).

Artists like Ecalpar, uBhut' Illy and Epic the Scriptwriter first interacted with hip hop while they were attending high school in Makhanda. During the active years of Def Boyz, Ecalpar reflected on how he was inspired to start rapping:

> "Around 2000-2003, we were fascinated by these hip hop workshops. MCs, like Macabre, were there…X-Nasty was the one hosting these workshops. There were cyphers, where we could interact with the older guys. We were quite young and we shared that platform with them, and luckily for us, the platform was already laid out" (Ecalpar, interview, 2021).

Before forming the rap duo, Supremacy, Epic the Scriptwriter recalls falling in love with hip hop after being exposed to American rappers on television and radio. After that, he met his co-rapper, Optik Nerve, after being recruited by the Rat Race collective (a Def Boyz subgroup consisting of X-Nasty and DJ Kama):

> "We used to write together and used to be part of the cyphers hosted by DJ Kama. We did an EP in high school called *People in Mind*. That got us a *Hype* Magazine article, and that was exciting at the time" (Epic, interview, 2021).

UBhut' Illy got involved with hip hop in 2001 after joining his first high school crew called Ruff Rymers. His involvement started when he and his friends began cyphers during break-time, competing to see who can recite the best 2 Pac verse. When asked about his entry into the wider hip hop circle in Makhanda, uBhut' Illy stated the following:

> "Back then, if you had to know somebody, you had to know X-Nasty. Everybody was like: 'whatever you do, you have to meet X-Nasty or any of the guys from Def Boyz".

> He was the key member of hip hop in the community. If you wanted to be a hot MC, he had to think that you were good. So, through X, I went to the cyphers and shows" (Bhut' Illy, interview, 2021).

Accounts from Azlan and Bee Mayne RSA also indicated that they met X-Nasty and/or Macabre, who then introduced them to the broader hip hop community in Makhanda. Whilst studying and working in Makhanda, Bee Mayne RSA used to support and attend local shows, in order to gain access to producers and a backyard studio. As he was also working on his music, he met X-Nasty in 2018, which allowed him to perform at an Around Hip Hop event, during the Fingo Festival. Azlan, however, moved to Makhanda, in 2011. The first person he met was Macabre, who showed him the ins and outs of hip hop in Makhanda, and who was doing what in the community. After establishing *Darkie Yam Studios*, a local recording label which also hosted events, he recollected his interaction with X-Nasty:

> "After that, I met X-Nasty and his Around Hip Hop movement, through Macabre. X was the one who told me about the history of Makhanda hip hop…like where it started and who was involved. I used to come to Makhanda during the National Arts Festival. There was a hip hop session happening every June during the festival".

Therefore, according to the participants' responses, X-Nasty played an important role in introducing new talent, facilitating workshops, maintaining and further expanding hip hop in Makhanda. As an individual who grew up in a community of hip hop artists, he started writing and rapping while his consciousness was inspired by his uncle, who educated him on South Africa's black political history, as well as introduced him to several publications by Steve Biko. When asked about how Def Boyz was formed, X-Nasty responded with the following:

> "I was forced by my uncle to be conscious, because he didn't want me to be Americanised, as he viewed hip hop as American. Since he was into Black Consciousness, he felt that I would step away from my own culture and identity. At first, we were rapping in English…but it was my uncle who gave me the direction" (Xolile Madinda, interview, 2021).

While his consciousness was encouraged by his uncle, his love for the genre started with DJ Mazwi, who introduced him to hip hop. After listening to hip hop on vinyl and cassettes, and by combining Black Consciousness ideologies, he was enabled to curate a unique, conscious hip hop culture in Makhanda. By adding a South African diaspora to an American subgenre, he was able to create a platform for the urban youth of Makhanda to express their views, exploreand negotiate their identities under the framework of Black Consciousness. While the current wave

of South African commercial hip hop conforms to the dominant ideologies perpetrated by global forces and capitalistic nature, the content, topics, themes and stories that local artists focus on are based on their own experiences. The subject matter of Makhanda rap artists contests these ideologies, as they are unwilling to comprise their art and political views.

5.3. SUBJECT MATTER

According to Kellner (1995: 175), "rap is best seen as a cultural forum for urban blacks to articulate their experiences concerns and politics". Local artists use traditional forms of hip hop, as well as Black Consciousness ideas, as a tool of urban youth expression. Haupt (2008: 203) argues that "conscious hip hop heads continue to make noise in attempts to raise critical consciousness and produce counter discourses to challenge seemingly seamless processes through which consent is manufactured by the dominant classes". Although some of the participants agree that it is important to be up-to-date with global hip hop trends, others argued that the preservation of the traditional elements of hip hop is vital. Not only is it imperative to hold on to knowledge-based hip hop, local artists have infused their own Makhanda-rap style "by authenticating their numerous identifications through language choice and an emphasis in their ethnic backgrounds" (Watkins, 2012: 65). Since conscious hip hop is a content-driven subculture, the subject matter of what these artists write and rap about is an important indicator which shows how the community of Makhanda's hip hop heads have created a platform for the urban youth to renegotiate their identities.

Whilst conducting interviews based on subject matter, one certainly identified similarities in how these local artists write and create their content-driven music productions and how their used conscious hip hop to express their life experiences. Most of the subject matter created by the respondents range from personal and/or local stories to general social themes, such as politics, gender-based violence and police brutality. For Ecalpar and uTamkhulu Wakho, life experiences tend to be the best motivator for them to write their lyrics. Ecalpar stated that:

> "The subject matter is the life that a person lives. It is the reality. Hip hop is documentation on its own. It is the perception of this generation and how they understand their world; so that future generations could see what we were thinking and the stories that came out" (Ecalpar, interview, 2021).

Although uTamkhulu Wakho believes that some of the older Makhanda artists are way too conscious, he is still aware of the personal struggles and experiences people endure in his environment:

> "What I enjoy and I am so comfortable writing about is the things that happen in the township. Since I grew up with consciousness around me, I tend to enjoy writing about stories in and around the township…also to give some hope to people living in and around Fingo" (uTamkhulu Wakho, interview, 2021).

According to Kellner (1995: 178), "one of the things one notices when listening to contemporary rap is how it is a form of articulating identity and self-assentation". By recording and documenting their personal experiences through the scope of conscious hip hop, the self-reflection by these artists plays a key role in "facilitating discussions about some of the major concerns that affect civil society" (Haupt, 2008: 185). Epic, under the rap group Supremacy, records writing content that addressed social ills happening in and around Fingo Village and the greater Makhanda community. He states:

> "We would speak on social issues. So we'd be like, 'Anything too much is an addiction/ living in this drug infested life, we live in fiction'. So the more social stuff as opposed to political stuff. People in Mind was all about the content that was playing on radio and how we used to scrutinize it" (Epic, interview, 2021).

Released in 2006, the subject matter in the album, People in Mind, by Supremacy contested the commercial hip hop content and ideologies in the songs that were being played on popular radio stations. In addition, they also wrote about the struggles and experiences of living in a small city, such as Makhanda, and the social problems that occur in their environment. For example, in their song featuring Cool G called *Area Code* (2018), their lyrics consist of the following:

"I hail straight from the City of Saints, where the living is slow
Alcoholic habits seem to be a rhythm of road,
To fit in we have to go with the flow,
But watch your back and watch your cash, 'cause we know where you roll
In a place like this, you can never have dough (money)
We got eyes everywhere, your friend become your foe".

Although the subject matter of Epic and Supremacy focus on social issues, other respondents address political issues that happen in Fingo and in South Africa as a whole. According to Haupt (2008: 217), "whilst it is largely true that a significant aspect of hip hop has been co-opted by the mainstream media, certain forms of hip hop continue to offer meaningful avenues of expression and critical engagement for a specific set of subjects". In addition, "this is so partly because conscious hip hop artists have aligned their work, as artists, with their identities as activists and educators" (Haupt, 2008: 217). Therefore, the subject matter of these local artists aims to oppose dominant ideologies, influenced by the identity they have constructed, in order to educate their audiences with what is currently happening. According to Watkins (2012: 64), the aim of these kinds of lyrics from local artists is to "recognise their power to change their behaviours and thereby have a positive influence on their communities". The content produced by Azlan and MindSkillz is politically driven, consisting of various topics. MindSkillz, with regards to his lyrical content stated the following:

> "I would say I am more political. I write about police brutality…I also touch on other concepts like family matters. As a person who suffered from mental illness, I even write about things like that, so that I can touch somebody who has suffered from the same illness. Basically, I focus on political issues" (MindSkillz, interview, 2021).

