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The role of Rap/Hip Hop music in the meaning and maintenance of identity in South African youth

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witswatersrand Johannesburg, in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Degree of Master of the Arts (Clinical Psychology).

June 2008

Declaration

I declare that this is my unaided work, and that I have given full acknowledgement to the sources that I have used. This research is being submitted for the Degree of Masters of Arts (Clinical Psychology) at the University of the Witswatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university.

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Dror Cohen

June 2008

Abstract

Although music has seemingly always formed an integral part of human culture, technological advances in contemporary society have increased both its accessibility and portability, allowing for unprecedented production and consumption of a medium that allows individuals to enact and display various social identities during day-to-day life. Furthermore, recent research has demonstrated that youth consume more music that any other age group. Thus music may be considered as a primary cultural influence in the lives of youth. While the bulk of the research conducted in understanding the form and function of this influence has been located in the disciplines of sociology and musicology, Psychologists in Europe and America have become increasingly interested in understanding the role of music in constructing and maintaining identity during this critical period of development. As a contribution to this field of application outside of these contexts and located within a qualitative framework, this study explored the role of Rap/Hip Hop music, as one of the most popular global and local genres of music, in the meaning and maintenance of identity in a cohort of South African youth. The resultant thematic framework illustrated the complex tensions negotiated by youth through assuming Hip Hop culture membership in South Africa. Importantly, the study showed that the nature of Hip Hop culture; its emphasis on self-expression, individuation and critical social awareness dovetails with many of the traditional psychological developmental theories of youth identity. Hip Hop consumption also implied appropriating identity markers from a wide range of social influences, posing challenges to the application of traditional social identity theory in accounting for in and out groupings. This was most pronounced in the way that 'remixing', as a governing musical principle in Hip Hop seems to resonate as key mode of identity and identification amongst its South African consumers. Thus, it seems fitting that South African youth currently in the midst of cultural, economic and political transitions would embrace an eclectic rather than rigidly bounded genre of music with such enthusiasm. In some ways then Hip Hop in South Africa, appears to provide youth with the means to remix past and present, old and new, global and local, self and other.

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Table of Contents

Declaration 1
Abstract 2
Acknowledgements: 3
Table of Contents 4

Chapter 1: Introduction 7
1.1. Introduction 7
1.2. Music 7
1.2.1. Music in Contemporary Times 7
1.2.2. Rap/Hip-Hop, Culture and Identity 9
1.2.3. Music, Meaning and Identity 9
1.2.4. Youth, Music and Identity 10
1.2.5. Youth as an Extension of 'Adolescence' 10
1.2.6. South African Youth 11
1.3. Aim 12
1.4. Chapter Structure 12
1.5. Conclusion 12

Chapter 2: Literature Review 13
2.1. Introduction 13
2.2. Identity 13
2.2.1. Theories of Identity 13
2.2.2. Adolescence and Youth Identity 15
2.2.3. Music and Identity 17
2.3. Rap Music: 20
2.3.1. A Brief History of Rap Culture 20
2.3.2. Rap Music and Identity Across the Globe 21
2.3.3. Rap Music and Identity in Africa 24
2.3.4. Rap Music and Identity in South Africa 25
2.4. Conclusion 27

Chapter 3: Methodology 28
3.1. Introduction 28
3.2. Methodology 28
3.2.1. Qualitative Analysis 28
3.2.2. Thematic Content Analysis 28
3.3. Interview Structure 29
3.4. Data Collection- Sampling 29
3.5. Ethical Considerations 31
3.6. Analysis 31
3.6.1. Contemplating the Analysis 31
3.6.2. Developing the Code 32
3.6.2.1. Reducing the raw information. 32
3.6.2.2. Identifying themes within sub-samples. 32
3.6.2.3. Comparing themes across sub-samples. 32
3.6.2.4. The Creation of the Code. 33

3.6.2.5. Determining the reliability of the code. 33
3.7 Application and Interpretation of the Material 33
3.7.1. Application 33
3.7.2. Interpreting results 34

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion 35

Figure 1. Diagrammatic Representation of the Thematic Structure of the Corpus 35

4.1 Introduction 36
4.2. Exploring The Relationship Between Rap/ Hip Hop and the Meaning and Maintenance of Identity For South African Youth 37
4.2.1 Global versus Local Understanding of Rap music 37
4.2.1.1. Glocalisation. 37
4.2.1.2. Similarities as a culture and lifestyle. 37
4.2.1.3. Remix and globalization. 38
4.2.1.4. Differences as a culture and a lifestyle. 39
4.2.1.5. Hip Hop vs. Kwaito in South Africa. 40
4.2.1.6. Socio-historical differences and variations in understandings of blackness. 41
4.2.2. Private Versus Social Enactments of Hip Hop Culture. 43
4.2.2.1. The use of Rap music in daily life. 43
4.2.2.2. Cultural, social rituals and performance. 45
4.2.2.3. Social Identity Theory and social interaction in Hip Hop culture. 46
4.2.2.4. Remix and pervasive group boundaries. 49
4.2.3. *Authentic versus Commercial Notions of Expression* 51
4.2.3.1. An aesthetic of authenticity 51
4.2.3.2. The relationship between authenticity and global, local and regional spaces. 54
4.2.3.3. Authenticity enacted and expressed through consumption. 55
4.2.3.4. Seeking authenticity as a Hip Hop performer. 56
4.2.4. Hyper-Masculinity, Gender and Social Activism 58
4.2.4.1. Prominent stereotypes within Hip Hop culture. 58
4.2.4.2. The hyper-masculine stereotype. 59
4.2.4.3. Female gender roles and an alternate sense of otherness. 61
4.2.4.4. The Socially committed MC. 61
4.2.5. Competitiveness Versus Communality 63
4.2.6. Critical Versus Easily Influenced 68
4.3. Conclusion 71

Chapter 5: Conclusion 73
5.1. Introduction 73
5.2. Global and Local Tensions 73
5.2.1. Glocalised Culture from a South African Vantage Point 73
5.2.2. Aspirations of blackness: Kwaito vs. Hip-Hop 73
5.3.Private and Social Tensions 75
5.3.1. Public and Private Lives In a South African Hip Hop Community 75
5.3.2. Hip-Hop: Between Group Interactions and Permeable Social Boundaries 75
5.4. Authentic Versus Local Tensions 76
5.4.1. Keeping it Real or Keeping it Bling 76
5.4.2. Being Real through Consumption and Performance 76
5.5. Gender and Social Responsibility 76
5.6. Competition and Community-The Conflict of Western and African Social Practices 77
5.7. Leading or being led 77

5.8. Remixing the Self 77
5.9. Considering the Findings in Relation to the Broader Field 78
5.10. Recommendations 79

References 80

Appendices 87
Appendix A: Participant Information Form 87
Appendix B: Consent Form 89
Appendix C: Consent for Audio Taping of Research Interview 91
Appendix: D: Interview Questions 92

> The issue is not how a particular piece of music or a performance reflects the people but how it produces them, how it creates and constructs an experience- a musical experience (Frith, 1996, p. 109).

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

It appears that music has always formed an integral part of human culture. Recent research has demonstrated that youth consume more music that any other modern age category. Thus music may be considered a primary cultural influence in the lives of youth. While the bulk of the research done in this field has been located in the disciplines of sociology and musicology, Psychologists have become increasingly interested in understanding the role of music in constructing and maintaining identity during this critical period of development (Zillman & Gan, 1997; Tarrant, North & Hargreaves, 2001; Iwamoto, Creswell & Caldwell, 2007). Moreover, the majority of such research has been conducted in Europe and the Unites States of America and to date, there have been no studies of the influence of music on adolescent identity in South Africa.

Hip Hop/Rap music is amongst the most popular genres of music consumed by adolescents in South Africa and throughout the world. This study therefore attempts to contribute to the growing body of research on the influence of music on adolescent identity by focusing on the specific role and place of hip-hop Rap music in the meaning and maintenance of personal and group identity in a cohort of South African youth.

1.2. Music

1.2.1. Music in Contemporary Times

The social psychologists Hargreaves and North (1997) define music as multidimensional and constituted by three separate aspects. The first aspect is the sound (physical component), the second aspect is the way that an individual perceives or relates to the music (subjective component) and the third aspect is the social meaning that is constructed within social groups around a particular style of music. In accordance with this definition a social psychological approach to music must appreciate each dimension of musical experiencees and the possible interactions that may emerge out of them.

The advent of modern technologies such as computer-based digital media and mass volume storage devices have transformed the way that music is created, accessed, transmitted and stored and thus impact the above definition as it is now possible for music to influence daily life to a larger degree. Additionally, such transformations have resulted in the increased portability of musical consumption as well as a greater diversity in the scope of music consumed. Digitized media can be rapidly transmitted across the world. Indeed, consumption of music at such unprecedented levels of influence may be considered a marker of modern middle class[1] South African life. However levels of music consumption vary across age groups.

Zillman and Gan, (1997) suggest that adolescents listen to more music than people of any other age group. In a study of 16-year olds by Fitzgerald et al (1995) in the USA, all of the adolescents interviewed cited music as their most important leisure time interest. The apparent affinity that adolescents have for music implies many hours spent listening to music as well as substantial amounts of money in the purchasing thereof.

This premise seems to hold true in the South African context. Market research in South Africa suggests that its youth also appear to consider music a valuable pastime. Targeting audiences aged between 16 and 35, the radio station YFM (Youth FM)[2] began broadcasting in the Gauteng area in 1997. Its audience had grown to 600 000 listeners after 1 month (www.yworld.co.za, 2007). At the time of conducting this research it was the largest provincial radio station, with 1.2 million YFM listeners within the Gauteng area (yworld.co.za, 2007).

Given the profile of adolescent musical listenership provided above, music may be considered a primary cultural influence on youths' lives in South Africa (Joffe & Ambert, 2003). In recognition of the growing importance of this influence, social psychologists have become increasingly interested in understanding the psychology of music, yielding the social psychology of music; a fresh field of study that seems to be gaining momentum.

Although there is some foundational literature in the field (Tarrant, North & Hargreaves, 2001; Zillman & Gan, 1997; Iwamoto, Creswell & Caldwell, 2007), no significant amount of research focusing on the function of particular kinds of music and identity from a strictly social psychology perspective has yet been undertaken. This study attempted to address this gap in the literature by

[1] The term middle class refers to South African people that are able to meet their primary needs and are thus also able to function as consumers of luxury products such as music merchandise and technology.
[2] YFM is the biggest radio station in the Gauteng region and a major part of its audience are adolescents. YFM also focuses on local and international Rap music in its play listing.

focusing on the social psychology of hip-hop[3] as a particular genre of music and in youth as a purposive target group.

1.2.2. Rap/Hip Hop, Culture and Identity

Rap music as a genre was selected for the study as it is one of the most popular global genres of music (Ogg, & Upshall, 1999). The influence of Rap music is prolific as can be seen in movies, fashion and the music industry. Rap music is considered more than just a form of music but as a lifestyle.

Following the fact that hip-hop originated in America, most formal academic research on the genre was conducted there. However, as the genre has become an increasingly global production so researchers have begun to also seek to understand Hip Hop culture outside of this context (Mitchell, 2001; Basu & Lemelle, 2006). So, although the genre is fundamentally of American origin, it seems commonly appropriated by the specific local cultures in which it is created, transmitted and consumed. Thus, exploring the influence of this genre on South African youth offers interesting insights into the way that such youth position themselves in relation to the rest of the world and within South African societies. As such, this research project is part of a new wave of studies that are seeking to understand more about the global manifestations of Rap music.

Theoretically, the study approached this understanding with an emphasis on what Mitchell (2001) has termed "glocalization". Essentially, the term implies that the global and local often intersect and provide a space for the negotiation of a space or identity that sits between global and local influences. Rap music is therefore regarded as a powerfully glocalized medium that is useful for exploring identity markers such as national identity and 'race' that are negotiated both locally and globally by youth (Mitchell, 2001). According to this theoretical base, music may hold a particular relation to meaning and identity in youth. These concepts are further considered in the following section.

1.2.3. Music, Meaning and Identity

Different people interpret music differently and music could represent any number of meanings simultaneously. Thus, according to Frith (1996) music is not a mere monolithic reflection of a society

[3] Rap and Hip Hop are used synonymously throughout the text. In colloquial language in current society the meaning is the same. In fact the term Rap music is a misnomer as it only refers to the verbal part of the song and not the music (Ogg, & Lipshall,, 1999).

at a given time, nor is it a static marker of identity. It is also an integral part of the daily activities that constitute individual subjectivity. Bound up with this constitution is the meaning that the listening experience holds for the listener.

The literature that focuses on identity is extensive, making the concept difficult to define. It is also difficult to combine all the theories and maintain theoretical consistency. Specifically, there is a discernible overarching tension in the identity literature between those theories that focus predominantly on the individual as the location of a stable identity and alternate perspectives that located identity as a socially-centered and fluid construct. This difference is especially pronounced when music consumption potentially acts as a concrete interface between these two accounts. A theoretical pluralism that could accommodate this tension underpinned the theoretical framework of this study. Although relatively eclectic, this framework emphasized the theoretical contributions of Tajfel's (1981) Social Identity Theory (SIT), Erikson's (1950) developmental theory of identity and some post-structural understandings of identity.

1.2.4. Youth, Music and Identity

For Erickson (1950) adolescence is a period of identity crisis which is resolved through a move towards an identity formation within society. During adolescence, many individuals go through a state of moratorium where time is spent experimenting with different social roles and rules (Berk, 1999). In order for this developmental stage to be successfully completed the adolescent needs to come to terms with his or her own identity within society. The adolescent also needs to begin to individuate from his or her family of origin. Erickson's perspective of identity development and the successful negotiation of the adolescent developmental stage therefore hinges upon the achievement of a stable identity.

1.2.5. Youth as an Extension of 'Adolescence'

Erickson's theory was initially devised to refer to the developmental period and social challenges of adolescence. However in contemporary society the meaning of the stage of adolescence has shifted over time. Many of the challenges once attributed to the physiological period of adolescence are now extended into a person's early twenties. There have been many changes in modern society such as a longer life and vocational specialization that requires a longer period of studying (Huq, 2006). The rapid innovations of technology should also be considered as it allowed teenagers access to a world

that was radically different from the one their parents were exposed to. Consequently some differences are required in terms of the rites of passage that unfold (Weinstein, 1994).

The youth of today could have been considered adults physically in the society that Erickson's theory (1950) originated from. However when considering Erickson's theory it seems that he was not only addressing the physiological changes of puberty but he was also focusing on the social challenges a youth experiences and society's expectations of adolescents. Weinstein (1994) describes the youth of today as inhabiting a space where they were forced to be dependent and can not yet begin to provide for themselves. It is therefore evident that some of the key theoretical explanations conventionally pinned to Erickson's adolescent could be extended in application to the age cohort, 'youth' more generally. Hence this project shall use the term youth in order to refer to individuals that were betwixt the developmental stages of childhood and adulthood and thus are engaged in Erickson's (1950) stage of identity versus role confusion.

1.2.6. South African Youth

South Africa's social climate had been characterized by rapid change. The racism and inequality that marks the history of the country has profoundly impacted its young adults and its legacy continues to influence everyday interactions. Thus socio-cultural changes potentially compounds the individual transitions that developmentally define the period of youth (Stevens & Lockhat, 2003) and so Erickson's largely individualistic account of adolescence cannot sufficiently accommodate for this contextual effect. That is the socio-historical past and present in South Africa perhaps influences the development of South African adolescent identity in a way that Erickson's theory does not adequately address. Hence, this research provides a timely opportunity to comment on adolescence as a crucial developmental stage in contemporary South Africa as perceived through the musically mediated lens of South African adolescents.