Although he considered himself a political writer, Azlan also focuses on other general issues. In his response to the topic of subject matter, he stated:

> "Basically, I tell stories about where I come from and how I grew up, and I also include the challenges that I faced. The major issue was crime. Where I grew up, there was a lot of crime which influenced how I survived every day. I was also focusing on social ills, because I was exposed to a lot of them, such as disease, hatred, and township and politics of the country" (Azlan, interview, 2021).

In his song, *Where I'm from* (2013) featuring Macabre, he raps about growing up in the township his, and describes his personal experiences in the following:

"I'm tired of this *lok'shin* corruption, it's unbearable
Akusekho safe kulemigaqo, sirhorhelela i-criminals
Keep one eye open
Because oonyana ba subliminal".

Apart from the content that he focuses on, he also enjoyed listening to the subject matter other

local artists address, such as concepts (or misconceptions) relating to the African identity. He believes that the representations need to be challenged, because people have learnt "a certain narrative about black identities and Africanacity, but do not challenge everything that they hear" (Azlan interview, 2021). Although other respondents are not fully conscious or socio-political, they still used the genre in positive ways and to challenge ideologies about their identities. In addition to writing about his life experiences, Bee Mayne RSA attempts to encourage his audience with to live an optimistic lifestyle:

> "Music is more about a feeling. I want people to feel something positive, and inspire people through my writing and my experience. It's all about the grind, which is going to cyphers, battle rap and breakdancing events, or freestyle sessions and interviews on local radio stations. You can support local community organisations, and through music, you can spread truth" (Bee Mayne RSA, interview, 2021).

As a self-proclaimed stand-up comedian and rapper, uBhut' Illy attempts to incorporate his identity in his lyrical content. In addition to stimulating positive imagery in his subject matter, he also addresses personal accounts into his music:

> "When I started, I used to try to be funny…but now I write about my fears, because a lot of people share my fears. Early in life, I found myself being too white for black people, and too black for white people. I've always had this kind of outsider's syndrome, being on the outside looking in waiting for someone to throw me a bone or give me the nod so that I could come in" (Bhut' Illy, interview, 2021).

In terms of subject matter, X-Nasty challenged ideologies of black history and the current political environment of post-Apartheid South Africa. After being influenced by his political uncle, X-Nasty remembered how he used to write when he was still an active Makhanda rapper:

> "We wanted to write something that was relevant to people and that was June 16th. I remember the chorus, "*No apologies, you already killed innocent for the Bill/ June 16th, that day was real".* Hip hop did make us conscious, it was the surrounding factors. I was conscious before conscious hip hop. It is not because of conscious hip hop that I became conscious, it is because I was because of the environment I grew up in that forced the self-awareness of who I am and what my role is" (Xolile Madinda, interview, 2021).

According to Kellner (1995: 178), "rap gives expression to very specific voices who have been left out of the mainstream culture". Therefore, a large majority of local artists, from the Eastern

Cape and especially from Makhanda, do not have access to the South African hip hop platform. In addition, Watkins (2012: 66) argues that "hip hoppers in the Eastern Cape feel marginalised because they sing and rap in isiXhosa, a language not widely spoken in South Africa". Although they are not fully exposed to the national scene, according to Haupt (2008: 184), a lot of local hip hop texts "challenge the hegemonic representations of black subjects and effectively laid claim to space within the public sphere".

5.4. CONSCIOUS RAP AS FORM OF RESISTANCE IN FINGO VILLAGE

According to Kellner (1995: 180), "rap music systematically attacks media culture, while contributing to the development of alternative culture". In addition, Haupt (2008: 183) states how hip hop in South Africa continues to act as a potential platform for urban youth to situate themselves as subjects existing in post-Apartheid. Moreover, according to Schoon (2018: 98), "hip-hop thus encapsulated various contradictions in how it had responded to neoliberalism, as both resisting it, while operating within it". In as much as there are local artists who continue to conform to the current wave of commercial Americanised South African hip hop, the Makhanda artists use this cultural expression as a form of resistance, and as a way to reclaim their youth identities and media representations. The perspectives of local artists of the South African hip hop scene is seen as a means of resistance, as they acknowledge the dramatic shift from traditional forms of conscious hip hop to commercial hip hop, driven by dominant capitalist ideologies. By opposing this version of hip hop, some Makhanda hip hoppers reject commercial rap and continue to be a part of conscious rap, in order to promote identity renegotiation and social change in their communities. In doing so, local artists reconstruct their own identities, as they create "challenges to misogyny in both gangsta rap music and mainstream media representations of female sexuality and consumer desire" (Haupt, 2008: 142).

When analysing the responses about the influence that commercial and conscious rap has on the urban youth in Makhanda and South Africa, as a whole, the majority of the participants in this research had negative views towards commercial hip hop. Artist and media practitioner, Azlan, stated the following:

> "Commercial hip hop has too much influence, and it is bad. People do not know what hip hop is…they buy into what is being sold. Some people like the songs because they are catchy, but they don't listen to the lyrics. I don't know what subject matter is being pushed by the mainstream media and commercial music, but it is bad. I feel that mainstream media is celebrating things that are irrelevant" (Azlan, interview, 2021).

Although pointing out that Makhanda and South Africa had a good underground hip hop scene, he also acknowledged that the underground scene faces fiscal problems that make it challenging for artists to promote their music on competitive platforms. Bhut' Illy also highlighted the importance of having financial support and, therefore, believed that it is because of this reason that hip hop artists 'sell out' to the commercial side of hip hop:

> "It is only recently that hip hop in South Africa started generating money. For the most part, we are driven by our stomachs. Most record labels started tolerating it because they realised they can't 'kill it' it. Smart people came into the frame and were like: 'let's make these people dance, you'll have 14 other tracks where you can be conscious…on that one song, you need to make these booty's clap'. That ideology drives the hip hop industry and the movement to a certain direction locally and internationally" (Bhut' Illy, interview, 2021).

In addition, to further emphasis Bhut' Illy standpoint, Epic in *People in Mind (2006)* writes about how there is no good hip hop music on popular radio stations anymore, because of the fact that conscious artists do not get airplay and do not have the fiscal means to produce radio quality content:

"(What do you expect when you switch on the radio)?
What you expecting son?
That kinda sound that'll get your ass to bounce?
Radio frequencies constantly posting inaccurate imagery,
Fashionable lyrics be misinformed transmitters, it's a disgrace
Turn on you radio quick,
It's labelled hip hop, but it's whack raps
Some stupid shit compiled by cats who are faker than their accents".

Despite the fact that he believed that commercial hip hop replicates a specific formula, which lacks the content-driven properties that exist in conscious rap, Epic the Scriptwriter also acknowledged the challenges of financial support that underground hip hop faces. In addition, he also pointed out that the media culture plays an important role in blocking out other music, in order to promote the dominant ideologies perpetrated through commercial rap:

> "Local rappers don't get paid as much as mainstream rappers. There needs to be more of a balance. It cannot be one dimensional and over-saturated. People gravitate towards

> what they hear on radio and watch TV. If socially conscious hip hop was more accessible, there would be some kind of resistance that emerges. People are starting to realise that that dream, sold by commercial rap, is not as glossy as it appears" (Epic, interview, 2021).

When discussing the hip hop scene, in both Makhanda and in South Africa, X-Nasty also acknowledged the position that radio, and other media outlets, play. He also pointed out that popularity is also an important variable to consider, in terms of how commercial hip hop influences that urban youth:

> "Hip hop in South Africa has leaned towards being popular, rather than playing the role of the messenger. There is an underground scene but the reproduction of popular music is stronger nowadays. It has taken over the popularity of graffiti artists, and B-Boys. Now, everything is commercialised…hip hop is accepted on the radio, like Umhlobo Wenene, RMR and other community radio stations. Nowadays, you can't tell rappers that they are wack…because they don't care about the community of hip hop. They have Instagram and Facebook followers…it is all about making money now" (X-Nasty, interview, 2021).

As part of the newer generation of conscious hip hop artists that have emerged in the Makhanda community, uTamkhulu Wakho and MindSkillz share similar perspectives to the older, more established local artists about the current state of South African hip hop. Although UTamkhulu Wakho agreed that conscious hip hop artists do not make as much money as commercial artists, he also acknowledged that commercial hip hop lacks the content that can influence and promote positive social change amongst the urban youth in Makhanda and other local communities around South Africa:

> "Hip hop, nowadays, is a disaster. Rappers today are wack. Have you ever noticed that commercial hip hop songs have no longevity? Music today doesn't last…unlike conscious rap. Maybe, this is why conscious artists like ProVerb are not so present in the SA hip hop scene. People don't listen to content anymore. Hip hop lacks that consciousness of like: what made you think of that concept? Hip hop has changed" (uTamkhulu Wakho, interview, 2021).

UTamkhulu Wakho referred to Macabre as one of the leading Makhanda artists that incorporates an oppositional position in his lyrics when it comes to the discourse of commercial hip hop, radio airplays, and record labels. In his song, *Rhini Emcees* (2021), not

only does he state some form of resistance to 'selling out', he reprimands local commercial acts that do and encourages Makhanda, as well as national artists, to 'keep it real':

"Minus soul, these rappers are a minus,

We Rhini rappers don't give a fuck if no label come find us,

We've been running this hip hop scene since we were kids, now we are [old] Timers

I'm not selling my out my soul,

Hip hop is all about the message, fuck the bragging and records

Because your delivery is bull, I'm cocking my lyrical weapon"

Although MindSkillz agrees with the other responses mentioned above, he also believes that some of the capitalist components of commercial rap can promote positive messages to up-and-coming artists:

> "With commercial hip hop, there are two sides. Firstly, it's a bad thing because they encourage the youth to smoke drugs and drink 'dirty sprite' or Codeine. This can negatively affect any person's life. On the other hand, they rap about money…which is a good thing. Nobody wants to stay broke. When they rap about money, they influence other rappers to go and get money, in order to change their lives for the better. It has the ability to change a person's life, good and bad" (MindSkillz, interview, 2021).

In addition, MindSkillz, in response to his views about South African hip hop, stated that:

> "Hip hop in South Africa just wants to be too commercial. People think they are in the United States, but they live in SA. They can't make their art original. Yes, I understand that things have changed, but they are changing in a way that local artists are taking other people's styles. It is copy and paste all the time" (MindSkillz, interview, 2021).

Similarly, to MindSkillz, Bee Mayne RSA also argued that artists in South Africa lean towards the commercial side of hip hop, in comparison to the traditional version of underground hip hop:

> "We are here in Makhanda but we sound like we are from overseas. I was raised by Boom Bap, but nowadays I know that I cannot do a full Boom Bap EP anymore, because there is a small community of that sound…and many listeners have left. We

> need to develop our brands and the movement, with healthier competition, not only for the music but also for the local community" (Bee Mayne RSA, interview, 2021).

The majority of the respondents were very critical of the commercialised South African hip hop currently surfacing in media culture. While the other participants focused on the bad influence of the capitalistic aspect of commercial hip hop, in South Africa and abroad, Ecalpar commented on a balance that is needed between commercial and underground hip hop. Although he believed that the content-driven material is slowly starting to make a profit, he stated that conscious hip hop cannot compete financially with commercial music because it appeals to a different market. However, Ecalpar commented that he is still unwilling to sacrifice his admiration of conscious hip hop, because he believed that there is a story that is being told by the content-driven hip hop, which is embedded into the songs. In drawing a clear distinction between commercial and conscious hip hop in Makhanda, and in South Africa in general, he said:

> "It serves a bigger message than the lyrics that are designed for people to dance. I'm glad that I got in touch with the knowledge-based era. To whoever is doing Trap or whatever…it is not play place to judge. The hip hop that we were exposed to has a lot of knowledge, because the era itself was going through a lot of transitions, and it had to educate the masses. I just want to say thank you to the people who brought that kind of music to my time…and encouraged people like me to start crafting my own music" (Ecalpar, interview, 2021).

According to Haupt (2008: 216), hip hop helps the youth to critically engage with their socio-economic and political realities. Therefore, the ability for these local artists to recognise the financial differences and rewards between conscious and commercial hip hop often leads to many artists abandoning the knowledge-led material to the fiscally lucrative, and frequently sexist and misogynistic content. However, while others exit the hip hop scene to pursue other careers, most local Makhanda artists are unwilling to give in to the pressures of commercial hip hop. In doing so, they use conscious hip hop to articulate a form of resistance against the dominant ideologies represented in commercial rap. While most of the respondents acknowledge the shift from conscious to commercial that most local artists take, others identify the uniqueness of Makhanda rap. It is through this originality and authenticity that a resistance to the dominant ideologies and capitalist normalities perpetrated through commercial hip hop is created. By curating their own version of hip hop, against the grain of the current wave of South African hip hop, most local artists have created a space where urban youth identities are

rethought, renegotiated and reconstructed.

When asked about how they perceive the community of hip hop in Makhanda, two categories emerged from the respondents: firstly, the local artists are producing original content, and secondly, that the local community is shifting from conscious to commercial rap. Azlan described the hip hop community of Makhanda in the following ways:

> "I believe that we are creating something else. We have adapted a new wave of sound in Makhanda, but the lyrics are not the same as the mainstream music uses. I believe we still hold those values of conscious hip hop, of sharing information and wisdom. We have knowledge behind the lyrics, instead of just saying whatever comes to mind. I'm confused as to why artists use hip hop for something else. Maybe it is what is exciting now?" (Azlan, interview, 2021).

In a similar fashion, uTamkhulu Wakho added that the content produced locally is unlike the national and international commercial rap. He began by introducing the following:

> "We are different here in Makhanda. Only a few artists moving to that side…but you don't see them at Boom Bap shows. Yes, we have those rappers but they do not get a lot of attention. We are trying to keep it the way it was, even though hip hop is constantly changing. Preferably, if you want to rap, you must stick to the already established Makhanda sound" (uTamkhulu Wakho, interview, 2021).

In addition, Bee Mayne RSA also contributed to the idea of distinctive hip hop culture in Makhanda.

> "I've been in the studio with some guys creating their own sounds. They have something unique. To be from somewhere, that is not Johannesburg, Durban or Cape Town, and has the ability to come up with some new sounds means that you are bringing something new to the table. We are doing this generation of music where we are aware of what's going on, in and around the world…we are being pushed by our dreams" (Bee Mayne, interview, 2021).

Although Epic the Scriptwriter is not familiar with the new up-and-coming artists emerging from Makhanda, he also argued that there is a specific gift that exists in this small local community. However, he noted that there is a significant difference in the nature of Makhanda back then, compared to what is happening today:

> "Makhanda is a talented town, but the only thing I think might be lacking is that there

> are too many rappers but not a lot of people that push the movement forward. People like Rob-E, who used to run *Hipocalypse* at Rhodes Music Radio and X-Nasty, of course. They were innovators and there were more movements back then. As *Supremacy*, we got help, from the X-Nasty's, to get on Hype Magazine, and from those people who had the connections to move you forward" (Epic, interview, 2021).