The sample consisted of 8 first or second year university students that volunteered to participate in the study. The students were between the ages of 18 and 24 and comprised of individuals who self identified as Rap or Hip Hop listeners. Individual interviews were conducted according to an open ended questionnaire on Rap music and social identity. The sample was limited as the volunteers were students and could not be generalized to other youths that had not studied at a tertiary level. In addition it was useful to bear in mind that all the students were volunteers and that perhaps had different perspectives to Rap listeners that would not be interested in volunteering. Finally the students all lived

in Johannesburg and the information gleaned cannot be generalized to account for youth in general in a country with a diverse cultural and socio-economic make up.

1.3. Aim

The aim of this project was to explore the role of Rap/Hip Hop music in the meaning and maintenance of identity in a cohort of South African youth.

1.4. Chapter Structure

Chapter 2 is made up of the literature review and theoretical framework. The literature review draws on theories and studies from a variety of different disciplines that include psychology, cultural studies and musicology to explore identity, adolescence and Rap music. The primary aim of the literature review concerns gaining an understanding of the context and areas of enquiry in which this study is located. The *third chapter* describes the qualitative design and methodology used for the research. Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) is elaborated as the primary analytic technique of the project. . Each aspect of the research process is discussed including the interview structure, code development and analysis. The chapter also reflects on relevant characteristics of the sample of volunteers that participated in the research. The procedure is finally discussed in detail in order to interrogate the weaknesses and strengths of the methodology. Chapter 4 discusses the outcomes of the analysis by drawing on an inductive analytic structure that is constituted by a number of continua anchored by diametrically opposing themes. Chapter 5, the conclusion, discusses the results in relation to the field of contemporary academic literature. Recommendations for further research conclude this report.

1.5. Conclusion

Music listening seems to have a profound influence on the lives of youth around the world. The advances that have occurred in technology have made it easier to incorporate music listening into daily life. Because Rap music is amongst the most popular music genres for youth both in South Africa and internationally, exploring its influence on identity offers rich insights into the role that this music potentially plays in constructing and maintaining identity at this critical developmental stage. Social psychological research into this field consists of only a handful of studies and to date there has been no such research undertaken in South Africa. This study attempted to address this gap in the literature by exploring the role of hip-hop as a particular genre of music on the meaning and maintenance of identity in a cohort of South African youth.

We humans are a musical species no less than a linguistic one. (Sacks, 2007, p. xi,)

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

Exploring the influence of Rap/ Hip Hop on the meaning and maintenance of youth identities in South Africa is a complex task as this is still a developing area of study. Although, Psychology is beginning to extend more interest in the way that music influences society, the majority of the writing related to the study of music is covered by several other disciplines. Consequently the literature review included theories and research from a multi-disciplinary spectrum of work.

This literature review covers several main factors that are useful for gaining deeper insight into the relationship between Rap music and the social identity of youths. These include theories and studies of identity, music generally and the nature and standing of Hip Hop in particular.

2.2. Identity

2.2.1. Theories of Identity

Social psychology has had a long-standing interest in identity formation in general and adolescent identity as a sub-component thereof. The literature focuses on identity is therefore extensive. It is also unsurprising that defining the concept is difficult. However, the following definition appeared to capture some basic sub-items implied by the literature. Therefore for the purposes of introducing the concept of identity as a starting point it could be defined as" A well organized conception of the self made up of values, beliefs, goals to which the individual is solidly committed" (Berk, 1999, p. 439).

The origins of formal psychological identity theorizing can be traced back to William James (1890) over a century ago. He divided the self into the "I" and the "me". The "me" is the dimension of the self that is perceived by society. However the "I" had the capacity to reflect upon the "me" (Hargreaves, Miell, & Macdonald, 2001). The social self was seen as being ever changing whereas the private self remained constant. The social self also was seen as having four dimensions that expressed different

parts of the self: a material self, a social self, a bodily self and a spiritual self (Hargreaves, Miell, & Macdonald, 2001).

Psychoanalytic theory did not focus on identity specifically (Louw, 1991). However the developmental theories conceptualized by Freud had many repercussions for understandings of identity. Erik Erickson extended Freud's developmental theory by emphasizing the importance of society and not only the intra-psychic aspects of growth (Louw, 1991). Erickson's theory is useful as it addresses the concept of identity and foregrounds adolescence as a crucial period for identity formation across several psycho-social stages of development. During each stage there is a need to negotiate internal needs and the demands of society (Kroger, 1986).

Tajfel (1981) focused on identity, particularly within a social context. His social identity theory (SIT) assumes that all people identify with varying social groups. Hence, individuals segment society into different groups and consider themselves as either members of a particular group or outsiders. Members of "in" groups behave in a way that will be congruent with the values or norms of their group. Tajfel (1981) also noted that individuals compared themselves to members of other groups and try to represent their own groups as being superior to external groups. Essentially the interpersonal behavior of individuals may often be influenced by group membership. Being part of a group can affect the way that a person may interact with other in group members and the way that members of different groups interact. In extreme situations such as war, interactions could be based only on group membership as opposed to interacting with the personalities of other individuals.

Under a postmodern framework individual identity may be understood as the place where social and discursive relations are negotiated (Amiran & Unsworth, 1994). These theories acknowledge the multiple influences that play a part in the fluidity of identity formation and maintenance, including gender, sexual, racial, social and economic factors. Thinkers like Derrida (Proctor, 2004) and Gilroy (2000) have proposed that the essence of these terms could be shown to be labels that are socially constructed (for example black or white) and not characteristics that ultimately provide universal definitions of different individuals. Hall (1996) prefers the term 'the subject' as opposed to terms like 'identity' that privilege the view of the self as complete, consistent or autonomous. "For Hall the self is internally fragmented, incomplete, multiple and was produced and positioned- that is subjected to and determined within- discourse (Proctor, 2004, p.110)". In some ways then, the basic tenets of the postmodern conception of identity contradict Erikson's, James's and Tajfel's theory (Hargreaves, Miell, & Macdonald, 2001). All of these theories, however, play an important role in the evolution of understandings around the concepts of identity and were all drawn upon in various forms to account

for readings of the data. Thus the theoretical tensions between different understandings of identity were utilized in different ways and different places in the analysis. The broad theoretical framework seemed useful in order to explore an emerging field in a non prescriptive manner. Thus for the purposes of this research, it seemed that it was useful to focus on SIT and its in and out group implications, Erickson's developmental approach and its insights into staged identity negotiation and postmodern conceptions of identity were useful in accounting for increasing globalization and its impacts on identities in a changing world.

2.2.2. Adolescence and Youth Identity

Adolescence forms an important developmental stage for Erickson (1950) as it represents a period of an identity crisis and a move towards an identity formation within society. During adolescence, many individuals go through a state of moratorium where time is spent experimenting with different social roles and rules (Berk, 1999). Erickson's perspective of identity development and the successful negotiation of the adolescent developmental stage hinges upon the achievement of a stable identity. In contrast to a postmodern perspective that holds that identity is in a permanent state of flux. Traditionally, adolescence could be seen developmentally as the transition phase between childhood and adulthood. Under this developmental framework, the onset of adolescence is triggered by a combination of physiological and social factors. It is generally triggered by the physical onset of puberty that in turn triggered cascades of physiological changes including rapid physical growth as well as the maturity of the sex organs. However, this primarily biological understanding is contested by other viewpoints. "From a legal point of view adolescence ends when the individual becomes eligible to vote (age 18) or do military service (from age 16), when she no longer needs parental permission (age 21). From a psychological point of view adolescence ends when the individual is reasonably certain of his identity, is emotionally independent of his parents, and is capable of establishing an adult love relationship" (Thom, 1991, p. 377). Meyer (1997) therefore suggests that the time adolescence may end can range from 18 years old until 25 years old depending on the socio-political context in which the adolescent is situated and the requirements necessary for an individual to qualify in a chosen profession. The confines of adolescence were therefore more often extended in wealthy societies where it was possible for youths to attend university (Larson, 2002).

Arguably, the period of adolescence as traditionally constructed by psychology has been extended in many societies. It appears as if this trend in the western world involves later marriage, longer periods of tertiary education and a protracted moratorium before joining the work force (Larson, 2002; Weinstein, 1994). For this group of thinkers the period of adolescence is influenced by biological

changes but, as Larson (2002) insists, this overemphasis on biology underestimates the mediating affect that social influences have on the length and scope of this period. Thus for Larson (2003), the traditional age parameters required of adolescence require revision. These revisions have important implications for the current project as in a group of university youth the developmental period of adolescence seems less constrained and defined. In short, the term youth seems related to the period of adolescence as a "signifier of change and transition, caught between the ignorance and innocence of being a child and the perceived dogmatism and inflexibility (perhaps even the corruption) of the adult" (Grossberg, 1994, p. 26).

Furthermore, separating the developmental stages of youths may have become more complicated with the onset of globalization. Jensen (2003) was able to demonstrate such ideas through ethnographic and cross cultural research. The cosmopolitan cultures of many large urban cities and the global media expose adolescents to more than one culture. A cultural identity according to Jensen (2003) is defined as a framework of ideas and beliefs of a particular community that could be enacted through behavioral rituals in day to day life. Globalization therefore allows individuals to adopt more than one cultural identity. Youths were more open to shifts in beliefs and values than adults. Jensen (2003) explains that the global environment differs from Erickson's theory where a youth would take on the values of a single community. The direct and indirect influences of several cultures may intensify the process of identity development as a youth could be forced to negotiate between several cultural identities and the tensions that unfold (Jensen, 2003). The process of becoming an adult therefore becomes less predictable and the personal meanings of experiences become more important in order to gain an understanding of each person's worldview.

In the social climate of South Africa there are many social factors, political factors and ideological factors that had changed drastically since the first democratic elections in 1994. Arguably then, the South African social landscape is complex and contradictory and as so these factors may influence South African adolescent identity in a way that Erickson's theory cannot comprehensively address (Stevens & Lockhat, 2003). Erickson's theory was devised to address developmental transitions but not specifically for a context like South Africa's which has been experiencing large scale social transition. Since the first democratic elections there had been drastic changes in South Africa that seem to have redefined many concepts in South African society related to gender, race and social class.

Thus, for the purpose of this research the term youth will be used to denote a period of moratorium that is equivalent to Erickson's (1950) stage of identity versus role confusion. The stage of youth is not only marked by biological or age specific criteria but also requires taking into account the influences of

society and an individuals location in local and global life in terms of intimate relationships, work and studies. The study regards the developmental distinction between adolescence and the social descriptor youth to be intimately related in the modern world.

2.2.3. Music and Identity

Social Identity Theory (SIT) appears to underpin the majority of research on music and identity from a social psychology perspective (Tarrant & North, 2000; Tarrant, North, & Hargreaves, 2001; Tarrant, Hargreaves & North, 2001a; Tarrant, North, Eldridge, Kirk, Smith, & Turner, 2001b; Tarrant, 2002; Bakagiannis & Tarrant, 2006). Tarrant et al (2001) argued that adolescence may be a particularly relevant time to explore social groupings as peer groups play a central part in the socialization of adolescents. In their studies, music genre taste served as a factor that played a role in social grouping. Hence adolescents used peer groups delineated by music taste in order to form positive evaluations of themselves and positive group identities.

Two such research projects (Tarrant et al, 2001a; Tarrant et al, 2001b) found adolescents used peer groups that were based on music identity to evaluate their own group identity. The results from the research demonstrated that the youths' perceived other adolescents in their own music taste groups as having more favorable characteristics than peers that listened to other kinds of music (Tarrant et al, 2001b). Furthermore it also appeared that the youths perceived members of the music taste out group in a more negative way in relation to general characteristics not related specifically to music listening. A correlation was also found between low self esteem and perceived in and out group differences. In addition it appeared that the measurements that indicated lower self esteem were related to larger perceived differences between in and out group members (Tarrant et al, 2001a). Hence these two research projects provided evidence that music taste may play a role in perceptions of a youth' s own social identity as well as how other music listeners are perceived

In a third research project conducted by Tarrant & North (2000), it was found that adolescents evaluated the reasons for the behavior of peers in different music taste groups differently. The results that they arrived at fit well with Tajfel's inter-group attribution theory (Tarrant & North, 2000), which attempts to account for the way that people attribute the causes of behavior to external causes outside the person or to the individual particularly. The group evaluated the cause of their own positive behavior as having a higher internal cause than the other groups. In contrast the group rated their own negative behavior as being less related to the internal causes of the in group members than the out

group. The attribution error seems to favor the in group members and evaluate the out group members more harshly. The research demonstrated that a bias was used when inferring the reasons for the behavior of a person within a music taste group in contrast to judging someone that is a member of a different taste group.

This research on adolescent social identity and music taste was extended further in a project by Tarrant (2002) which sampled 115 adolescents of both genders. The participants were asked to answer questions regarding their perceptions of their own group of friends and a group of youths that were not a part of their social group and finally questions on their level of identification with their own crowd. The perceptions of the in and out groups as well as the levels of identification were ranked on 11 point scales and the results were analyzed statistically. The findings supported the tenets of social identity theory (Tarrant, 2002). The in group members were perceived as having more constructive characteristics than the out group members. A correlation was also noted between the level of participants' identification with their own in group and a more pleasing view of the in group members. The high levels of identification with an in group were not dependent on negative ratings of out group members.

A more complex study was conducted by Bakagiannis and Tarrant (2006) that continued to focus on Tajfel's theory but also explored some additional social dynamics. The study used the 'common in group model' and 'meta-stereotypes' in order to seek a better understanding of inter-group identity (Bakagiannis & Tarrant, 2006). A meta-stereotype refers to how a person believes that someone from another group will perceive them. The common in group identity model states that the interactions of groups may be improved by changing the way that the groups are thought about (Bakagiannis & Tarrant, 2006). The attitude of one group to another may improve even more if a super-ordinate identity exists that allows both groups to be considered as possessing inherent similarities. The research wanted to explore if two separate groups would have more favorable attitudes to one another if the groups considered themselves to have a super-ordinate identity that could be facilitated by both groups listening to the same style of music as opposed to a second group where students thought the two groups had different tastes in music (Bakagiannis & Tarrant, 2006). It appeared as if the participants that were told that they were similar to the other group had more pleasant perspectives of the members of the other group.

Meta-stereotypes were also used to explore the attitudes between group members. The groups that were told that they shared a musical preference seemed to have more constructive meta-stereotypes of the other group members (Bakagiannis & Tarrant, 2006). A third pair of groups was also used as a

control group in the study. These two groups were not told what music the other group listened to. The control group that had no information regarding the relevant out group had the most favorable views of other group members and the most positive meta-stereotypes. The study concluded that the social identity theory and the common identity theory may be useful to inform further understandings of inter group interactions although there still appeared to be anomalies that were worthy of further exploration and more refined research methods in the area of music and identity (Bakagiannis & Tarrant, 2006).

Research by Frith (1996) focused on the different meanings that music can assume through everyday activities. Music is often played at many of the important activities that mark out a person's life. Weddings, birthday parties, funerals, dances or religious services often take place with a musical soundtrack. Even in these cases, the listener is always a consumer that is interacting with the music and facilitating the emergence of meaning. On the other hand private consumption still marks identity. Musical taste has therefore been likened to a "badge" of identification. This "badge" of musical taste can be expressed in the way a person listens to music, speaks, wears particular clothes or adopts a particular life style in public as well as negotiations of self-identification in private spaces. This was amply demonstrated by De Nora (2000) whose study showed that participants appeared to categorize themselves or even an institution or country analogous to a genre of music and the connotations attached to it. These possibilities are amplified in a globalised age.

In the days before electronic technology the music that people listened to would predominantly reflect local, folk or national trends. Globalization has allowed any person with access to music an opportunity to experience or participate in music from around the world. This global distribution of music allows for the sharing of cultural or sub cultural information (Larson, 2002). The experience of listening to music may therefore provide a person with an opportunity to reconnect with the music of their distant homeland or participate in a novel culture that an individual may never have experienced but identifies with (Stokes, 1994).

Youth subcultures present an example of the different dimensions of a person's life that can be affected by choice in music. Grossberg (1994) delineates three important points that applies to rock music subcultures as well as other youth subcultures. The music that a person chooses to listen to and to avoid listening to made a statement about where a person positioned themselves within youth culture. Furthermore, a youth's commitment to a particular youth culture would increase if the culture provided a framework that was useful to create meaning out of life experience. Finally, he asserted that music subcultures occurred within a broader socio-political context. Subcultures emerged as a result of the capacity to define important events in society. It is plausible that Grossberg's (1994) three criteria may

be applied to Rap culture and hence it is important to gain an understanding of the origins of Rap music.

2.3. Rap Music:

2.3.1. A Brief History of Rap Culture

The last ten years have heralded a growth of academic literature analyzing Rap music and the culture that emerged along side the music (Rose, 1994; Mitchell, 2001; Ogg, & Upshall, 1999; Crosley, 2005). Hip Hop culture is one of the most influential forms of music of our time. Perhaps when people look back at our generation it could be characterized as the Rap era (Ogg & Upshall, 1999).

The genre of music was born in the late 1970s and began to gain popularity in America during the 1980s. Four forms of expression were all interconnected within the broader framework of Hip Hop culture. The four elements of Hip Hop were defined as break dancing, graffiti art, rapping (rhyming over a beat) and being a DJ (Ogg, & Upshall, 1999). Hence Rap music began to symbolize a culture or a way of life that opened up several areas for creative participation.

Hip Hop or Rap music is an umbrella term that describes several varieties of Rap music. Some of the well known varieties in South Africa are gangster Rap, underground or conscious Rap, commercial Rap and more recently South African Rap.

In its simplest form Rap music was performing rhymed lyrics over an electronic break beat. However in order to truly understand Rap music it was essential to define the terms “sample” and “remix”. The roots of Rap music can be found in other genres of music that were influenced by African American culture. Perhaps the most influential genres related to the field of Rap music are jazz, reggae and the soul or funk era of the 1970 s (Ogg & Upshall, 1999). The early creators of Rap music used to often sample or cut a short section of an original soul or jazz song than loop it in order to create a break beat that would form the background for a Hip Hop song. Remixing is a technique used to create a hybrid of different aspects of cultures and place it within new relevant contexts (Nutall, 2004). “Rap is often cited as an example of post modern music for it’s inter-textuality and use of source material recycling of earlier musical eras” (Huq, 2006, pp. 115). Hence the ability to sample any piece of music and remix it into more accessible formats provided Rap music with a way to connect and comment on many different genres. It also made the boundaries of Rap music open to an infinite variety of

influences. This idea of remixing was core to the dynamic aesthetic of Rap music and it was also reflected in other aspects of Rap culture.

2.3.2. Rap Music and Identity Across the Globe

Foreman (2004) considers Rap music a way of creating an abstract space for commentary on the meaning of urban space and race. The root of Hip Hop culture was located in the underprivileged neighborhoods in America or the ghetto. In many underprivileged neighborhoods in America the ghettos are populated by racial minorities living within a broader socio-political society. Hip Hop music therefore seemed to offer a commentary on the racial identities that emerged within the confines of these specific urban neighborhoods. It was important that Rap musicians remained true to the place where they had grown up in order to remain authentic. Therefore Rap music created a social discourse for performers and listeners to perform and enact ideas around the meanings of urban spaces and the connections to racial identities in a way that was congruent with their local surroundings and cultures.

The process of creating Rap music originated from a climate where there were often scarce resources. Within the urban ghettos of America there was seldom recreational space available to youths to practice making music and few Rap musicians had the benefit of formal musical tuition (Magubane, 2006). The ethos behind the creation of Rap music allowed for people to participate within their culture in an accessible way and the line between the performers and artists blurred (Lashua & Fox, 2006). Consequently the format of music can be enacted all over the world in any urban space regardless of the resources of the participants. The aesthetic of participation also extended to the other dimensions of Rap music culture. Break dancing, MCing, spray painting and DJing that each possesd different creative rituals available to enact Hip Hop culture within the course of everyday life. Perhaps it was due to the practical and simple nature of engaging with Hip Hop culture that many places around the world have adopted Rap music and some of its cultural practices (Huq, 2006).

The roots of Rap music began in the inner city streets of the ghetto (Foreman, 2004; Watkins; 2004). As time progressed however Rap music grew in popularity and became a global financial commodity. Rap music had given birth to an industry that gave black youths a voice for cultural expression. The Rap music industry facilitated the emergence of a generation of creative black entertainers that were able to become affluent and celebrities (Baldwin; 2004). Furthermore several Rap stars have created innovative business models in the music industry by insisting that they earned the full profits from their music production. This was done by starting their own record companies that countered the

perceived exploitation of Rap musicians by the established music industry (Ogg, & Upshall, 1999). Thus Rap music provided a platform to display to the world new models of the American black capitalist. Many Rap artists enacted this role in songs, music videos and concerts by creating the image of an affluent mafia boss or a business tycoon (Baldwin, 2004). Consequently Rap music had been labeled as a medium to transcend stereotypical associations between American blackness and lower socio-economic status (Baldwin; 2004; Watkins; 2004). The commercialism of Rap music created a dilemma though for many Rap music listeners that felt that the music was being aesthetically compromised as Rap music was being used by many large record companies as a vehicle for profit (Huq, 2006; Baldwin, 2004). On the other hand there also appeared to be a separate faction of black middle class Hip Hop listeners that countered the theory that real Hip Hop had to be connected to the inner city streets to be real (Baldwin, 2004). This led to a new movement in Hip Hop culture led by Rap artists that spoke about suburban blackness as opposed to being tied to inner city life in order to claim Hip Hop authenticity. Evidently Rap music had become a space for the contestation of race, space and social class that emerged from the American socio-historical meanings attached to blackness (Baldwin, 2004; Watkins,2004).

The initial literature on Rap music primarily focused on Rap music as an American phenomenon. Rose (1994) was one of the innovative academic writers that began to reflect on the depth of American Rap music culture as a space used for the negotiation of meaning relating to politics, identity and other social issues. More recently however, Rap music has become a focal point for research that has been conducted from a variety of different disciplines and in different contexts.

Crosley (2005) analyzed Rap music in terms of the metaphors that were used in the music. Metaphors were considered a powerful form of communication used to create and express concepts for the speakers and the listeners of Hip Hop music. They provide a framework that individuals could use to create meaning and understand experience. Crosley (2005) noted that the individual meanings of metaphors are extended incrementally when they are adopted by entire communities. The poetical nature of Rap music is rich with allegories that are often extended in day to day life through thought, conversation, listening to music or watching music videos. The metaphors used contain diverse messages that comment on everyday experiences of listeners as well as recurrent themes that are present in society. Thus Crosley (2005) asserted that the metaphorical nature of Rap music warranted its study as a particular genre.

Iwamoto, Creswell, & Caldwell (2007) conducted phenomenological research exploring the meaning of Rap music for ethnically diverse mid western college students in America. The research was

valuable as it was one of the first projects to have used qualitative research methods in order to explore the meanings of Rap music in a group of subjects. Furthermore it is one of the few psychologically-based studies on rap music. The avid listener appeared to listen to Rap music more often and also engaged more intensely with the music. The avid listeners also used the music as a source of motivation that provided a space for identification and learning. It was also noted that the music was used to regulate moods and manage stress on a daily basis. The influence of Rap music seemed to influence the experience of individuals regardless of ethnic group, gender or race. The researchers also found that although the subjects were aware of negative messages in the music the listeners often ignored them and focused on more constructive aspects of the performances or recordings. This was in contrast to concerns often voiced in the media that Rap music may lead to destructive behavior (Iwamoto, Creswell, & Caldwell, 2007). The study also found that Rap music could actually improve communication skills and enable participants to boost feelings of efficacy through participation in Hip Hop communities. These suggestions echo those of an earlier study by Stephens, Braithwaite, and Taylor (1998) who successfully stimulated group motivation that increased HIV risk awareness using Rap music. A further study on the efficacy of using Rap music as an auxiliary format for counseling with delinquent youth found that there were significant advantages relative to the studies control group (Tyson, 2002). Hence it appears that Rap music lends itself to therapeutic interventions or group work within certain contexts. It could also be useful to gain more knowledge around South African meanings related to Hip Hop culture in order to consider whether Rap music may lend itself toward therapeutic encounters with youth in South Africa.

In an alternate project Iwamoto (2003) focused on the influence that Rap music had on gender and racial identity. A discourse analysis of lyrics from songs by the rapper Tupac Shakur was used to examine the hyper-masculine image that is often portrayed in Hip Hop lyrics. The portrayal of black men in the media in America is limited to characters that are often poor role models. Furthermore many people living in poorer areas are mainly exposed to mass media that perpetuate racial stereotypes (Iwamoto, 2003). As a result many black men aspire towards a hyper-masculine image that is based on strength, sexual virility and behavior that was not emotionally expressive (Iwamoto, 2003; Baldwin, 2004; Watkins, 2004). The analysis showed that the Rap music constructions of masculinity were associated with a masculine image that provided young black men in America with a way to behave that earned respect from other youths (Iwamoto, 2003), which was related to blackness and powerlessness in particular urban contexts.

There are a variety of studies that have commented on Rap music in America as a medium of negotiating identity and finding meaning within an urban landscape (Iwamoto, Creswell, & Caldwell,

2007; Rose, 1994; Foreman, 2004). However it was also important to consider the ramifications of Rap music and its global influences. Mitchell (2001) expanded the literature on Rap music in an important book called *Global Noise*. This collection of articles offered many interesting perspectives on newly emerging aspects of Rap music culture that were occurring outside of America. The global influence of Rap music has taken root in fresh forms in a diverse range of countries such as Japan, England, Bulgaria, France and South Africa (Mitchell, 2001).

The development of Hip Hop culture in countries outside of America has created much debate. On the one hand it is possible that many of these countries throughout the world were mimicking aspects of American culture. Under this argument, the adoption of the cultural behavior or global trends may point the world in the direction of a future that could become homogenized or Americanized (Magubane, 2006). Critics of Americanization argue that America has usurped many forms of cultural behavior through out the world due to the almost unilateral pull that it has exerted through the film, music and media industries. Commentators on the other side of the debate suggest that countries throughout the world may be disproportionately exposed to American cultural influences but this affords them the opportunity to reinterpret American influences in a local fashion.

Music has been identified as a critical agent of intra-national identity maintenance due to its global distribution, its use as an agent of resistance and means to national identity generation has been studied. Some of the aspects of identity that have been explored in relation to Rap music and its political potential include racial identity, national identity and gender identity. For example, Ibrahim (2003) conducted a study on how African immigrants living in Ontario Canada used Rap music as means to define their blackness within Canadian culture. The research focused on the ambiguities between an African and Canadian national identity juxtaposed against American and African definitions of blackness.

2.3.3. Rap Music and Identity in Africa

While the relationship between Rap music and globalization has been researched on a relatively wide scale, there are few studies that have been conducted in Africa. Mendez (2001) conducted a study in Botswana that focused on the influence of Rap music videos on the youths of Botswana. One of the findings was that two thirds of her sample had been exposed to Rap music videos regularly. The study also noted that American entertainers were beginning to have a greater influence on the youth of Botswana than their African counterparts.

Fenn and Perullo (2000) conducted analyses regarding the way language is used by Hip Hop performers in Tanzania and Malawi. In Africa, the English language is often a second or third language and its use is often a consequence of being colonized. However over time the English language in African countries has developed local meanings and narratives. The artists featured in the research commented on the different benefits of using English and local languages. The choice of hybridized languages by the Hip Hop performers was therefore found to imply specific political statements that had varying appeal to different local Hip Hop consumers. Furthermore, the languages that were chosen by Hip Hop performers and the way that these were enacted allowed for the formation of sub-identities within the Hip Hop consumers, illustrative of the type of dialogue that takes place in order to define the identity of local performers within a post-colonial context (Fenn & Perullo, 2000).

2.3.4. Rap Music and Identity in South Africa

Language use in South Africa has also been used to define allegiances and distinctions to different local and global parts of society. In the early 90s the Hip Hop group *Brasse Van Die Kaap* broke new ground by rapping in Afrikaans (Magubane, 2004). The Capetonian artists demonstrated that it was possible to remain authentically connected to the language that they used in their communities and still participate within global culture as Rap artists.

Music was also often used in the past to creatively object to the racial inequalities that were enforced in South Africa. However a large majority of youth music in South Africa began receding from protest politics as its defining feature after apartheid. In fact, the most popular youth movement in South Africa presently is Kwaito, a form of music that often eschews dealing with serious issues (Swartz, 2003; Steingo, 2005). This new way of musical life suggests a distinction between the youths in contemporary society and times past. It is almost as if the youth of South Africa that had played a major role in addressing many serious issues during apartheid were now attempting to enjoy the hard earned freedom of their new democracy (Allen, 2004). Although at the same time the thriving culture that emerged around Kwaito music has played an important role in reinventing concepts of blackness and youth in South Africa (Nutall, 2004). Many South Africa youth interact with Kwaito at some level and locate their identity by assuming a stance of being included in the Kwaito movement, excluded, neutral or against it (Swartz, 2004). Consequently in order to locate Rap music in the South African context it is important to be aware of the background of Kwaito culture and its relationship to Rap music.

Kwaito rose to popularity during the 1990s in South Africa. It was a mixture of several genres of music that included pop, Rap, Reggae and American or European House (Allen, 2004). One of the most identifiable aspects of Kwaito was the beat. Although it was structurally similar to house music, Kwaito beats are at a much slower tempo then house beats elsewhere in the world. Kwaito was often sung in a dialect of a combination of South African languages that was spoken on the streets. This served as a technique of keeping the identity of the music tied to the target market of black youths (Swartz, 2004). It appeared as if the style of Kwaito culture created special modes of musical identity for black youth.

There have been several comparisons made between Rap music and Kwaito (Allen, 2004, Swartz, 2003). Some writers had even gone as far as saying that Kwaito is a South Africa's version of Rap music (Swartz, 2003; Magubane, 2004). There is no doubt that there were several similarities between Rap music and Kwaito. However, there are also stark differences between the two styles of music and the cultures that existed along side them in South Africa.

Swartz (2003) performed an analysis comparing Kwaito and Hip Hop. The comparison was conducted using Hall's (1997) concept the "circuit of culture" that allowed for exploration of five levels of meaning that included representation, production, consumption, identity and resistance (Swartz, 2003). The research entailed exploring narratives that were related to several aspects of Kwaito culture. Swartz (2003) concluded that Kwaito was not South African Hip Hop but rather a local form of music that had evolved to meet the needs of the youth living in South Africa. However, Swartz (2003) also acknowledges some of the parallels between Rap and Kwaito by noting that both genres of music served as agents of identity and empowerment. Perhaps it was because Kwaito and Hip Hop both attempt to negotiate new but different definitions of black identity that there is a discernible difference between their respective cultures. Magubane (2004) traces this difference to their relationship to American culture. Rap music evolved as the music of an underprivileged minority not entirely averse to American amalgamation whereas Kwaito was the music of an often underprivileged majority within the South African population that did not readily identify with American rap culture.