On the flip side of the coin, while most respondents agree with the views mentioned above, others tend to focus on the how some local artists shift their attention to commercialised hip hop. Not only that, they also point out the rift from traditional forms of hip hop within the holistic nature and structure of the Makhanda community, i.e. event organisers and club owners. MindSkillz stated that many local rappers have conformed to the dominant ideologies in media culture and have embraced those actions and attitudes as their own:

> "Their ideas are based on what they seeing mostly on television. Most of Makhanda artists don't want to be seen as underground MCs, they want to be local celebrities right now. Instead making their own, they are coping other people's styles" (MindSkillz, interview, 2021).

However, he still argued that Makhanda rap has two different versions of hip hop. In addition, he reiterated the fact that the cypher plays a significant role in determining which rappers possessed the skills, and those who are commercially inclined:

> "In a cypher, anything can happen. It is not about cars or money…so it is hard for them to participate in a cypher. When we talking about a cypher, we are talking about raw hip hop. You hardly see these local celebrities in cyphers. Go to their bedroom studios, that's where they are" (MindSkillz, interview, 2021).

Even though uBhut' Illy acknowledged the bodies of work that were produced locally, which helped curate the existing structure of hip hop in the local community, from artists like Artefacts and Dopeless Narcotics (D'Narcs), he commented on the current state of Makhanda rap:

> "Based on my initial statement, we are driven by our stomach and not by our hearts and souls. We are always questioning whether Umhlobo Wenene radio is going to play our work so that they can give you a cheque at the end of the month" (Bhut' Illy, interview, 2021).

Nevertheless, he noted that there is a strain of hip hop that still exists in Makhanda that does not follow the commercialised version that is continuously promoted by media culture, i.e.

radio:

> "Currently, on the local content, I have been kind of enjoying these Battle MCs. This Jungle East Cape Battle kids can write, and they are creative because they do it for the love. So, if these kids can channel that kind of energy into making music…we could go a long way" (Bhut' Illy, interview, 2021).

X-Nasty commented on how the artists who own these studios have an undesirable impact to rap industry, not only in local communities, but also in general:

> The culture is now based on you and your Instagram and Facebook friends. The twist of the community of hip hop is that they don't want to acknowledge the negative part of how only some people have the privilege and access to recording equipment, which even made people more selfish to the commercial side. Some people write about girls and other things that is brewing negativity in the community. So, this is what we are fighting against. Basically, for us, we wanted to see competition, inviting some lyricism from MCs" (Xolile Madinda, interview, 2021).

Instead of conforming to commercial hip hop in media culture, X-Nasty explained how he negated these dominant ideologies and created a platform of resistance, which encouraged other local rapper to start rethinking their identities:

> "Having bedroom studios killed the hunger to write and to give out something with substance. This is why I have an event called *The Return of the Cypher*; its purpose is to bring back that hunger…and it is difficult for these young MCs to go to cyphers because nowadays everything is rehearsed" (Xolile Madinda, interview, 2021).

Kellner (1995: 188) states that "rap can circulate oppositional thought and action, and can empower people to struggle against the system of oppression". Moreover, "resistance not only takes the form of musical and cultural expression, but it also takes multiple forms of resistance in everyday life and social relations" (Kellner, 1995: 188). Therefore, conscious hip hop, in Makhanda, is used to generate a creative oppositional worldview that not only to critiques commercial hip hop, but also contests socio-political authenticities of urban youth. It also provides a platform in which urban youth are able to denounce forms of racism, levels of poverty, misrepresentations, and exclusion; as well as constructs a public space whereby the urban can respond and reflect about how their perceive the world, and it encourages young people to renegotiate their identities.

5.5. HIP HOP AS A TOOL OF EXPRESSION

The hip hop community in Makhanda not only use this genre as a platform for the urban youth to speak out about social and political issues they experience in their environments, but they also used it as a means of expression. Moreover, hip hop also produces "opportunities for subjects to renegotiate their world views, enhance their analytical abilities and influence their futures as educated citizens" (Haupt, 2008: 217). Conscious hip hop not only helps local artists express themselves, but it only helps its audience by creating "a positive emphasis on the need to work for change within the community" (Kellner, 1995: 186). When the participants were asked about the expressive nature of hip hop, the majority of them responded with a positive affirmation, stating that conscious hip hop, especially, does influence individuals to express themselves. When asked how hip hop has shaped their identities, most respondents believed that hip hop was the catalyst for their identity reformation, while others stated that there were other factors around hip hop that influenced their identity reconstruction, and therefore used hip hop as a desired vehicle of expression.

In response to questions mentioned above, MindSkillz stated that hip hop has the ability to release the inner-extroverted characteristics of individuals:

> "Sometimes you will catch someone who is an introvert…but when they listen to hip hop, they can have an outer body experience and act a different way. Hip hop in a way can bring out the inner beast in you" (MindSkillz, interview, 2021).

In addition, he commented on not only how hip hop helped reshape his identity, but also how it helped him out of a gangster lifestyle:

> "Growing up, just like any teenager from the township, I was involved with a lot of bad things. When I became involved with hip hop, I couldn't do *those* things…I'm in the public eye now. So, it changed my personality to the point where I have to be aware and conscious about everything I do. That's why people say that I started off as a street thug and then became a nerd, because in hip hop one has to read and be educated. That's why I decided to go back to school and finish my degree. Everything changed" (MindSkillz, interview, 2021).

In a similar fashion, uBhut' Illy believed that hip hop brought him out of his shell, as he reflected upon how he was growing up compared to how he identifies himself as a hip hop artist today:

> "I was very insecure and anxious as a kid, until I met hip hop. At first, it was an anger thing, and I didn't know how to express it. I found that writing helped with that, because you channel that anger into something creative. Whatever emotion you going through, it is healthy to write about it, and express it in a creative way. Nowadays, I think in hip hop…I think in rhymes. Hip hop had been with me my whole life. It has changed the way I look at the world, relationships, everything. It is so much for you" (Bhut' Illy, interview, 2021).

In the song entitled *Born and Bred* (2012), with co-rapper *Too Chilled* (D'Narcs), Bhut' Illy shared his experiences of being raised in Makhanda, which promotes a social consciousness for his audience, in order to inform them about his complicated relationship with the town, as well as promoting self-awareness:

"Born and bred in a small city
Where the tsotsi's roll deep, and they all skivi
Welcome to the townships, buddy
Please don't feed the animals,
You give a fiend a finger, they'll be sure to rip a hand or two
A by-product of a tiny town"

Once he had entered the Makhanda hip hop scene, uBhut' Illy recalled that the well-established older hip hoppers also influenced him, in terms of which version of hip hop he should be focusing on:

> "There was this whole misconception that if you were anti-mainstream, you were conscious. That definitely shaped the way I listened to hip hop, because I was young and impressionable. If someone I looked up said, 'Jay-Z is wack'. I am also thinking, yeah, f*ck Hov! It was all about getting approval from these grown men…we were about of boys with no fathers, and no role models, trying to make sense of their lives. Eventually, in a small town, you are going to gravitate towards hip hop" (Bhut' Illy, interview, 2021).

In as much as hip hop does help individuals express themselves, there are also social issues that exist outside and around hip hop that shape urban youth identities. Following the trend of two previous respondents, Bee Mayne RSA also believed that hip hop helped him blow out of his bubble:

> "I was a shy person growing up. There is a larger majority of things that I can do now because of hip hop; it inspired me to get on my studies, join a local soccer team, and most importantly, it taught me to be curious and helped developed my own brand, i.e. Village Kid. It's not just about the music…it is about learning. If you listen to artists like Nas, Prokid and ProVerb, they tell you to wake up and grind. I think that is how we can grow the local community as a whole" (Bee Mayne, interview, 2021).

UTamkhulu Wakho also found that the use of hip hop for expression allowed him to think in a different way. Artists such as Nipsey Hussle, and KRS-One introduced him to other facets of knowledge and education, especially learning about black history and different perspectives of religious views:

> "The person that I am now is because of hip hop…I was raised by hip hop, and I wouldn't be the person that I am today without it. I was unaware about people like Marcus Garvey; I didn't learn about him at school…it was because of hip hop. I'm branding myself (Being Black) because of hip hop. I was a Christian before, and I was listening to songs from artists like Rass Kass (Interview with a Vampire) and Hopsin (Ill Mind of Hopsin 7). So, it has shaped me a lot. This is why I worry about the things that are happening now because of the influence of commercial hip hop" (UTamkhulu Wakho, interview, 2021).