In perhaps the most locally relevant study, Nutall (2004) conducted research in Johannesburg focusing on the culture emerging in Rosebank around the radio station 'Y FM'. The broadcaster that began in the early 1990s was the most popular provincial radio station at the time of conducting this research project and a popular magazine was also operated along side the radio station called 'Ymag' (Nutall, 2004). The radio station promoted Kwaito although it was also influenced by other genres such as American and South African Rap music and rhythm and blues. In addition to the radio station there

were also several South African clothing labels that emerged to cater for this group of consumers. Nutall (2004, pp. 232) referred to the process of youths in Rosebank [4] redefining their identities as a way of "stylizing the self". Although race is still a powerful distinction in the new South Africa it was now possible to accessorize a person's identity through activities such as taste or consumption. Notions of youth identity in South Africa had to gain a lot of ground since the end of the obstacles of apartheid. 'Y FM' served as an agent that was creating a lifestyle that many under privileged youths were not able to fully participate in at present but the emergent identities provide possible aspirations for the future (Nutall, 2004). The University of the Witswatersrand is located close to Rosebank and Y culture was a useful backdrop to begin to understand some of the unique meanings of Rap music for some of the subjects of this study.

2.4. Conclusion

While research and theory on identity and youth is extensive, their relationship to music and culture appears to be a somewhat understudied topic. This is especially true of psychological approaches to the topic in the South African context. Thus a multi-disciplinary literature base was consulted in the construction of a theoretical framework and knowledge base for the present study. The framework includes contributions from developmental psychology, social psychology, sociology, ethnomusicology and the psychology of music. Having tapped the relevant theoretical and applied material on the core concepts of identity, youth, and rap music both globally and in South Africa The follow section details the design and method utilized in the present study that is congruent with the location of this research within current academia.

[4] Rosebank is a cosmopolitan shopping centre based within the Northern suburbs of Johannesburg. The shpping centre is a cultural hub that houses several local and international fashion emporiums and the studio of the youth radio station Y FM.

> Music has always played an important part in forming the identities of individuals and of groups of people. It provides a means of defining oneself as an individual belonging to and allied with a certain group, and of defining others as belonging to other groups which are separate from ones own (Folkestad, 2001, p. 150).

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1. Introduction

The following section details the design and analytic methods used in the study. It provides a full description of the sampling techniques, data collection procedure, and analytic techniques used to interpret the resultant transcripts. It concludes by contextualizing and highlighting the role of the researcher in each of these research domains.

3.2. Methodology

3.2.1. Qualitative Analysis

The study is underpinned by a qualitative approach to research as this was considered the most appropriate way to gather data on the subjective dimensions of identity and Rap music use. The qualitative research approach broadly attempts to make sense of detailed information and is therefore useful for addressing exploratory questions (Mouton, 2004). The current study is positioned within a newly emerging field that has not been comprehensively mapped out and thus was suited to an approach of this kind. The empirical form of analysis that was used was thematic content analysis.

3.2.2. Thematic Content Analysis

Qualitative analysis is "a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). For the purposes of this project the data comprised of interviews that were transcribed into text. The unit of analysis was themes or patterns that were discernible throughout the text. However the emphasis on particular themes was based on the meaning of the themes rather than only the frequency rate (Breakwell, 1995), thus differentiating the technique from traditional content analysis. Theme identification was largely inductive but some elements in the data lend themselves to deductive identification. Overwhelmingly, the majority of the themes were inductively identified as the specific nature of the relationship between Rap music and youth identity had not been studied

before within a South African context and from a psychological perspective. Development of the coding system used to arrive at themes was methodical and systematic. A full description of the steps in the analysis is provided in the analysis section below. A semi-structured interview constituted the means to data collection for analysis.

3.3. Interview Structure

The instrument used in this study was an open ended semi-structured interview attached as an appendix. The format of an interview was useful as it created an opportunity to glean rich information on complex responses to issues of identity and Rap music (Miles, & Huberman, 1994).In addition, this research was exploratory in nature and a flexible interview was helpful as it did not foreclose possible unanticipated responses form participants.

It was possible that some of the answers addressed local or unique terms and the interview process allowed time to clarify the meaning of the answers given through dialogue (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This was important in the context of this research as there were many aspects of youth culture that served a purpose of distinguishing youths from adults. Consequently when engaging with youths, it seemed essential to attempt to gain insight into some of the meanings that the students attributed to language or cultural rituals. The interview had the potential to act as a catalyst for the generation of understandings for the researcher as well as the participants. The experience of the interview process was also a starting point for the inception of the code for structuring the data (Kvale, 1996).

The questions for the interview were devised after a survey of literature that was available on the topic of youth identity and Rap music. The theoretical frameworks that influenced the construction of the interview were multidisciplinary and made up of several relevant theories that were documented in the literature review. The interviews were recorded on audio tape and than transcribed verbatim.

3.4. Data Collection- Sampling

The sample was conveniently drawn from the University of the Witswatersrand. The sampling began once the ethics committee had approved the methodology of the study. The concept of parsimony was useful when defining the parameters of a sample in qualitative analysis (Boyatzis, 1998). The more general the sample the more additional factors need to be considered and it is non efficient to make the study overly complex. Hence the criteria for the sampling focused on a specific group of students from the University of the Witswatersrand that considered themselves Rap music listeners. It was important that the volunteers were full time students as this was an indication that the youths were not

independent yet and still in the process of forming a career and defining an adult identity. Purposive sampling was utilized in order to seek students that considered themselves Rap music listeners. This was necessary as it was significant that the students met the requirements for the research that demanded a subjective labeling of themselves within the particular group of music taste (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

The technique of snowball sampling was also used as it was difficult to find the number of required individuals and there did not seem to be a specific organization on campus that represented Rap music listeners. For this reason it was helpful to ask students to mention the study to other students on campus that they felt would fit the sampling criteria. Pamphlets detailing the aims of the study were distributed across the campus of the University of the Witwatersrand requesting volunteers who met the selection criteria. The researcher approached random groups of students on campus and distributed the pamphlets by hand during the last week of December 2007. The contact number of the researcher was included on the pamphlet and the prospective participants were invited to contact the researcher in order to schedule an interview.

The researcher met with many varying responses from prospective volunteers. The researcher is a 30 year old white male that was dressed in a professional manner. There were several people that felt clearly that they were not Hip Hop listeners and informed the researcher of their musical choice of preference. There also seemed to be several people that were suspicious of the researcher's motivations for studying Rap music and the researcher was challenged on several occasions regarding his knowledge of Rap music. The researcher declined to comment in detail regarding his own background although he made it clear that he has been studying Rap music for many years and that he would be grateful for any volunteers. There were also several people that were intrigued and even excited by the aims of the study. The researcher met most of the volunteers while distributing pamphlets on campus and three volunteers were introduced to the researcher by students that knew someone that met the research criteria.

The sample consisted of 8 university students that volunteered to participate in the study. The students were between the ages of 18 and 24 and comprised of individuals who self identified as Rap or Hip Hop listeners. The sample was comprised of the first group of youths that volunteered which consisted of seven men and one woman. The sample of students' was from varying undergraduate backgrounds that included psychology, music, drama, construction management, commerce and marketing. It was worth noting that all of the members of the sample participated in Hip Hop culture as performers as well as listeners. There were several poets or MCs, one break dancer, a musician and a producer. The

interviews took place at Wits campus in an office that was a convenient location for the students. The interviews ranged in length between forty five minutes and an hour and a half. All of the interviews took place between the last week of November and the first week of December 2007. This was a difficult time to seek students as it was during examinations despite this busy period there were 8 volunteers that made themselves available to contribute.

Interviews were scheduled with each volunteer. At the interview, the researcher presented each participant with an information sheet (attached as appendix), obtained informed consent (attached as appendix and received signed permission to record the interviews (attached as appendix). Each interview was then transcribed verbatim. At the end of the interview basic demographic information was captured and the students were given an opportunity to ask the researcher questions regarding the motivation for the research.

3.5. Ethical Considerations

The research observed all ethical requirements of the HREC at the University of the Witwatersrand. The confidentiality of all the subjects was guaranteed. The transcriptions were stored in a safe place at the home of the researcher. The interview was conducted by the researcher on a face-to-face basis. The request for audio taping form formally requested permission from the participants to use direct quotes. The researcher's and supervisor's e- mail address were given to participants, to provide an opportunity for them to voice any queries and to view the project once it was completed.

3.6. Analysis

3.6.1. Contemplating the Analysis

The transcripts were analyzed using a variant of Content Thematic Analysis (CTA) described by Boyatzis (1998). The steps in the analysis were not unique to Boytazis (1998) and appeared to overlap with several other experts on research methodology (Kvale, 1996; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss, & Corbin 1998). The aforementioned interviews were taped and than transcribed and served as the data for the research.

The analysis of data was a dynamic process that occurred throughout the research project (Kvale, 1996). Each stage of the research provided opportunities to refine understandings and gain knowledge.

However the aim of the analysis was to comment on themes that were present in the data and to be able to substantiate inferences that were made in a valid and methodical fashion.

The first step was to divide the data up into separate sub-samples that could be explored as individual texts. This research project consisted of eight separate interviews that each served as an individual sample of data during the early stages of code development. Once this had been done the code was than developed by comparing the different sub-samples to each other. The following five steps illustrated a process of developing the code and establishing the reliability devised by Boyatzis (1998). After the code had been developed the researcher was than able to apply and validate the code. The final stage of the research was to interpret and present the themes that had emerged after the code had been applied in a reliable and valid fashion.

3.6.2. Developing the Code

3.6.2.1. Reducing the raw information.

The first stage of analysis comprised of iterative reading through the transcripts. The stage also involved paraphrasing certain sections of the transcripts towards the generation of synopses of larger sections of the interviews (Boyatzis, 1998). The main aim of this stage was to read through all of the interviews in a comprehensive way and to create basic outlines for each interview.

3.6.2.2. Identifying themes within sub-samples.

In the second stage, the synopses were reviewed for similarities or themes within each sample of a participant's account (Boyatzis, 1998). There were approximately 250 pages of transcribed material consequently it was important to allow sufficient time to thoroughly approach this task. The themes were noted and reproduced alongside the transcripts. The aim of this stage was reducing the bulk of each interview into more refined patterns.

3.6.2.3. Comparing themes across sub-samples.

The third stage involved comparing the similarities or themes found in each sample with the themes and similarities found in other transcripts (Boyatzis, 1998). Boyatzis (1998) also notes that it is imperative for the researcher to avoid using theories to structure the information at this juncture although the themes should be coherent or rationally based. Thus, this phase aimed at synthesizing the raw material of all of the data into more manageable categories of information that were part of a larger web of meaning punctuated by differences and similarities present throughout all of the data.

3.6.2.4. The Creation of the Code.

The transcripts were than read against the thematic codes that had been developed in the earlier stages. This final reading focused on producing a reliable code-driven description of the thematic organization and hierarchy contained in the data (Boyatzis, 1998). The researcher generated a set of thematic statements that highlighted differences that emerged within the texts and between sub samples in accordance with Boyatzis's guidelines that require the statement to have "a label, a description or definition, indicators or flags, examples and exclusions or special conditions" (Boyatzis, 1998, p. 49). Hence through the interrogation of the units of meaning the themes emerged as insular concepts that are well thought out.

During the course of this initial analysis the statements were revised to meet the criteria of a useful statement mentioned by Boyazkis (1998). The aim of the refining of the codes was to achieve a parsimonious approach where the minimum amount of statements captured the greatest differentiation between the different interviews. In terms of the application of the code this was important as the researcher could only comfortably hold 5-7 items of information in mind while applying the code (Boyatzis, 1998). Another way to gauge the effectiveness of the code was by monitoring to ensure that the code minimized exclusions (Boyatzis, 1998). The advantage of such a code was that it demonstrated an ability to note the similarities of the data. Hence the differences that were punctuated were significant and worth interpreting in relation to the context of the data.

3.6.2.5. Determining the reliability of the code.

The reliability of the code was determined through inter-rater reliability. The researcher and another examiner that was trained in order to understand the code and the application technique were both provided with an opportunity to code the same piece of text (Boyatzis, 1998). Once this was done the reliability was assessed according to the acceptable levels of reliability for qualitative thematic content analysis. The aspects of the code that were not able to be used in a reliable fashion were than adjusted or dropped from the code. The aim was to develop a code that could be applied in a systemic and accurate fashion by more than one researcher.

3.7 Application and Interpretation of the Material

3.7.1. Application

Once the reliability of the code had been established the code could than be applied to the full body of data. The process of validation was carried out by drawing up tables that allowed for the contrasting of

the differences that emerged in relation to the most prominent themes. The validity of the final data was a product of the method that was used to compare the different data sub samples.

3.7.2. Interpreting results

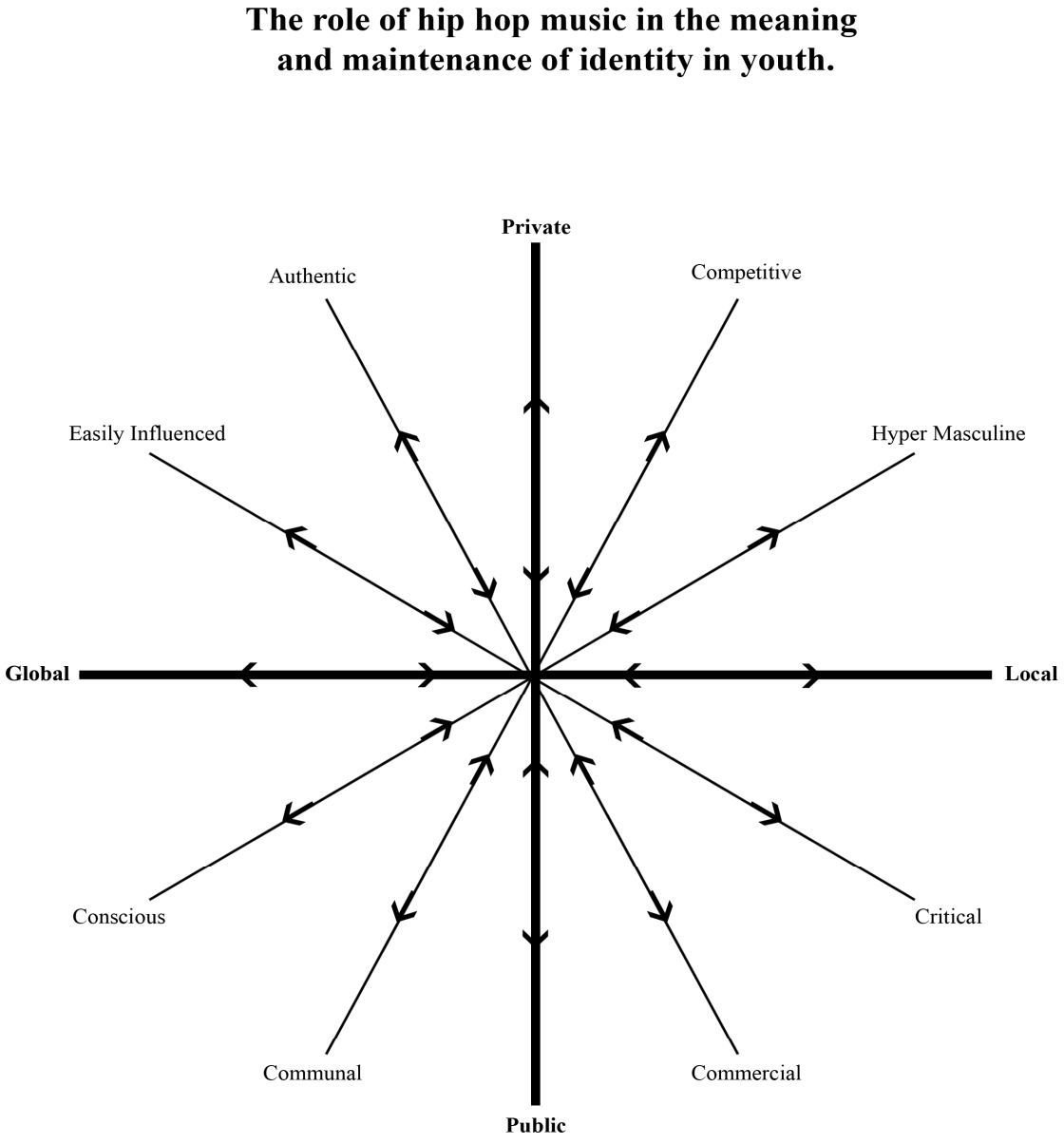
The end result of the code application provided succinct themes that were triangulated with differences and similarities present throughout the text. It was deemed useful to present these findings in accessible forms of presentation that included a diagram, quotes and a more comprehensive written description. The final stage of the process allowed the researcher to interpret some of the meanings of the themes relative to the context of the research. At this point theoretical principles were mentioned if it seemed that they were congruent with the themes (Boyatzkis, 1998).