As one can deduct from these responses, hip hop does help individuals to express themselves. However, it is in the direction of conscious hip hop that these local artists generally gravitate because of its knowledge-based content. This allows these artists and audiences to gain access to additional information, as well as a platform to speak out in the public sphere. Whilst the newer Makhanda rappers responded to the question at hand in a personal way, the older hip hoppers provided more general accounts on how people use hip hop as a tool of expression. Ecalpar stated that hip hop did not directly reshape his identity, because he started writing after being influenced by the eldest person in his family; his grandmother. However, in response, he commented on the general concept of expression:

> "My philosophy is that expression is the opposite of depression. Almost like, if you don't have a channel or outlet for you to express yourself, you will be plugged up and that will lead you to be depressed. So, hip hop creates that platform of expression that helps people regain some sort of power over that depression, as they talk about their stories. Hip hop gives people empowerment" (Ecalpar, interview, 2021).

This outlook is shared with Azlan Makalima, as he stated that hip hop is supposed to be used

as a tool to share knowledge or wisdom, from a bird's eye view. He responded by saying that hip hop is a tool to express views and opinions, as well as a means to inform audiences about the on-going social and political issues in society:

> "You, as an artist, are supposed to see things in society from afar, and then your duty is to notify people and keep them aware, and alert about what is happening and what is going to happen in our communities. I think hip hop should be, can be, and is supposed to be used as something that awakes the consciousness of people" (Azlan, interview, 2021).

In addition, Azlan Makalima stated that media culture plays a significant part of how people choose to express themselves. He added that:

> "When people get exposed to the same type of hip hop more frequently and every day, the will get conditioned to the commercial stuff, because that is what the media does. People get their ideas based on what they see, and ignore everything else. If we can use the conscious movement in the same way that mainstream hip hop is used, then maybe people could be conscious as well…they will be more conditioned or programmed to conscious hip hop and consciousness" (Azlan, interview, 2021).

In creating Around Hip Hop and Fingo Festival, X-Nasty stated that it was his uncle that influenced his consciousness:

> "Hip hop did not make us conscious, it was the surrounding factors. This is why I say I was conscious before conscious hip hop. It is not because I've listen to conscious then became, it was the environment I grew up in, and my uncle who forced the self-awareness of who I am and what my role is" (Xolile Madinda, interview, 2021).

However, by using hip hop, X-Nasty was able to curate a platform for urban youths to express themselves. When asked about expression within hip hop, Epic the Scriptwriter commented about what has been going on the Black Lives Matter Movement (BLM). He mentioned that hip hop artists around the world have entered the media culture to order to voice their opinions on what has been going on in North America. According to Oware (2018), "most recently, several rappers have passionately address cases of murder by police officers". Rappers like Lil Baby, DaBaby, Tech N9ne, Tumi (aka Stogie T), and Nasty C – just to mention a few – have all touched on the topic of police brutality, as well as the BLM movement. Moreover, according to Oware (2018), some of these artists who "do not view or classify themselves as activists [expressed] the sentiments of BLM". Therefore, in terms of musical expression

through the hip hop mouthpiece, Epic the Scriptwriter stated that socially conscious hip hop helps people express themselves about personal and general issues that happen locally and internationally:

> "If it is done properly, I think hip hop is the most influential shit that young people can fucken get into. It's like writing a diary but making it rhyme…because usually black people do not like writing in diaries. Hip hop can also take something negative and turn it into knowledge-driven subjects…I mean we can go deep and speak about what is happening with the controversy around the BLM movement. I guess since it is COVID-19 now, even commercial artists are being honest now…those filters are fading off, which is beautiful because it shows within the music" (Epic, interview, 2021).

In his song, *Few Good Men* (2018), Epic writes about women empowerment and encourages men in the community to change their ways, which social change by engaging with issues related to GBV, and gender politics:

"Mama never liked Papa, Papa used to beat her,
I always thought he liked drama,
Why won't you just leave her?
And now I look at Mama like she God, My Athena
And now that you a gift from God, Nank'uNina
We both forgave my Papa, now he knows how to treat her,
I too I'm like my Papa, I just fight that demeanour"

In addition, under the rap duo *Supremacy*, Epic co-raps, in *People in Mind* (2006), that if hip hop is written for the people who truly appreciate its art form, this global phenomenon can be used to create social change in the community, especially the mind sets of those members:

"Every time I embrace a page, I have to do it in an open-minded way,
Cause what my lines would say, could affect you and your mind with change
Cause I rhyme in ways not specific to the mainstream,
So all you fragile beings, open your mind and let me in,
Specifically, knowledge is a gateway to divinity
So, I'm not going to fabricate hip hop to suit the cliché imagery"
…

"Our souls are hip hop because they are straight from the source

Like the image of God, we got you all trapped in your thoughts

Integrity of an emcee gets sicker each other time

To be ahead of time, true hip hop has got people in mind"

As we have seen from the above responses from the participants, conscious hip hop in Makhanda has helped local artists and their audiences to express their views in varying ways. Conscious hip hop in Fingo Village has played a particular role in rethinking and shaping the identities of urban youth. Much like the artists of American conscious rap, Fingo artists' dialogues and influences are rooted in past and present of not only South African history, but the history of the Fingo area as well. In this community, social activists and conscious hip hop performers and poets/artists have formed a platform whereby urban youth can rethink and reconstruct their identities, whilst engaging with the locally curated conscious hip hop. Around hip hop and Fingo Festival aimed to bring the community together in the Fingo Township and Makhanda, by hosting workshops, dialogues and various activities for both children and young individuals in Makhanda. The following section looks at the case of Fingo Village, and explores how *Around Hip Hop* has been used to create opportunities for social change in Makhanda.

5.6. HIP HOP AND SOCIAL CHANGE

From 2011 to 2019, Around Hip Hop, and certain events and organisations involved with this movement, has created opportunities for social change. Not only have that, a number of locally produced songs from hip hop artists in the Makhanda community been drawn from aspects of society. Events such as *Skate Ubuntu, Makhanda Rap and Dance Battles, BUA Poetry Society* and *RU Hip Hop Society* have all contributed to changing how the urban youth renegotiate their identities. When asked about hip hop and social change, most of the respondents agreed that conscious hip hop songs and events have contributed to the betterment of the Makhanda community, whether it is through creating awareness about the socio-political events that occur locally, nationally and globally, or fundraising in order to build new structures within the community.

Ecalpar recalled a time in Makhanda hip hop history where he used to host events that were aimed at community bridging and social change. Although he admitted that he has not been involved with such events, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, he stated the following about

previously hosted events:

> "We had a project, in 2007, with The Artefacts. We had a show that combined all the MCs from East Makhanda, as well as Fingo guys. The show was called *Grahamstown's Finest*…we co-hosted with BUA and RU Hip Hop Society at Rhodes. We had a crazy line-up; guys like Creeper Reborn, Supremacy, X-Nasty, T.I.P., San the Instrumentalist, and Joza Raw. We also hosted shows during the NAF, at Olde 65, Monastry and EQ" (Ecalpar, interview, 2021).

BUA and RU Hip Hop, in collaboration with RMR and Around Hip Hop, spread the movement within the Rhodes University campus. Due to the political history of segregation and oppression in Makhanda, some hip hop artists and activists attempted to create events that were aimed at bridging the gap between the West and East parts of the community. In addition, uBhut' Illy also recalled that, even though such events have not happened for a long time, there were a number of hip hop artists trying to get back to the Makhanda community:

> "I remember X-Nasty used to mobilise these conscious cats, including myself, for community developments. Ecalpar and Fanatikas were dudes who really tried to give back. It is all about money in Makhanda…we might have good ideas but we get discouraged because the funds run out. I know hardened criminals whose lives have been flipped by hip hop. Ace Nondlwana started Makhanda Rap Battles and he stopped robbing people, for 5 years. There were poetry nights at the Duna Library and Bionic Breakers. So, hip hop is power and, if wielded well, it can affect a whole lot of change" (Bhut' Illy, interview, 2021).