3.8. Shortcomings and limitations

There were several advantages of the thematic content analytical approach. One of the benefits that the research technique facilitated was a way of structuring material that had no 'inherent' structure This was important in relation to the study of Rap music and identity in South Africa as there was no cohesive psychological framework available to the researcher in this area. A further useful reason for using this approach was that this technique of research allowed for large amounts of data to be processed. This was useful considering the data collected for the project exceeded 250 transcribed pages of interviews. The themes in the transcripts are open to a range of possible interpretations. However the thematic content analysis technique was grounded in the context of the data hence the meaning was limited to a more precise range of understandings.

There were also several areas that imply weaknesses for this technique. In accordance with the general limits of qualitative methodology, this study has limited generalisability. However, the study purposively compromised generalisability for richness and depth of analysis. In addition, the research used a purposive sampling method and all of the people that volunteered considered themselves Rap music listeners. The sample could differ from other Rap listeners that considered themselves Rap music listeners but preferred not to volunteer for a research project. It was also interesting to note that the sample consisted of 7 men and only one woman. The inferences made cannot represent the female gender to the extent that the male gender is represented. Likewise insights into the meanings of Rap music in other population groups are limited by the fact that the sample also consisted of only black listeners and each of the volunteers was a performer of some nature within Rap culture.

Figure 1. Diagrammatic Representation of the Thematic Structure of the Corpus



> My own feeling is that the idea of the Hip Hop generation brings together time and race, place and poly-culturalism, hot beats and hybridity. It describes the turn from politics to culture, the process of entropy and reconstruction. It captures the collective hopes and nightmares, ambitions and failures of those who would otherwise be described as "post this" or "post that". (Chang, 2005, p. 2)

4.1 Introduction

The results and interpretation of the thematic content analysis are reported in this chapter. A number of themes featured prominently across the transcripts. However it was also interesting to note and consider the thematic differences within the corpus. In accordance with the reporting conventions of a thematic content analysis, each theme will be introduced and illustrated with quotes from the data and than interpreted in relation to recent research in the field as well as theory that is relevant to the topic. It is important to note that pseudonyms have been used in order to conceal the names of the volunteers that participated in this project.

The nature and type of themes gleaned from the corpus were organized along six continua as diagrammatically represented in figure 1 (above). It is useful to envisage each theme as being anchored by its extreme. The isolated ends of each diametrically opposed theme can only be considered by recognizing the tension that emerges through the negotiation of each dichotomy. Hence although there are 12 different headings noted there are only six inter-related themes. Each of the themes will be explored within the larger framework of social interactions in the South African and global Hip Hop communities.

All of the themes were interconnected and often built upon one another. Hence the themes are reported in an order that facilitated the former themes introducing the ones that followed. The initial theme outlined some of the participant's perceptions as they played out *between local and global Rap music*. The second theme addressed the *role of Rap music between public and private life*. The third subject matter dealt with the space between notions of *authenticity and commercialism.* The fourth topic tackled some of the prominent identities in Rap music that ranged from being *conscious and socially aware to being hyper- masculine and destructive*. Contrasting female gender roles will also be mentioned in this section. The fifth issue discusses the intersections between *competitiveness and community* that coexist in Rap music culture. The final theme extracted concerned different ways of engaging with Rap music that ranged from *being critical to being easily influenced.*

All of the subjects in this study were defined as avid Hip Hop listeners (Iwamoto, Creswell, & Caldwell, 2007) that participated in Hip Hop culture through social activities and creative acts which differed from a casual listener that only listened to Rap music occasionally. This is important to bear in mind as many of the themes were more convincingly substantiated when considering social identity due to the fact that all participants were artists as well as listeners. It is thus reasonable to assume that the more active a youth was in Hip Hop culture the larger the influence it had on his or her identity (Iwamoto, Creswell, & Caldwell, 2007).

4.2. Exploring The Relationship Between Rap/ Hip Hop and the Meaning and Maintenance of Identity For South African Youth

4.2.1 Global versus Local Understanding of Rap music

4.2.1.1. Glocalisation.

Drawing on the above literature review, the term glocalisation (Mitchell, 2001) is useful for understanding the entire spectrum of meanings that emerged between the local and global thematic poles. It appeared as if there were many converging and diverging factors that emerged through the process of comparing the local and global meanings attached to Rap music. It was useful to separate the differences and similarities. It was also important to consider the South African socio-political history and cultural climate in order to interrogate unique South African understandings that had implications for social identity in understanding this theme.

4.2.1.2. Similarities as a culture and lifestyle.

> *Hip-hop to me is more than just a job. As they say it's a culture. It's a culture that you live, it's a culture that you dress. (Bongi, p. 1)*

The different disciplines of Rap music mentioned in the literature review (included rapping, break dancing, graffiti art and being a DJ) seem to play a role in South African Rap culture. Other aspects of Hip Hop culture that are enacted through daily activities included ways of speaking and dressing. In order to receive recognition from other members of the Hip Hop community formal and informal competitions between different artists occurred. This global tradition was a legacy of the urban roots of Rap music that demanded that artists proved themselves in order to gain respect and popularity. This was congruent with the ethos of participation and lifestyle that was a part of global Rap music culture.

The participants also felt that Rap music could potentially play an important role in educating the South African community through a process of artists networking with prominent corporate or government initiatives. Hence the youths' envisioned Hip Hop culture as a way to interact with broader culture in a productive fashion. The global meanings attached to Rap music have often allowed for Rap music to be used as a tool to communicate around aspects of society and to educate people. This is further elaborated in the section "Social activism as opposed to hyper-masculinity".

Another key aspect of Hip Hop culture noted by the youths was an awareness of authenticity and the concept of remixing. Authenticity played a large role in global and South African Hip Hop culture. This placed South African Rap music listeners and performers into a position where the norms of Rap music needed to be followed in a way that reflected where they come from and how they live. This has prompted some local innovations such as Rapping in an African language or using (remixing) older South African music as an inspiration for contemporary sounds. There had also been unique South African trends that South African Rap listeners followed that differentiated them from Rap listeners in other countries. The subsequent excerpt from the transcriptions recognizes the relevance of Rap music as a global culture that needs to maintain an awareness of the local environment.

> *Hip-hop has I think similar features worldwide it's just that there are different languages and different settings. Because we have different situations and problems to other countries, so I think you should express like what's happening around you.*
> (Mongezi, p. 7)

4.2.1.3. Remix and globalization.

Thus Rap music culture seems to provide a framework in which youth felt that they could participate in a global youth culture while also maintaining a South African identity. The capacity to reformulate a South African identity was done by selecting certain aspects or qualities and contextualizing them within the global framework of Rap culture. The ability to remix social identity is a key tool that was used to negotiate the tension between the global and local influences that adolescents are exposed to. This process of remixing allows for a fluid notion of identity that can be negotiated to fit each individual regardless of their global and local location. The concept of remixing reemerged in the following theme that dealt with the tension between individual and public identities.

Listening to Rap music also implied diverse forms of creative expression as well as norms for individual behavior and social participation. The poetic nature of Rap music also enabled it to address many diverse issues in a depth that was not normally broached by other forms of popular youth culture.

Rap music offered the youths a global framework that provided a social means for negotiating global and local identities. Through a lifestyle that permitted remixing it was possible to fuse elements of global and local culture as well as contemporary and retro trends in order to redefine notions of South African youth culture.

4.2.1.4. Differences as a culture and a lifestyle.

It is also useful to establish the perceived differences regarding South African and American Hip Hop culture. The social identity of the individuals' in the sample must be contextualized against this backdrop that located them within global parameters. The youths that were interviewed unanimously recognized that Rap music was originally an American export. Furthermore the youths' also noted that the industry and lifestyle associated with Rap music was more prominent in America. The booming Rap music industry in America often sets global trends and the artists also set a benchmark in terms of levels of skill and creativity according to the data. The scene in South Africa was described as being in a state of development. It seemed as if the local Rap music industry had only produced a handful of performers that were able to sustain themselves financially. Hence the associations between Rap music and success in South Africa are tenuous at best according to the youths. This was in stark contrast to the ostentatious images of opulence that are conveyed by many of the popular American rappers.

The perceived size of the South African Hip Hop market was still limited according to the participants and there were not exclusive radio stations that played only Rap music. Furthermore several of the Rap listeners interviewed stated that it was impossible for a Rap music listener to listen to only South African Rap music as it was a newly emerging genre. The genre of Rap music in America had become so diverse that it contained several subgenres that catered for a wide variety of listeners. There was also a depth of American music that had been created over time so someone could hypothetically listen to contemporary Rap or older Rap music. Perhaps it was this cornucopia of variety that attracted the South African Rap music listeners in this study to predominantly pay attention to American Rap music.

The South African youth interviewed generally seemed to prefer American underground Rap music that had not been play listed by large scale local broadcasters. In order to keep track of the new music that was being produced in America it required the youth groups to communicate and share music as well as the names of artists. The students mentioned that they felt that this made it significantly harder to keep track of the recent trends locally and thought that it would be much easier in America's larger Hip Hop community with artists that performed regularly. The students also noted that in America it would be normal to lead a lifestyle conforming to the norms of Hip Hop expression. However in South Africa it appears as if avid Rap music listeners were left feeling self-conscious as they were often

singled out and accused of mimicking American behavior. The following quote illustrated this common theme in the data.

> *If I were to take for example Kwaito – Kwaito fans, especially when hip-hop, South African Hip Hop came out, all Kwaito fans were asking what are these guys doing, are they trying to be American. (Bongi, p. 5)*

4.2.1.5. Hip Hop vs. Kwaito in South Africa.

It was only possible to locate Rap music in South Africa against the background of Kwaito as was discussed in the literature review. The data also suggested that Kwaito was considered to be the most popular music form for South African black youth. It was mostly sung in a hybrid of African languages and street talk. This South African youth culture was primarily accessible only for people that could speak African languages. In contrast to American Rap music that had proven an appeal to a worldwide population through the use of English predominantly.

The South African youth appeared to have a low tolerance level for South African music that did not sound as if it was locally influenced in terms of the language it was sung in and the contents of the song. Another noticeable difference was that Kwaito was often used for dancing and having fun. Although Rap music can be located as a party music it also has a serious side and often comments on relevant socio- political issues. Thus it appeared as if there were several different levels of conflict in relation to the two different styles of music and their respective cultures.

The perceived values of American youth appeared to be located in a contrasting position demonstrating greater ease at dealing with their place in global society and commenting on serious issues happening around them. The South African youths seemed to still be involved in a process of creating an authentic post-liberation youth cultures within a democratic society. After many years of being stinted by the confines of the Apartheid regime, there seemed to be a need to resist the prescribed notions of American Rap culture in order to differentiate contemporary South African Hip Hop identities. The following statement by one of the volunteers addressed an awareness of the socio-political changes in South Africa and also commented on some of the distinguishing characteristics of local Rap music such as using South African languages.

> *I think there is a difference simply because of our experiences politically, culturally in general in society, we going through so many things at the moment from, I don't know, from transformation to transition, you know, its, we going through so many things you*

know and our Rap music is different to music overseas. You never hear someone from Jamaica rapping Zulu and English, you know. (Thabang, p. 12)

4.2.1.6. Socio-historical differences and variations in understandings of blackness.

One of the key socio-historical identities invoked by the participants concerned race and its relation to music consumption. The perceived vast sociopolitical differences between South Africa and America suggested that it was not possible for there to be one all-defining discourse on racial identity without taking local factors into account. Perhaps it was for this reason that there was a lot of ambivalence towards Rap music listeners in South Africa. America has been a democracy for significantly longer than South Africa. The local environment in South Africa was still in a state of flux at the time of this research that was set into motion by the first elections in 1994 that ended the injustices of legally enforced segregation and racism. At this time the black majority in South Africa were able to vote for the first time. This significant shift in governance had large scale implications for notions of identity. Hence it was important to bear in mind the developmental stage of South Africa's democracy as well as to locate these participants as first generation youths in a post Apartheid era.

South Africa's newly emerging democracy also comprised of a different demographic make up to the USA. In America black people are the minority whereas in South Africa black people make up the majority of the countries population. This was important to note as Rap music often reflects aspects of local society and has played a strong role in redefining notions of blackness (Rose, 1994).

I have to point out to say that it has affected me as a black person in terms of this is our music. (Jack, p. 29)

The seemingly peaceful revolution that resulted in equality in 1994 created a cascade of constitutional changes that could take generations to manifest. The racial oppression that occurred in South Africa was based on pathological understandings of race and these ideas were enforced. There were many similarities between the current constitutions of America and South Africa that had both risen from a past that included racism. There were intrinsic differences however to the identities relating to race in the two countries.

From a cultural perspective participants commented on several other differences between black identities in South Africa and America that played out in Rap culture. There are eleven national languages in South Africa. This served as an important reminder of intra- racial differences. The

influence of African cultural practices also affected the lives of different South Africans in unique ways. There remains a tension in South Africa between western ideas and more traditional African practices and this is settled by different individuals according to their own needs and environments. The young South Africans that participated in this study labeled themselves as part of Rap culture and in so doing opened up an arena to interrogate the tensions relating to African and urban American life styles. The following interaction from the data demonstrated this participant's awareness of the complexities of applying uncritical Hip Hop stereotypes in the multicultural South African environment.

> ***Interviewer: So although you are aware that those stereotypes are there, you've also become aware that you can't generalise about people as well.***
>
> *Subject: You can't especially in our country we have 15 billion languages and colors and.*
>
> ***Interviewer: Ya**.*
>
> *Subject: Influences from every where, you can't be sure anymore, so you have to be sensitive.*
>
> ***Interviewer: Ah ha**.*
>
> *Subject: Especially in our country, okay he looks like that but let me find out a bit more.*
>
> ***Interviewer: Sure**.*
>
> *Subjects: So that I don't judge, you know. (Jack. p37)*

Hence the spectrum of meaning attached to blackness in South Africa had many differences to notions of blackness in America. There had been a strong process of redefining notions of black identity in post Apartheid South Africa (Swartz, 2003). However it was not only a renaissance of black identities but rather an emerging of unique South African identities. It was inevitable that there would be some tension between the discourses circulated on a global level by Rap music and the newly emerging ideas of South African youth that were epitomized by the most popular South African youth music called Kwaito. It may seem threatening for the newly emerging black identities being forged in South Africa to come in to conflict with the global distribution and financial clout wielded by American Rap music. The following citation by the participant recognized that many American fashion accessories are linked to Hip Hop and simultaneously he expressed a need to be authentic as a South African member of the Hip Hop community.

I don't follow their misrepresentation I don't follow somebody else's idea about Hip Hop. I follow my own like you won't see me sagging jeans there with an American capital NY I don't live in NY so I don't have that NY thing I am just me. (Mongezi ,p. 10).

There appeared to be many differences relating to the meanings attached to Rap music in South Africa and America. It was interesting that despite these differences Rap culture was able to assimilate into the lifestyle of an urban South African. One of the key functions that Rap music provided is for youth to be able to function in a global community while being rooted in the authenticity of their own culture.

It was clear that globalization had influenced the development of the participants. In times past the transition into adulthood would require a youth gaining a social awareness of the city they lived in and perhaps an entire country. However in today's times it could be argued that in order to be successful or even just socially conscious a youth needs to locate themselves in their local environment while holding in mind their position from a global perspective. The advent of modern technology had allowed people to enact global cultures through music, internet, fashion or movies. Rap music was perceived as similar to many other contemporary trends that were interacted with through the use of technology. However participants provided evidence that that Rap music as a youth culture offered a more comprehensive framework for glocalized participation through the enactment of rituals in everyday private and public spaces.

4.2.2. Private Versus Social Enactments of Hip Hop Culture.

4.2.2.1. The use of Rap music in daily life.

Participation in Rap culture has a large influence on participants' daily activities. The data from the interviews confirmed that the youths spent significant portions of their leisure time listening to music or participating in other Rap music related activities. The majority of the students acknowledged listening to Rap music every day and often spending three hours or more listening to music. This confirmed observations made by Zillman & Gan, (1997) that music related activities were the most popular way of spending time for youths. The youths that were interviewed described listening to music in different settings throughout the day. Interesting observations emerged regarding the tension between listening to music in private as opposed to social musical interactions. As a result interpretations were made seeking to explain issues around social identity. Interpretations were largely informed by social identity theory as well as a postmodern conception of identity.

Participating in Rap music culture on an individual basis entailed more than just listening to music. The students also spoke about the ways that they engaged with the music. The nature of the lyrics facilitated a means of expression that allowed the listeners to get a sense of the personality that the artists were attempting to project. The music also facilitated a process of interpretation of stories or metaphors in the songs and/or learning from the contents directly. Furthermore many issues were addressed in the songs that included urban life, love, racial identity, drug use, moral values as well as comments on political issues. Hence the nature of engagement was at a level that allowed for the consideration of a variety of globally or locally relevant subject matter. The following quote displayed the way that Rap was perceived in this interview as a tool that could introduce challenging topics that captured this youth's interest.

> *I need my senses to be working, I need to be challenged, if someone can really get into my head and show me something in the language that I speak, that's what Hip Hop does. (Jack, p. 32)*

Another theme that emerged in the interviews relating to private and public space was that the youths seemed to listen to different music when they were alone. Almost all of the students acknowledged that there were certain styles of music that they were comfortable listening to at home alone but would not listen to with friends. Many of the youths mentioned that they listened to different music depending on their moods. In addition to this there seemed to be a greater flexibility and sense of searching to define an individual's taste when the participants were listening to music individually. This also demonstrated a need to meet with certain norms when listening to music in a group context. The following quote from the data provides an example of the way the youth's taste in music differed in a public and private space. The example also illustrated that the student felt a need to be certain of his feelings towards a piece of music before sharing it with friends.

> *I think the thing is that I do perhaps just play around. But there is some stuff that I listen to right now that I wouldn't, I'm not comfortable listening to even by myself yet. So it will be difficult for me to play it in a public context and back it up. (Mark,p. 24)*

Several of the participants discussed listening to music in semi-private settings such as students' residences or at the family home. It was interesting to note the significance of music as a way of interacting with other members of a household. The music seemed to serve as a way of defining public space and sometimes setting up boundaries within the house. One of the students mentioned that his sister did not like him listening to Rap music in the house so he often needed to compromise by listening to music in the lounge.

My little sister listens to Beyonce', I listen to that just for her sake you know. (Mbuso, p. 15)

The act of having to choose a kind of music that was more suitable according to his sister was a form of negotiating acceptable behavior within the family home. Thus the meaning of listening to music changed if was being done in a private space or public space. Music served as a tangible agent of communication between a youth and the people that resided nearby. The taste in music that a youth displayed and the way that other people responded to the music provided a way to learn more about society through gauging or eliciting the responses of others. The music that was played also communicated about dimensions of an identity that a youth was attempting to define.

It appeared as if there was a strong relationship between the types of music the youths listened to and their friends' taste in music. The students mentioned that a lot of time was spent with friends talking about Rap music. It was easy to believe this as the students were passionate throughout the interviews and enjoyed sharing their views on Rap music and their own experiences. It seemed as if conversations with peers provided an opportunity to share knowledge and opinions around Rap music. It was also noted that the youths made an effort to attended clubs, poetry events, album launches and other social gatherings where Rap music was played.

I make it a conscious choice to seek places that have hip-hop that have poetry . (Mark,p.12)

There were even some youths that would only attend events where Rap music was featured. It was plausible that certain youths that were unsure regarding their identities may have placed a greater emphasis on remaining in a familiar environment. Tarrant et al (2001b) found a correlation between low self esteem and larger perceived differences between in and out groups based on music taste. Although the majority of the individuals were willing to attend clubs or events that played different types of music when there was a sufficient motivation. There was variability between the approaches of different participants in relation to socializing with youths that listened to other kinds of music. Youths sometimes experienced their identity as a rigid entity or most often as a malleable self that was open to change and experimentation depending on their social and personal needs.

4.2.2.2. Cultural, social rituals and performance.

All eight of the volunteers practiced varying forms of Rap music culture as artists. The manner of interacting with the music was changed by assuming the perspective of a performer that works within that realm of expression. The music served as an inspiration for a creative direction for many of the

subjects as well as a source of entertainment. Furthermore, all of the different forms of expression in Hip Hop culture appeared to demand considerable amounts of practice and dedication in order for an individual to be competitive. An example of this would be break dancing, which required the agility and dexterity of a gymnast in order to execute the different moves. The following interaction from the data discussed the amount of training this participant invested in the practicing of his dance moves on a daily basis.

> ***Interviewer: How long do you train per day?***
> *Subject: Well I train between 3 and 4 hours a day.Yeah. And all I played is basically Rap and break beats.Ya, just for this year basically ya, this whole year.*
> ***Interviewer: Okay, sure that's quite a lot of time.***
> *Subject: Ya, but I enjoy it you know I can relate to it, I just go with the music. Without the music you can't dance, music comes first you know. (Thabang, p. 1)*

The youth in this interview emphasized the way that the music facilitated the cultural activity of practicing his form of expression. The honing of a form of expression seemed to take place privately, with a group of friends or alternatively while competing publicly. The chosen cultural activities allowed each Rap listener the freedom to maintain a social identity related to taste in music. Each musical activity possessed many meanings related to bodies, movements and thoughts within a social context that allowed the participants' to locate themselves within local and global social hierarchies (Denora, 2000).

4.2.2.3. Social Identity Theory and social interaction in Hip Hop culture.

It seemed as if music was often used as a social tool to fit in with a crowd of people. The limited nature of the South African Rap music scene did not offer a broad selection of Rap music events to the Hip Hop community. The Rap music scene was perceived by the participants as being peripheral to the more mainstream Kwaito community. Hence if Rap music listeners were not willing to compromise regarding the musical events they attended it could have led to them finding themselves ostracized from the larger community. The following quote illustrated the way music was used as a social tool. This particular example referred to attending a club and the importance of conforming in a particular social setting as a means to blend in with friends.

> *You want to be in with the in crowd, if you going to a party what kind of music will they be playing? Music will be a big part of it and you want to go there and look like you enjoying yourself other than just going and saying I don't like the music and than you won't belong. So its, socially you want to fit in, so music listening helps you fit in. (Jack, p. 5)*

The social uses of music for youths seemed to apply at different levels. It was helpful for a person to participate in a community where there were shared norms and values. The interactions within a group of friends that listened to Rap music created a space where there was a collective choice in terms of lifestyle and taste in music. There was also room for differences of opinion, style or taste within the social group. This enabled the youths to locate their own identity within the larger local and global Rap community while simultaneously differentiating oneself as an individual. In many ways this was congruent with Tajfel's (1981) social identity theory that explained the need for conforming to the rules and roles of a person's "in group" in order to be accepted. The following interaction illustrated the sense of approval that this Rap music listener felt when spending time with his friends.

> ***Subject:*** *So people who listen to the same stuff hang out together or go to the same places and people who listen to deeper stuff hang out together at these same places.*
>
> ***…Interviewer: Okay, you find that in your life that you hang out with people who listen to similar kinds of music to you?***
>
> *Subject: Yes, you know my comfort place is with my friends. (Jack, p. 16)*

Tajfel's (1981) Social Identity theory appeared to hold some relevance in relation to addressing within group interactions. The themes noted in the data also seemed to confirm research done by Tarrant, Hargreaves and North (2001) that peer groups were used to evaluate adolescents' identity in a more positive light if they listened to the same music. It did seem as if the youths that were interviewed perceived other members of their personal Rap music taste groups in a positive way. The following quote related to Hip Hop listeners that are also called "heads". This description described Rap music listeners in a positive light as individuals that listen to music intellectually and strive for growth.

> *We're heads we're listening to this with our heads you know what I mean, so it's about building yourself I would say. Because when you heed a lot of things you know, you get a sense of direction where you want to be and where you want to go. (Mongezi, p. 6)*

Social identity theory also addresses interactions that occur between different groups. Remembering Tarrant, Hargreaves and North (2001) study, questions were used to try and gain an understanding of how the youths perceived others that were not in their group. The youths generally did not seem to abide by negative stereotypes of individuals that listened to other types of music. Although, there were several incidents where students' did make generalizations about out group members that listened to other types of music. It was interesting to consider whether these occurrences were an exception to a rule or alternatively that perhaps the other youths did not want to come across as judgmental. The

following two quotes were interesting to compare. The two youths were both making comments about a music group based on taste relating to reggae music. The first quote implied that most reggae listeners smoke marijuana. Whereas the second quote suggested that it was hard to understand a person based strictly on their tastes in music.

> *Most of the people I meet who listen to reggae they smoke.(Jabu, 13)*
>
> *Just because his got dread locks doesn't mean he smokes weed. Maybe he likes these yellow, green, red colours. (Jack, p. 37)*

The past social climate in South Africa was ruled by Apartheid legislation that enforced oppression based on socially prescribed differences. It was possible that due to these past realities in South Africa a legacy was created that made it uncomfortable for generalizations to be voiced about another group by the participants. The youths that were interviewed could have experienced pressure to conform to those prescribed expectations of avoiding prejudicial statements. The following quote demonstrated that despite the democratic climate in South Africa this youth was still aware of past socio-historical influences 13 years after the first elections were held.

> *So I think people still have a lot to learn because we've had freedom for so long and yet it seems that we've only had it for a year. (Mongezi, p. 16)*

It was also useful to think about how the Rap listeners believed that they were perceived by people that were not in their groups based on musical taste and so particular questions attempted to tap the participants' meta-stereotypes. The Rap listeners often felt judged by the negative stereotypes that related to drug use or being involved in gang activity that were frequently depicted in movies and commercial Rap videos. The following quote displayed that this youth felt stereotyped as a criminal and that many constructive aspects of Rap culture were not recognized.

> *Definitely it's difficult! I mean being a b-boy being a part of Hip Hop culture. Its people just look at us …oh wow. Next day his out there pimping whores, you know, pimping some whores and its not. It's a practice it's a lifestyle people don't understand how many hours go into practicing your rhythms your creative thought. (Thabang , p. 6)*

In addition to feeling perceived as being connected to surreptitious activities the youths interviewed all seemed cautious that other South Africans would accuse them of trying to be American. Negative meta-stereotypes relating to out-group members were held by the youths that were interviewed. This

seemed to confirm the tenets of Social Identity theory that there were expectations that out group members perceive Rap listeners in a negative way. However it was also acknowledged that at times they were recognized and respected for having their own style by peers or parents.

The Social Identity theory appears to be particularly useful in describing intra-group interactions and meta-stereotypes. Although the data regarding inter-group behavior was complex and there was also an indication of mixed results. It was doubtful that this theory was devised to take into account all of the social ramifications of belonging to a global community of this nature. However, the use of 'remix' implied that many identities and sounds can be assumed within the framework of Rap culture.

4.2.2.4. Remix and pervasive group boundaries.

> *Sometimes it's quite funny that it's the interest in the other style that makes me look more into hip-hop, because I understand the miracle of hip-hop. (Mark, p. 13)*

Remix is a key term that may be applied to the complex process of appropriating novel social influences into an identity (Nutall, 2004). The term remix seemed to fit the data as a resolution to the global and local dichotomy as well as a means of negotiating a compromise amidst the tension between private and public interactions. Rap music did more than just allow its participants to position themselves in relation to other social groups it also recognized that it was interdependent on the rest of society. Rap music seems to have an inbuilt concept that allowed for the boundaries of the culture to remain susceptible to influences from other groups within society. The act of remixing allowed for interesting sounds, images or ideas to be reformulated in a way that could be appropriated for use in Hip Hop culture (Nuttal, 2004). This had implications for the viewing of Rap music as a distinct social group. It was in built into the nature of Rap music culture to depend on other aspects of society for inspiration. Thus the cultural framework of Rap music must be interdependent on the broader local and global societies that it forms a part of.

This capacity to remix connected Rap music listeners to other cultures and it also made certain aspects of Rap music more accessible to non Rap music listeners that had heard a Rap song that incorporated elements of a style of music that was familiar to the out group members. This is a significant concept to use in understanding the way that Hip Hop interfaces with youth identity. It is interesting to consider the implications of a social group based on interdependence within a larger society. The youths that were interviewed mentioned becoming interested in many other aspects of musical culture through Rap

music. This was part of a process of hearing a classical or blues influence in a Rap song and than searching to find out more about the original influence. The following quote commented on the way classical music could become more relevant to the black community in South Africa through Rap culture.

> *The black community than knows about that classical song where and if it was just a Mozart or Beethoven kind of a song they wouldn't be interested in it so I think Hip Hop also just kind of gives a way for people to know other music other than Hip Hop you know you just kind of just introduce change . (Bongi, p. 15)*

Furthermore it also seemed as if this influence had become reciprocal. The concept of remixing material has now also been used in many other facets of contemporary culture as Rap music had become globally popular. For example the rock music genre has also adopted the technique of remixing or alternatively including Rap singers to facilitate the creation of music. The following quote mentioned that rock music listeners were more interested in the rapper Jay Z after his lyrics had been included in a rock song. Hybrid projects of this nature demonstrated the influence of Rap music on the creative process of other genres and also expand the market of Rap music.

> *I was a Linkin Park fan before they released, "hypo theory", most people that I talk with will never listen to Jay Z. Once his lyric were mixed with that genre they instantly picked it up and you know. (Thabang, p. 11)*

The notion of remixing as exemplified in Hip Hop music seemed to be mirrored in the identity possibilities for its listeners while remaining entrenched within Rap music culture. It was interesting to interpret the Social Identity Theory in a novel fashion in order to recognize that Rap culture provided the youths with tools to negotiate a dynamic social identity. This in turn affected inter and intra group interactions. Hence it was plausible that the ability to remix ones identity was one of the factors that contributed to the majority of youths being open minded regarding individuals from other music taste groups. A curious attitude that entailed wanting to learn more about other genres or cultures characterized the attitudes of the participants. This was helpful as it allowed for prospective opportunities of finding sources of inspiration that could be enacted within a Hip Hop framework.