The Makhanda Dance and Rap Battles aimed not only to empower and inspire local hip hop enthusiasts to partake, but were also involved with high school youth programmes. Azlan Makalima stated that most of the community based hip hop events in Makhanda involve hip hop, schools, and radio:

> "I used to host sessions on Sundays called *Food for Thought*...it was a cypher that I believe developed the youth. I believe radio is one of the tools that helps shape hip hop in this community. It helps promote local rapper and social change in town. Growing up, we had hip hop in school. I think if hip hop could be used in schools, at a grassroots level or as a tool generator to inform and educate the youth. We can have dialogues and workshops to teach kids how hip hop can be used as a tool for them to excel in their academics. Hip hop events are the only ones I know that can shape communities"

(Azlan, interview, 2021).

Another event that yielded opportunities for social change was called Skate Ubuntu. Skate Ubuntu was an organisation designed to create a skate park, with the help of the Makana Municipality and Around Hip Hop, in the township of the outer Makhanda community (uBhut` Illy interview, 2021). This initiative was created to teach underprivileged urban youth how to skate, as well as to develop other life skills. Bee Mayne RSA stated that he was motivated by this collaboration, because he also picked up skating in Makhanda:

> "I am happy there is a skate park in Hlalani, because it is inspiring kids to get off the streets and do something new for a change. Hip hop does bring light to peoples' lives…it provides you with skills that you can live off. I remember that X-Nasty was also involved with the Skate Ubuntu movement. Before they built the skate park, Around Hip Hop also had a mini skate park, where they hosted events, cyphers and freestyle sessions. This made me see a lot of change in the community" (Bee Mayne, interview, 2021).

MindSkillz also commented on how he was a part of a hip hop community-based social event:

> "They were cleaning up the Fingo Square…it was conducted by X-Nasty. The project was influenced by hip hop or Around Hip Hop for the urban youth in the community. I think this was in 2019. I think that if hip hop affects the youth, then it can create change within the community. Right now, it is only the youth that can change the community. That's how things will change, from the bottom up. As soon as the youth is affected by change, they can influence older people to change too" (MindSkillz, interview, 2021).

Not only do these hip hop related events create opportunities for social change, local artists have produced hip hop songs that aim to educate the urban youth audiences about the socio-political issues that exist in their community. MindSkillz argued that conscious hip hop songs comment on the issues faced by the communities:

> "We grew up listening to Macabre. There is this track about community matters…he has this line: *'Kucinyiwe umbane apha kum endlini but eTown kusalayitiwe'*. People in town still have electricity while black people in the township are living in darkness. He raps about a community matter and how black people have been side-lined. This inspires change with the youth because they understand the things we talk about, and they dwell on those things. Most of the youth idolise the artists they listen to. If there is a kid looking up to me, it would be easy to reconstruct his identity because he wants to

do what I'm doing" (MindSkillz, interview, 2021).

Bee Mayne RSA also stated that a number of songs from local artists address the social ills that occur in Makhanda, in an attempt to create social cohesion and social change:

> "We have our own issues as a town, such as potholes, no water, lack of resources and poor Makana Municipality public service delivery. As artists, these are things we need to talk about…what we say in our songs and what we do, as creatives, can give others some sort of light and enlighten our communities" (Bee Mayne, interview, 2021).

UTamkhulu Wakho argued that for social change to occur, local artists need to use aspects of media culture in order to get their messages across:

> "We need to flood conscious rap into local radio stations and television. If we can hear and see conscious rap in the media more often, it can do some change. For example, there is a line in '*Where I'm from*', by Azlan and Macabre, that talks about two guys holding each other's belts, while trying to stab each other. There are a lot of things that rappers talk about that have happened in our society. There more people listen to these songs, the more we can change the way we think about things" (uTamkhulu Wakho, interview, 2021).

In answering the question about hip hop and social change, Epic the Scriptwriter provided a top to bottom holistic overview of how hip hop artists, either from the USA or locally, use this genre to create change in their social environment. Epic The Scriptwriter stated the following:

> "It definitely creates change. You can take it from N.W.A., or take it from P.O.C. and bring it down to Def Boyz in Makhanda. This is what hip hop has been doing for people. The building of conscious hip hop in South Africa was from Emile XY…looking at what he has done; it reminds you that you are all part of a community, a people that need to grow together. DJ Kamma was at Dakawa Community Centre doing breakdancing sessions with Bionic Breakers, while X Nasty was doing Def Camps. These people played a bigger role that they think they played. They think they were doing something small and maybe never got funding from the government but they hosted these events…and that changed society" (Epic, interview, 2021).

Whether it may be from its point of origin, in the Bronx, or many communities around the world, especially Fingo Village in Makhanda, "rap is about creating identities as rappers

establish their identities through their music and their audience identify with oppositional culture and the critical attitudes and posture of rap, thus producing oppositional identities" (Kellner, 1995: 188). In addition, according to Haupt (2008: 184), "a significant amount of conscious hip hop continues to enjoy an underground following, and is often employed by networks of youth workers and community activists". Therefore, with the help of Around Hip Hop events, conscious hip hop artists in Makhanda, have been involved in and/or have created hip hop related events that were aimed at promoting social cohesion and encourage opportunities for social change.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Decker (1993, cited in Haupt, 2001: 177) states that "the hip hop nation understands, today, control over the media means the ability to control representations of the real as well". Therefore, according to Kellner (1995: 174), "African-Americans have traditionally used music and musical idioms as a privileged form of resistance to oppression". Hip hop music, which emerged in the 1980s, has been used as a tool of expression amongst the urban youth against these pre-existing dominant oppressive ideologies that still exist in society. Certain various subgenres of hip hop became a global phenomenon that soon affected urban youths from numerous multicultural backgrounds around the world. Haupt (2008: 184) states that "the version of hip hop that is largely seen as a tool for critical and socially conscious engagement is often called conscious hip hop". Conscious hip-hop "challenges the dominant cultural, political, philosophical, and economic consensus and aims to subtly inform the public of true political and social issues which are predominantly obscured by the mainstream media" (Fox, 2014: 1). The commercialisation of hip hop culture generated a shift of emphasis in subject matter and content within the genre, due to the ever-growing dominant capitalist ideologies influences produced by the major record labels. This shift, from a knowledge-based music content of expression to a glorified 'gangsta' rap style, caused the Black Consciousness embedded lyrics to change to messages that focus on capitalist needs, sexism and misogyny. The global phenomenon has reached remote parts of the world, as it influences urban youth identities globally. In the case of South Africa, "rap music developed in the Cape Town area as a form of resistance to apartheid" (Künzler, 2011: 1). The hip hop culture of African-American youth has not replaced other aspects of culture and identity; however, youths are using it to achieve their aspirations and dreams as well as a sense of self in the post-apartheid world.