The strength of the Social Identity Theory was that it accounted for social interactions in relations to group identity. The Post Modern Theory focused more on the fluid nature of identity during the course of day to day life. The term "remix" opened up the prospect for youths to access a myriad of identities

and could be considered in relation to the Post Modern theory. The dynamic malleability of identity allowed by Hip Hop culture fitted with the fragmented notion of post modern identity. However the term "remix" implied that the identity fluctuations remain rooted in the continuity of Hip Hop culture. Rap music taste for youths' was an important identity construct that was not perceived as rigid a category of identity as race or gender. This created an invaluable developmental opportunity for youths to experiment with their identity permutations in relation to taste in music. It was possible that the lessons learned in relation to the variability that identities possessed led to more comprehensive understandings of a youth's own identities. In addition to cultivating a curiosity in relation to the identities of others that did not foreclose on possibilities based on socially constructed ideas such as race or gender.

The first two themes of diametrically opposed opposites discussed served as the foundation for the themes that followed. It was also useful to recognize that Rap music served as a framework that allowed these two different pairs of tensions and meanings to intersect and create an axis. This axis of meaning negotiated though the identity tool of remixing plays a pivotal role in the discussion of all the themes that followed.

4.2.3. *Authentic versus Commercial Notions of Expression*

4.2.3.1. An aesthetic of authenticity.

> *By distinction of parents or wealth or social class, all those different hip-hop listeners have different views towards hip-hop. They rap different raps. (Mark, p. 20)*

Themes regarding authenticity emerged in the data as a fundamental concept of Rap music that influenced social identity. However in order to gain a holistic conception of the meanings attached to authenticity, it was also important to juxtapose this concept against commercialism or behavior that was aimed purely at gaining popularity or making money. Authenticity and commercialism coexisted within Hip Hop culture according to the participants. The original aesthetic of Rap music strived for authentic expression. It was inevitable however that issues regarding commercialism would arise though in the wake of an industry that had a huge global audience and yielded large profits annually. The tension between these topics created a space to generate meanings regarding identity, art, expression, popularity, and attaining wealth. This theme also built upon the foundations that had been

put in place regarding Rap culture and the global and local tensions as well as the diametrically opposed aspects of interacting with Rap culture in private and public spaces. .

The participants discussed several different dimensions relating to Rap music becoming commercialized. Rap music's increasing popularity as a form of music has motivated many record companies to exploit the industry for profit. Rap music was often treated like a commodity in order to provide a mass market with a product that had commercial appeal that need not necessarily meet the criteria of Hip Hop aesthetics. On the one hand the record companies stood to make profit and on the other hand there were many Rap music artists that were willing to compromise their standards in order to become successful. It was interesting to note that many commercial Rap music songs focused on creating images of wealth and virility or alternatively conjuring the façade of an urban gangster. Although these themes were prevalent in many commercial Rap songs it seems as if they had almost become a cliché. The following quote illustrated the opinion of one of the participants regarding the way that many rappers or microphone controllers (MCs') conformed to the specifications of the music industry rather than being authentic.

> *There's that number of MC's who are unfortunately engulfed by the record companies, just speak about this and not about how they feel. (Bongi, p. 4)*

The youths are placed in a challenging situation as consumers. An avid Rap listener needed to differentiate between authentic music and songs that are created more for commercial success. It does appear as if it is possible though for Rap music to meet both of these criteria. Several of the participants acknowledged enjoying music by artists with global success that had also achieved respect for being authentic. The youths' position as consumers had been complicated further as many marketing companies started to use Rap music to meet their own ends as a marketing tool to aim at the youth market. The end result often ended up being a diluted form of Hip Hop that met certain criteria but nonetheless was lacking authenticity. The following extract from the data contrasted commercial and underground Hip Hop music. Commercial Rap music was described primarily as a contrived financial asset as opposed to underground Rap music that this youth was able to relate to in a more authentic manner.

> *Commercial Rap to me its not really true to Hip Hop or Rap per se its more like money making schemes, its just, its producing basically, the money's in production not really the real lyrical content per say. I love to hear a story being told to me and underground Rap*

tells me lots of stories, you know, whether it be a history of oppression or whatever it be, you know. It expresses, it helps me you know, relate to things I want to express in my life like I'm having trouble at home theres an underground rapper that will be discussing you know, problems you know and ya it makes you feel like that person is connecting with me whether he be 50 miles away or a 100 000. (Thabang, p. 4)

The participants broadly described Rap music as being separated into underground Rap music and commercial Rap music. Underground Rap music had free range in terms of the content that could be included. Underground Rap was labeled by the youths as being a tool for social change, education, having fun or commenting on realities of society such as religion or politics. The youths chose to listen to specific artists that they could identify with. Each choice was motivated by several factors but authenticity was an omnipresent as a marker of quality. The following quote mentioned a key term that was present in Hip Hop culture that referred to *being real* or authentic. It was important to note that this ethos was applied to performers that were judged in terms of authentic expression. In addition to being an aesthetic criterion to measure creative Hip Hop expression it also referred to participants in the Hip Hop community living an authentic life or being real.

There is this whole concept of being real quote unquote, there's what else, there's keeping it real. (Mark, p. 7)

The youths described their favorite artists as being truthful in describing their experiences, personalities and opinions. A metaphor that arose from the data compared listening to authentic Rap music to the the experience of watching a movie and than finding out afterwards that it was a true story. It seemed as if there was something about being able to engage with a personal and honest form of expression that made listening to the music more meaningful for the youths.

You know how you can watch a movie, like a drama or a what not and you find out at the beginning or the end or whatever that it was a true story. It is just like that, it just makes the movie just that little bit more, you connect a little bit more. (Thumi, p. 32)

In contrast to the commercial market, underground Rap music is held in high esteem as the artists were often perceived as making music for the love of it rather than in order to make large amounts of money. Furthermore many of the Hip Hop stars of today had to work their way up from the underground so the underground represented a training ground for future artist and trends. The meanings attached to underground and commercial music were important to establish as a prelude to contextualizing the choices that the youths made as consumers and artists. The search for authenticity

as a global consumer and performer was further complicated by negotiating the tensions between global, local and regional influences in the quest for a personally tailored resolution.

4.2.3.2. The relationship between authenticity and global, local and regional spaces.

> *That's where the geographic motion comes in, you realize that a certain region creates its idea of what hip-hop is. (Mark, p. 9)*

Many of South African youths appeared to fear that South African Hip Hop participants would become inauthentic or lose their South African roots. The notion of authenticity in Rap music is a buffer against such an occurrence as a South African Rap musician cannot be authentic if they sound identical to an American performer. The following quote recognized that Rap music as a culture cannot be lived authentically unless the person's place of residence is taken into account.

> *At some point you got to realise okay you here, know where you are. If you start rapping English okay cool, you can be creative but you here knowing your surname, knowing your name. What are you saying about yourself? If you all English and never mention anything about your home even if it's a tiny thing, about what happens in the street corner or what do you feel about the world itself from where you are, again you just another pawn. (Mbuso, p. 9)*

This participant emphasized the need for South African Rap artists to remain authentic. There also seemed to be a theme that showed that despite all of the youths being well versed in Hip Hop culture, there was a need to resist pre-formulated identities that could leave a youth feeling like a pawn that was being manipulated by a global culture. The need for authenticity was overt and conscious. Hence the youths managed the local and global tension in a conscious manner that was made overt due to the striving for authenticity. Diverse aspects of the youths' lifestyle needed to be integrated into Hip Hop lifestyle. Several of the participants mentioned that they were able to integrate their religious life style with their participation in Rap culture. The ability to lead an authentic Hip Hop lifestyle in South Africa required remaining connected to where a person came from their neighbourhood, family, friends, home languages and African heritage.

> *If I have to become a musician, I'll also talk about what's happening in South Africa, what's happening around the world, and how can God help us, I'm a Christian. (Jabu, p. 24)*

Authentic Rap culture seemed to take into account the urban location that the listeners or performers originated from. Several of the youths came from different cities before coming to study in Johannesburg at the University of the Witswatersrand and they discussed differences between the Hip

Hop communities in Johannesburg and Pretoria as well as Cape Town. The following quote described the experience of a Hip Hop artist that had lived in a smaller town trying to acclimatize to the competitive scene at a Hip Hop event in Johannesburg.

> *I was here, new city, trying to, I'm still a rapper I'm from back home trying to be here, trying to be a Rapper here and then you have to entertain the crowd but also, you know, you got to show them you the best, disregarding anything else. If you don't have a crew you a 1 man army, I don't like competition much, I don't like competition but you can't survive in this city with out being competitive. (Mbuso, p. 6)*

The Johannesburg scene was described as being very competitive in relation to some of the other Hip Hop communities. Perhaps this is a reflection of the competitive lifestyle lead in South Africa's financial hub. The tensions relating to the global and local aspects of Hip Hop culture were essential to locate meanings that related to authenticity for the cohort of youths. According to the data the national and the global only provided a starting point and in order to actually engage with authentic youth culture it was necessary to acknowledge the regional culture as an identity pinpoint. Hence an effort was made to describe some unique aspects of the Johannesburg Hip Hop experience according to themes from the data. The enactment of Hip Hop culture in Johannesburg took place in two ways through consumption and through taking on the role of a performer. Both of these ways of participating in Hip Hop culture were explored respectively in relation to authenticity.

4.2.3.3. Authenticity enacted and expressed through consumption.

> *It's kind of like in seeking or in finding this place where you more comfortable with the style that you listening to, it more reflects the way you are. (Thumi, p. 4)*

The spectrum of tension that included authenticity and commercialism provided an informative window into many aspects of social identity. The foremost area to consider was in relation to the listener judging music as being authentic or commercial. The challenge that was a reality for Rap listeners was to negotiate the social rules and norms of Rap culture in an individualized manner. The youths were faced with navigating many decisions as consumers based in a target market that companies were attempting to exploit. Each youth faced a challenge to search out the music or clothes that fitted with his or her current identity or the identity the youth was aspiring towards (Nutall, 2004). The following quote illustrated the way that talking and dressing in a particular way or reading certain magazines distinguished consumers that listen to Rap music.

Where I go has trails of my interest in hip-hop, what I listen to, the records I buy, the magazines I read these are the trails of hip-hop. The way I speak formal, informal in any context there is trails of hip-hop. My thinking because of listening to other thinking which is from hip-hop and influenced by hip-hop or fashioned by hip-hop. (Mark, p. 19)

The first level of expressing or enacting an authentic identity as a consumer occurred through being affiliated with products related to Rap music. The commitment to authenticity manifested partially through cultivating a lifestyle associated with products that were congruent with the roles and norms of Rap music culture. This was useful as it displayed to out group members or the general public that a youth had chosen to be a Rap listener. The next level of experiencing music culture differentiated each Rap music listener in relation to other members of the Hip Hop community. This was similar to a badge of identification that was displayed and showed where youths chose to situate themselves in relation to society in general and the Hip Hop community specifically (Frith, 1981).

You can see by the way they dress that person is either like a fan of the Hip Hop clothing or a real true Hip Hop head. (Bongi, p. 16)

4.2.3.4. Seeking authenticity as a Hip Hop performer.

You know what with me it's different because like I'm also a hip-hop artist. (Jabu, p. 15)

In addition to considering the way that a consumer evaluated authenticity, it was also important to recognize that all of the youths interviewed are performers within Rap music culture. Hence the notions of authenticity were extended to include the process of expression within a local community. Therefore authenticity interacted with this cohort of participants on a dual level as consumers as well as artists. It was also vital to mention underground Rap music as it contextualized the act of participating in Rap music. The underground provided a practical way for young Rappers to work their way higher up in the entertainment industry. All of the youth in this study participated in Hip Hop culture as artists or entertainers and this demonstrated aspirations to explore the Rap music industry on another level aside from just being consumers. Several of the youths indicated that Rap music had benefited them by helping them to find a voice. The ability to have confidence in ones thoughts and expressive abilities was stated by the youths as an important part of Rap music culture. The following quote by a participant that is a rapper or MC recognized some of the personal lessons that he had learned from being a Rap artist.

Whether it is right or wrong it's my opinion you know what I mean, I think this taught me to be truthful to myself and express what I am thinking and that's how you learn. (Mongezi, p13)

These social skills relating to expression and confidence could also be used in other social spaces that the youth interacted in. For example it was plausible to assume that an authentic rapper could come across as a sincere public speaker in a work or academic environment. It was also interesting to consider that each rapper learned a lot about aspects of him-self and society through being a performer. Rapping in an authentic way distinguished the performer from his peers although there were also other influences to consider such as wanting to be popular or recognized. Through the creative decisions that were made the youthful rappers grappled with the tensions that emerged between the commercial and authentic spectrum. It appeared as if this dilemma created a thoughtful place for the different youths that were searching to mediate their individual identity and social position.

The spectrum between authenticity and commercialism was used for the youths to locate themselves as consumers as well as participants in Hip Hop culture. The dichotomy manifested to some degrees in the way that commercial and underground Rap music was understood. Furthermore, it was also important to get an idea of the perceptions of the youths regarding how authenticity could be identified within South African Hip Hop culture on a regional level. The impact of individual and social behavior could only be established by taking the meaning of the youths' actions into account. In the same way that remixing functioned within SIT as a process of cultivating a social identity that may expand and integrate different influences from a person's private and public life. It was useful to highlight 'keeping it real' as an internalized ethic that guided the youth in their attempts to navigate the tensions of authenticity and commercialism in order to seek and define an identity within a social context.

It is interesting to compare Erickson's concept of identity with the way the concept authenticity was used in the youth culture. According to Erickson's (1950) developmental theory, the period between adulthood and childhood was a process of searching for an identity. The search for balance between authenticity and popularity seemed to be similar to the process of becoming an individual in the midst of a larger society with prescribed rules and roles. The parameters of Rap culture however incorporated explicit global, local and regional dimensions. Despite the differences in terms of the scope of society that were acknowledged. It was logical that a comparison be made between Rap culture and Erickson's theory as they both acknowledged the role of society in identity development. Erickson's theory however was not devised to account for developmental stages and the manner in which global

communication and trade had accelerated over time. In contemporary society a youth need not only adopt the culture of ones family of origin. The global identity potentialities offered seemed to now extend to the point that a youth could choose what culture to participate in. Alternatively a youth could choose to participate in several cultures to different degrees (Jensen, 2003). Rap music provides an interesting example of the realities of youths being socialized into complex global cultures distinct from a family of origin.

According to Erickson the task of performing or living in an authentic manner would be a challenge for a youth that had not foreclosed on a unique identity. The process of defining an identity seemed to be facilitated to some degree through the culturally mediated search for authenticity. Individual's that seemed to have mastered the process of 'keeping it real' had found creative ways to define themselves within a broader society that demonstrated maturity in terms of displaying an identity from Erickson's developmental perspective (1950). A critical example of some important facets of identity that could be challenged and negotiated within the framework of Hip Hop culture were reflected in the participants' comments on an extreme male gender role and social responsibility.

4.2.4. Hyper-Masculinity, Gender and Social Activism

4.2.4.1. Prominent stereotypes within Hip Hop culture.

Research conducted by Iwamoto, Creswell & Caldwell (2007) indicated that Rap listeners often identified with the Rap artists that they listened to. Rap listeners were able to identify more strongly with artists that were considered to be authentic. The process of listening to Rap music opened up a space to listen to the words of a Rap song and interpret the varied contents during activities. The scope of the contents addressed a broad range of personal topics as well as commenting on aspects of society. Furthermore a Rap listener often listened to the lyrics of a favourite rapper over and over again which ensured the listener would become well versed in the subject matter and grow acquainted with the identities represented by the Rap artist. The identification with the rapper could also be enacted socially through listening to music with other youths or telling other youths about being a fan. Thus choosing to listen to a particular artist was a commitment and suggested a high level of identification with the artist.