According to Haupt (2008: 70), "rap in South Africa in no longer a vehicle of expression but is also a means of earning a significant income". Therefore, "this dual legacy of the genre has given rise to highly contested claims to its authenticity" (Haupt, 2008: 70). However, some rappers are unwilling to compromise their artistic integrity. There are hip hop movements in smaller parts of the country that also play a vital role in further developing South African hip hop. Conscious hip hop has strong grassroots forces in Makhanda and the Eastern Cape, "which is identified as one of the poorest and least developed province" (Watkins, 2012: 64-5). In Makhanda, the Fingo Revolutionary Movement (FRM) recruits young people, trains them to become rappers, and educates them "in the creative and ideological aspects of hip hop" (Watkins, 2012: 64). According to Schoon (2018: 7), some of the young people in this

community are “ordinary out-of-school, unemployed young men from township families who lived precarious lives, struggling to make ends meet and unable to enter higher education”, and spend “long hours huddled in a back room creating hip-hop digital media and learning new digital skills”. Xolile Madinda, along with his friends and fellow artists and activists, continues to create public spaces and platforms where young artists and audiences can use hip hop as a vehicle of cultural expression. In doing so, Madinda has encouraged the urban youth to rethink and reconstruct their identities, and has created opportunities for social change within community. Conscious hip hop in Fingo Village plays a particular role in rethinking and reshaping the identities of urban youth. Issues of land, identity and economic development in this community are deeply rooted in the injustices of the past. Much like the artists of American conscious rap, who felt that it was their social responsibility to rethink and comment on urban black politics based on the past and present, Fingo artists’ dialogues and influences are rooted in the past and present of not only South African history, but the history of the Fingo area as well. In this community, a group of social activists and conscious hip hop performers and poets/artists have formed the Fingo Festival. This project is a project devoted to bringing the community together in the Fingo Township and Makhanda. It does this by constructing a platform for the performing arts, as well as hosting workshops, dialogues and various activities for both children and young individuals in Makhanda. Initially, Madinda, and the Fingo Revolutionary Movement, recruited enthusiastic young people interested in being part of the hip hop community in Makhanda, and trained them to be better rappers. Therefore, *Around Hip Hop* is where ‘old and new’ hip hop artists and audiences, in these community-led music events, social platforms and interactive public spaces, negotiated and contested their urban youth identities.

In this thesis, qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to provide evidence that conscious hip hop has the ability to influence urban youth identities in Makhanda. Eight local hip hop artists and activities were asked whether they believe that hip hop has affects the way they their audiences rethink and reconstruct their way of understanding the world. In addition, this research examines the agency of marginalised subjects of Makhanda, in the context of global capitalism, the information age and ideologies of oppression and resistance. Furthermore, it studies the “opportunities of agency on a local level through the appropriation of certain kinds of hip hop that critically engage with US cultural imperialism and the legacy of Apartheid” (Haupt, 2008: xvii). An analysis of the music produced by these local artists, and responses of the participants is conducted, in order to explore counter-hegemonic discourses, forms of expression, social change opportunities and effects of the hip

hop culture within a multicultural approach employed by Kellner (1995).

REFERENCE LIST:

Adams, T.M. and Fuller, D.B. 2006. 'The Words Have Changed but The Ideology Remains the Same: Misogynistic Lyrics in Rap Music. *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 6, pp. 938 - 957.

Adaso, H. 2015. Defining Conscious Rap. Available at http://rap.about.com/od/genresstyles/p/ConsciousRap.htm. Retrieved: 30 July 2016

Alim, H. S. & Pennycook, A. (2007). Glocal Linguistic Flows: Hip-Hop Culture(s), Identities, and the Politics of Language Education. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 6:2, 89-100, DOI: 10.1080/15348450701341238.

Alridge, D. & Steward, J. (2005). Hip Hop in History: Past, Present, and Future. *The Journal of African American History*, Vol. 90, No. 3, The History of Hip Hop (Summer, 2005), pp. 190-195.

Babbie, E. & Mouton, J. 2001. *The Practice of Social Research*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.

Barker, C. & Jane, E.A. (2016). *Cultural Studies: Theory and practice* (fifth edition). London: Sage Publications.

Blanchard, B. (1999). The Social Significance of Rap & Hip-Hop Culture. *Ethics of Development in a Global Environment (EDGE): 'Poverty & Prejudice: Media and Race'*. [Accessed April 10 2021]. https://web.stanford.edu/class/e297c/poverty_prejudice/mediarace/socialsignificance.htm.

Bodunrin, I. (2014). Rap, graffiti and social media in South Africa today. *Media Development,* 4, pp. 1-6.

Blumenfeld, J. & Nutall, M. (1972). Grahamstown's Fingo Village: From Poverty To Paradise? *Reality*, 4(3), 15–19.

Clark, M. K. (2012). Hip Hop as Social Commentary in Accra and Dar es Salaam. *African Studies Quarterly*, Volume 13, Issue 3, Summer 2012, pp. 23-46.

Cohen, D. (2008). *The role of Rap/Hip Hop music in the meaning and maintenance of identity in South African youth*. Unpublished MA Thesis. Johannesburg: University of the Witswatersrand.

Coplan, D. (2005). God rock Africa: Thoughts on politics in popular black performance in South Africa. *African Studies*, 64:1, 9-27, DOI: 10.1080/00020180500139015.

Davis, H. (2004). *Understanding Stuart Hall*. London: Sage Publications.

Delaney, C. & Kaspin, D. (2011). *Investigating Culture: An Experiential Introduction to Anthropology*. New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell

Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (eds.) 2000. *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (second edition). California: Sage Publications.

Diallo, D. (2015). Intertextuality in Rap Lyrics. *Revue française d'études américaines* Volume 142, Issue 1, pp. 40-54.

Dicks, B., Henwood, K, Housley, W. 2016. *Qualitative Research*. Sage Publishers.

Drissel, D. (2009). Hip-Hop Hybridity for a Glocalized World: African and Muslim Diasporic Discourses in French Rap Music. *Common Ground Research Networks,* Vol. 2, Iss. 3, pp. 121-144. doi:10.18848/1835-4432/CGP/v02i03/40634.

Errey, M. (2021). *History of Hip Hop Music*. Available at: https://www.englishclub.com/vocabulary/music-hip-hop.htm [Accessed June 5 2021]

Forman, M. & Neal, M. A. (2004). *That's The Joint! The Hip Hop Studies Reader*.

Fox, N. (2014). *Top 10 'Socially Conscious' Rappers*. Available at: https://www.hitthefloor.com/features/top-10-socially-conscious-rappers/ [Accessed June 5 2021].

Grocotts Mail Online. (2009). XHASA - BACKGROUND OF AREA. Retrieved: 3 August 2016.

Haery, T. C. (2020). (Pro-) Socially conscious hip hop: Empathy and attitude, prosocial effects of hip hop [Master's thesis, Ohio State University]. OhioLINK Electronic Theses and Dissertations Center. http://rave.ohiolink.edu/etdc/view?acc_num=osu1587747399137313

Hall, S. ([1973] 1980): *'Encoding/decoding'. In Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies* (Ed.): Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972-79 London: Hutchinson, pp. 128-38, ('Encoding and Decoding in Television Discourse', 1973).

Hammett, D. (2012). Reworking and resisting globalising influences: Cape Town hip-hop. *GeoJournal*, Vol. 77, No. 3 (2012), pp. 417-428.

Hanzi, M. (2016). *Hip-hop in Tanzania.* Available at: https://www.musicinafrica.net/magazine/hip-hop-tanzania [Accessed 4 June 2021]

Haupt, A. (2008). *Stealing Empire: P2p, intellectual property and hip-hop subversion.* Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council.

Ibrahim, A. (1999). Becoming Black: Rap and Hip-Hop, Race, Gender, Identity, and the Politics of ESL Learning. *TESOL Quarterly*, Vol. 33, No. 3, Critical Approaches to TESOL (Autumn, 1999), pp.349-369.

Jay, Martin. (1973). *The Dialectical Imagination*. London: Heinemann Educational Books.

Kellner, D. (1995). *Media Culture: Cultural studies, identity and politics between the modern and postmodern*. London: Routledge.

Khan, K. (2010). Re-locating South African hip hop into global intercultural communication, *Muziki*, 7:1, 148-160, DOI: 10.1080/18125980.2010.483850.

Kidula, J. N. (2012). The Local and Global in Kenyan Rap and Hip Hop Culture. In: E. Charry (ed.) *Hip Hop Africa: New African Music in Globalizing World*, 171-186. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Künzler, D. (2011). South African Rap Music, Counter Discourses, Identity, and Commodification Beyond the Prophets of Da City. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 37:01, 27-43, DOI: 10.1080/03057070.2011.552540

Lo, F. (2016). *Mbalax in Senegal.* Available at: https://www.musicinafrica.net/magazine/mbalax-senegal [Accessed 4 June 2021]

Loots, L. (2001). Re-situating culture in the body politic. *Agenda*, 16:49, pp. 9-14, DOI: 10.1080/10130950.2001.9675967.

Loots, L. 2003. 'Being a Bitch: Some Questions on the Gendered Globalisation and Consumption of American Hip Hop Urban Culture in Post-Apartheid South Africa. *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity,* No. 57, pp. 65-73.

Louw, H. 2014. 20 Years of Democracy in South Africa, 40 Years of the National Arts Festival, Fingo Festival. *ThinkFest*. Retrieved: 04 August 2016

Mateveke, P. 2013. Stunning the Nation: Representation of Zimbabwean Urban Youth Identity in some Songs by Stunner. *Journal of Hip Hop Studies*.

Monaheng, T. (2014). *Discovering Prophets Of Da City*. Available at: https://africasacountry.com/2014/06/when-adam-haupt-discovered-prophets-of-da-city/ [Accessed June 2016].

Monaheng, T. (2015). *Hip-hop in South Africa*. Available at: https://www.musicinafrica.net/magazine/hip-hop-south-africa [Accessed April 2021].

Muijs, D. (2011). *Doing quantitative research in education with SPSS* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications Ltd https://www.doi.org/10.4135/9781446287989.

Niang, A. (2006). Bboys: Hip- hop culture in Dakar, Sénégal. In: Nilan & Feixa (ed.) *Global Youth? Hybrid Identities, Plural Worlds*.

Niang, A. (2010). *The Hip Hop Movement in Senegal: A 'Revolution' from Below?* Available at: https://www.ascleiden.nl/news/hip-hop-movement-senegal-revolution-below [Accessed 28 May 2021]

Ntarangwi, M. 2009. *East African Hip Hop*: *Youth Culture and Globalisation*. University of Illinois Press: Chicago.

Nyirenda, Z. 2015. Analysing gender construction in the music. Research Dissertation.

Oware, M. (2018) *I got something to say: gender, race, and social consciousness in rap music*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.

Pernegger, L. & Godehart, S. (2007). Townships in the South African Geographic Landscape – Physical and Social Legacies and Challenges. *Training For Township Renewal Initiative.*

Perullo, A. (2012). Imitation and Innovation in the Music, Dress, and Camps of Tanzanian Youth. In: E. Charry (ed.) *Hip Hop Africa: New African Music in Globalizing World*, 182-207. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Perrulo, A. & Fenn, J. (2003). Language Ideologies, Choices, and Practices in Eastern African Hip Hop. *Global Pop, Local Language*. Jackson: U. Press of Mississippi, 2003. 19-51.

Phakhathini, V. (2019). *Golden age of hip-hop a memory trip.* Available at: https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/entertainment/2019-06-14-golden-age-of-hip-hop-a-memory-trip/. [Accessed June 2021].

Pietilä, T. (2017). The Discursive Creation of a Subculture by Conscious Rap Adherents in South Africa. *Suomen Antropologi*, volume 42, issue 2, pp. 25-42.

Rai, R. & Panna, K. (2008). *Introduction to Cultural Studies*. Mumbai: Himalaya Publishing House.

Rose, T. 2008. *The Hip Hop Wars: What We Talk About When We Talk About Hip Hop and Why It Matters*. New York: BasicCivitas.

Rosenburg, S. (2002). Youth, Popular Culture, and Identity. *Safundi*, 3:2, pp.1-14, DOI: 10.1080/17533170200203202

Rubin, B. (2007). "There's Still Not Justice": Youth Civic Identity Development Amid Distinct School and Community Contexts. *Teachers College Record*, Volume 109, Number 2, February 2007, pp. 449–481, Columbia University, 0161-4681

Samper, D. (2014). 'Africa is still our mama': Kenyan rappers, youth identity, and the revitalization of traditional values. *African Identities*, 2:1, 37-51, DOI: 10.1080/1472584042000231773

Segalo, P. (2006). The psychological power of rap music in the healing of black communities. *Muziki*, 3, (1), pp 28–35.

Schoon, A. (2018*). Remixing the tech: The digital media ecologies of hip-hop artists from Grahamstown, South Africa*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town

Silverman, D. (2013). *Doing Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications.

Steele, T. (2003). Critical Theory and British Cultural Studies. *Counterpoints*, 2003, Vol. 168, Critical Theory and the Human Condition: FOUNDERS AND PRAXIS (2003), pp. 222-237.

Steward, J. (2005). MESSAGE IN THE MUSIC: POLITICAL COMMENTARY IN BLACK POPULAR MUSIC FROM RHYTHM AND BLUES TO EARLY HIP HOP. *Political Commentary in Black Popular Music,* pp. 197-225.

Tang, P. (2021). The Rapper as Modern Griot: Reclaiming Ancient Traditions. In: E. Charry (ed.) *Hip Hop Africa: New African Music in Globalizing World*, 79-91. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Taylor, S. J. & Bogdan, R. (1998). *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods: A Guidebook and Resource* (third edition). New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Thompson, Amanda (May 6, 2004). "Gender in Hip Hop: A Research Study" (PDF). Humboldt State University. Retrieved June 9, 2006

Watkins, L. (2012). A Genre Coming of Age: Transformation, Difference, and Authenticity in the Rap Music and Hip-Hop Culture of South Africa. In: E. Charry (ed.) *Hip Hop Africa: New African Music in Globalizing World*, 57-75. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Wigston, D. (1996). The role and functions of radio, in introduction to communication: Journalism, press and radio studies. Course book 5, edited by L. Oosthuizen. Kenwyn: Juta.

Yonezawa, S. (2009). Youth engagement in high schools: Developing a multidimensional, critical approach to improving engagement for all students. *Journal of Educational Change*, 10. 191-209. 10.1007/s10833-009-9106-1.

Zondo, Y. (2008). The History of Hip Hop and conscious Hip Hop. Unpublished Thesis. University of Witwatersrand

ADDITIONAL LINKS:

2 Live Crew – We Want Some Pussy, *What We Are (1986)*

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NYp9x_u930M&ab_channel=n8hundo

Azlan ft Macabre – Where I'm from, *The Late Awakening (2013)*

- https://soundcloud.com/azlan-makalima/where-im-from-ft-macabre?in=azlan-makalima/sets/isiban-emqolombeni-2013

Cashless Society – Hottentot Hop Bantu 1 2, *African Raw Material Vol. 1 (2003)*

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X7KH_i5ciTg&ab_channel=TomMaraisSASC

Cool G ft. Supremacy – Area Code, *Single (2018)*

- https://soundcloud.com/cool-g-music/cool-g-supremacy-epic-optiknerve-area-code

Dead Prez – I am African, *Let's Get Free (2000)*

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-qsmRzyKLaw&ab_channel=deadprez-Topic

Dj Switch – Now Or Never, *Single (2016)*

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vudRAcjr6Vo&ab_channel=djswitchsa

Dopeless Narcotics (D'Narcs) – Born and Bred, *Light-A-Gwaai Vol. 1 (2012)*

- https://soundcloud.com/dopelessnarcotics/08-born-and-bred-mr-nobody

Godessa – Social Ills, *Single (2002)*

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4dr0Y8emMU&ab_channel=Zden%C4%9BkRumpl%C3%ADk

Epic the Scriptwriter – Few Good Men, *Green (2018)*

- https://soundcloud.com/epicthescriptwriter/few-good-men

Macabre – Rhini Emcees, *Single (2020) Multimedia Makenik*

- https://soundcloud.com/multimediamakenik/maca-bre-rhini-emcees

Proverb – I am Hip Hop, *Manuscript (2006)*

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zpM9dsvxgWQ&ab_channel=smokie504

Public Enemy – Fight The Power, *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back (1988)*

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mmo3HFa2vjg&ab_channel=PublicEnemyVEVO

Skwatta Kamp – Politics, *Khut En Joyn (2001)*

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NaLt1yX66vU&ab_channel=SkwattaKamp-Topic

Supremacy – People in Mind, *People in Mind (2006)*

- https://onervemusic.bandcamp.com/track/people-in-mind

Supremacy – Radio, *People in Mind (2006)*

- https://onervemusic.bandcamp.com/track/radio