There were two broad polarities of male stereotypes in Rap music that emerged in the data. The hyper-masculine or gangster was a prominent image invoked by the participants and was directly opposed by

themes related to a conscientious commentator on contemporary society that strived to educate and uplift society. Within Rap music both of these representations of identity coexisted and many variations in between. Rap culture provided a space for any person to express themselves as long as it was done in a skilful and authentic manner.

4.2.4.2. The hyper-masculine stereotype.

Rap music is often associated with the lifestyle of a gangster often portrayed by several popular rappers. A gangster rapper would engage with surviving life on the streets of the ghetto. Many songs also focus on escaping the ghetto through strength or street smarts in order to achieve wealth and success. This style of Rap music is often fraught with misogynistic descriptions of woman as sex objects that serve as conquests for the rappers. The media often sensationalise this side of Rap music and it has created an environment that condemned Rap music as a bad influence. Iyamoto (2003) describes this stereotype as being hyper- masculine; attempting to create an image of a man that has no feminine characteristics and epitomized exaggerated features of masculinity.

The South African youth interviewed could respect that this was a reflection of a reality that existed in America but they could not relate to it in regards to local life in Johannesburg. The general consensus in the themes was that there was not a strong relation between Rap culture and a gangster lifestyle in South Africa. Although one student from the Cape did comment that he felt he felt he was lucky that he escaped becoming involved in gang culture. The following quote demonstrated this student's disbelief of the gangster stereotype being entrenched in South African Hip Hop culture.

I doubt there's really gangsterism in South Africa in terms of Hip Hop. (Jack, p. 28)

It is notable that not one of the students said that they condoned the lifestyle and values epitomised by gangster rappers. Although it seemed unanimous that the students felt that each performer should be allowed to reflect the reality that they had lived. Hence many controversial topics were not seen as taboo as long as they were authentic or real experiences of the performer. The youths recognized that Rap music reflected aspects of society and that not all of the things that happened were non-offensive or politically correct. Gang life was considered a significant part of the American urban black experience and was often reflected and even glamorized by Rap music. The following quote illustrated

that the youth in the interview recognized that gangster Rap was often based on an authentic experience of growing up in a tough environment.

> *If someone grows up in a place where guns go off and people are raped and the father used to hit the mother. Obviously that person as a person first not as a hip-hop artist, it has a certain environmental influence on the person, who they are first. So the thing they think about or what they write about is shaped by their environment, it's just that these people make it to the biggest bigger voice. (Mark, p. 21)*

This youth also recognized that gangster Rap was the more popular side of Rap music or the larger voice due to the high profile media coverage given to gangster Rap. It was ironic in relation to this research as the youths did not seem to follow a lifestyle that was congruent with the hyper-masculine image. This echoed the findings of a seminal qualitative study on Rap music conducted with the help of a small sample of American university students by Iwamoto, Creswell & Caldwell (2007). The youths that were interviewed by Iyamoto were influenced by Rap music but did not seem to take on the negative messages and rather sought positive interpretations of the music.

The South African youths made several interesting comments regarding the stereotype of the gangster in Hip Hop culture. One of the youths mentioned that perhaps it was popular as a style as it represented the lives of many people that did not have a voice. However many of the listeners felt the gangster image was maintained by certain rappers in order to be popular or make money (commercialism). It was also noted that sometimes a youth would not like the content of the song but would admire the skill of the performer. The imagery of the gangster seemed to create a glamorous and dangerous world that could be a setting for interesting stories and characters. The listeners don't always take the behavior described in the songs literally but rather interpreted it as descriptions that were created for entertainment value. The following quote recognized that although the gangster lifestyle existed in contemporary Rap music not everything could be taken at face value.

> *I'm going to shoot you I'm going to do this, they did that stuff that's where it started really literally that's where it started. Now the idea is carried on but its more metaphors. (Jack, p. 27)*

Rap music was also frequently cast as art. However the youths did not attempt to justify all of the lewd content. The youths unanimously agreed that the derogatory way that women were often referred to as bitches or sex objects was unacceptable. There was only one volunteer in this study that was female and she emphasized that she was initially skeptical of Rap music due to its misogynistic content and that at the time of the interview it was still off putting to her. The majority of well known rap artists

were male consequently the gender stereotypes regarding woman were often related by men There had also been several influential female rappers that had presented different ways for woman to be thought about.

4.2.4.3. Female gender roles and an alternate sense of otherness.

It was notable that a female rapper could not fall under the hyper-masculine category of gangster Rap and would be located within the sub-genres of commercial or underground Hip Hop. It was also note worthy that a coherent theme did not arise in the data regarding attributes of a female MC. It seemed as if the most prominent stereotypes in Hip Hop culture were of a black man. Within Rap music culture participants that were female or white were often noted as possessing qualities of otherness. The following quote acknowledged racial and gender descriptions that were punctuated in Hip Hop culture as being different. The concept of the black man appeared notable due to its absence as it was taken for granted as the norm in Rap culture.

> *People get preoccupied with an MC being a white MC, being a coloured MC, being a female MC. (Mark, p. 17)*

In other words there was a reversal of the hegemonic constructions in the western media that often established the white male as the norm. The data did not indicate that there was no space to introduce identities that were female or white into Rap culture. It just seemed as if the rules and norms for establishing identity differed from mainstream western culture. It appeared that the stereotype of the conscious rapper and the connotations attached to it were more androgynous and offered an appeal to males and females. The female youth that participated in the research located herself closely to the identity template of the socially committed MC. The notion of using Rap music as a tool of social change dated back to the inception of Rap music. The creative elements of Rap music provided a way for inner city youths to interact as an alternative to the gangster lifestyles that were popular in those areas in America.

4.2.4.4. The Socially committed MC.

The subject matter that could be broached in a song was boundless and some of the youths suggested that they experienced Rap music to be similar to an alternate form of news broadcasting. Many of the youths were introduced to topics relating to contemporary society that included politics, race, religion and philosophy. Furthermore the topics were introduced through a medium that was accessible and

relevant for the youths. The following description by one of the participants described some of the qualities that are embodied by a conscious performer in the Hip Hop community.

> *I think what I admire is someone who is not only aware of the social environment but aware of what their material and content and activities impart on greater scale beyond music or painting or graffs or DJing as an art. What it imparts on a greater social scale, what it imparts not only on someones ear but someones spirit, how it shapes someones way of thinking, how it shapes some ones way of living, how it shapes someone personally like someone who has that for me has all the essential qualities of being a great leader in the movement. (* Mark, p. 26)

It was interesting to note the youths' responses to the questions that were asked in order to find out which Rap artist was admired by each of the youths. All of the youths selected rappers that had actualized themselves within the Rap industry and than had gone on to make a difference in other aspects of society. The role models that were selected had all achieved success as diplomats acting on behalf of the Rap community in order to accomplish social improvement. Hence there was a side to Rap music that engaged with important social issues and creates a framework for youths to interact around these topics. Another aspect of Rap celebrities' lives that the youths admired was that several of the stars had achieved financial success through being authentic. The following quote recognized that Hip Hop artists played a role in educating the public on social issues such as HIV in South Africa. The artist mentioned in the quote is an American artist that had been to South Africa to contribute to Nelson Mandela's charity concert promoting HIV awareness.

> *If you look at the 46664 concert, Ludacris is a hip-hop artist, a lot of the hip-hop artists are involved in the prevention against AIDS. (Bongi, p. 19)*

The identity templates that had been enacted through conscious Rap music had provided novel conceptions of locations that black people could assume in American and global society. The conscious and socially aware rapper stood in stark contrast to the image of black people that was created through gangster Rap music as well as the stereotypes often portrayed in Hollywood movies (Iyamoto, 2003). It was also important to bear in mind that many of the ideas represented in Rap music applied to notions of race and blackness in particular (Rose, 1994). Rap music seems to have provided a space for black entertainers to tell their own stories in an authentic format. Although there were many people of different races that had also achieved success in Rap culture, the identities that emerged from Rap music were primarily influenced by society's understandings of blackness and created a space to influence society through redefining conceptions of black identity.

It seemed as if performers and Rap listeners were still striving towards building unique South African ways to represent their personalities. However many of the South African rappers also expressed the need locate themselves within the global framework of Rap identities. The data suggested that the identity of the conscious rapper seemed to be much more popular in South Africa. This may be as a result of the socio-political challenges that South Africa had faced in the past as well as the current social climate. The violent crime rate in South Africa was amongst the highest in the world when this research project was conducted. Perhaps the moral climate in the new South Africa was not very tolerant of people that declared them selves to be hyper-masculine gangsters. It was also interesting to observe that many of the values of the conscious rapper regarding being aware of social ills and changing society are congruent with the challenges that South Africa is facing.

Each Rap music listener in the study was influenced by prominent stereotypes in Rap culture that were identified with or alternatively could motivate a youth to differentiate themselves from preconceived associations of identities portrayed in the media. The South African participants also seemed to interrogate these concepts while recognizing that the representations of American black identity differed from South African realities. A further issue of tension emerged around social expectations of behavior that oscillated between seeking the comfort of a community and the need for competing to be recognized as an individual.

4.2.5. Competitiveness Versus Communality

> *Hip Hop is like the world you got to put your marks out there, you already there you got to just tell them where you are. (Mbuso, p. 23)*

The participants were all privy to a shared framework of meaning that accessed global and local issues. Furthermore the youths shared ways of making meaning of the world. Important factors that influenced the way youths understood the world around them included the Rap stars that they identified with and how they were able to negotiate a socially sanctioned image in an authentic way. The competitive versus the communal factors was located as a tension within the social dynamics of Hip Hop culture. The Rap music community provided a space for the youths to be comfortable and interact with friends. The experience of belonging to a group helped build a sense of self-efficacy although the dynamics were infinitely more complex within the Rap music community. The participants also spoke about navigating the social hierarchy of the community through competing with each other as performers.

The following interaction from the data demonstrated that the participant appreciated the shared experiences with friends that listen to Rap music.

> *It's very easy to understand each other, like if somebody would say something, if a stranger walked passed us and they'd asked us for something or they'd say something, we'd immediately think the exact same thing, you know*. (Thabang, p. 9)

The youths shared a sense of community and shared meanings that were enacted through activities that were a part of Hip Hop culture. Another important aspect about participating in youth culture was that it allowed the youths to feel like they participated in a culture of their own choice. This seemed to be an important distinction as often it was a youths' first experience of participating in activities that were not scheduled by an adult. The laws within Rap culture had evolved for the facilitation of a developmental process that allowed youths to progress and learn skills that would benefit them as adults. The Rap community had inherent laws of social regulation that were analogous to the nature of democracy and capitalism. Rap music was a culture that depended on the participation and critique of its constituents that could be compared to democracy. It was also a social space that allowed the individuals in the sample to distinguish themselves as performers or public figures through a process of individualism and being competitive similar to capitalism. The importance of being a performer varied for the different participants. For some participants it was a hobby and several participants also considered making a career from their participation in Rap culture. The following quote displayed how this performer began to take her role much more seriously and her participation began to take on elements of a vocation.

> *I obviously feel like as soon as we become a participant of Hip Hop it's like a job now. You know you go to battles, you go to battles to get recognized. (Bongi, p. 9)*

Hence there had been a shift in the social role of an individual that chose to be a Hip Hop artist. The performer now had the opportunity of gaining social approval from the community. Although at the same time becoming an artist that represented a specific community elevated that person to a level where she appeared vulnerable to public critique. In many ways the success of a performer seemed to be determined by an individual's ability to manage the tensions of Hip Hop culture to his or her benefit. The process of competing as an individual in order to achieve success and recognition was perceived to be similar to capitalism. The success of capitalism as an ideal rested on the premise that competition was supposed to benefit the community as a whole. Rap music was constantly evolving as a culture and it seemed to be lead by the participators that chose to compete informally or formally.

The creative conflicts that generally occurred allowed for clashes within a communal setting. The performer often assumed a different identity while performing. This was similar to an alias or a brand. The identity the performer chose to use was often larger than life. The purpose of assuming a superior demeanor was often to prove that one was better than their competitors. The following quote illustrated the participants understanding of how being confident was a necessary quality as a Hip Hop performer.

> *In hip-hop most of the time if you don't show your confidence you don't make it. You have to be like yeah I'm a top dog, I'm the boss, I can do my stuff, I can do my thing so than people will be like yeah this guy is tight, this guy has got confidence that's how hip-hop is. (Jabu, p. 16)*

Hip Hop was described by the only female in the sample as a male dominated industry and hence the activities within Rap culture that required competitiveness could appeal more to men that were socialized from a young age to compete. This may be compared to the nature of the capitalist world that had required woman to participate and adapt to male dominated industries. However there was a space for females to compete although they had to earn their respect from the community, the following citation demonstrated this.

> *I think they really do respect and give the ladies the recognition that they deserve you know. But then at the same time I don't think they give me the recognition because you a lady sometimes they also tell you like you whack. You do not have the skills, not because they are being mean but because hip-hop is also about the survival of the fittest. (Bongi, p. 7)*

The artist could select anyone of the four elements of Rap culture that included break dancing, rapping, graffiti or being a DJ. One of the benefits of Hip Hop culture was that it seemed easy to participate; generally expensive training and equipment are not necessary. It was important that a youth would need to possess an awareness of their own aptitudes in order to participate at a competitive level. This level of social awareness was important as it could have repercussions on a person's social life and credibility. In many ways this activity of choosing to assume a public role was similar to choosing a job. It is something that required careful thought and an awareness of a person's own potential and the demands of society.

The nature of competing within society was considered similar to a sports activity that functioned according to social consensus. However there was more to Rap activities than physical strength or

dexterity as the elements of Rap culture require each performer to have an authentic identity that also needed to be accessible to the other members of the Hip Hop community. The ability to meet the needs of a crowd as well as express oneself authentically was challenging and demanded that the youthful performers had a dual awareness of themselves and others. This inter-subjective awareness was valuable to youths that were in a process of development as it required them to gain an understanding of themselves and the world around them in order to function as adults. The following quote demonstrates part of the process this youth had engaged with as a performer negotiating a range of tensions in order to make sense of his role within the Hip Hop community.

> *Rap can never really be about you or me, you got to relate to them but in order to relate to them you got to know what they want, you know, what they listen to, what they do and ya it became a journey that's when I realised okay Hip Hop is bigger than just Tupac and Biggy Smallz or just the creative side or just the emotion side. You got to really find out what you want to relate to them. (Mbuso, p. 9)*

This performer gained an opportunity to search for an authentic way to meet the approval of the Hip Hop community. The other members of the Hip Hop community often served as the judges that determined whether an artist was performing at a level that deserved public affirmation. The following quote demonstrates that the participant understood the social dynamics of Rap music that allows for the performer and the audience to have mutually reciprocal relationships.

> *You must take into consideration what people can relate to. Especialy, us in South African, we quite a stubborn kind of audience. Where if you come with a whack line that people can't relate to, they will you know shut you down, especially with hip-hop. (Bongi, p. 3)*

The quote above also recognized that the South African audiences are particularly hard to please. It was also mentioned by other participants that it was possible for the crowd to respond by booing someone off the stage. A Rap performer had to manage many tensions in order to be authentically South African and still express her self well as a rapper. Furthermore the South African community at large followed the ethos of Kwaito that placed more emphasis on dancing and having fun than thought provoking lyrics. The following quote recognizes that the South African community in general appeared to be more attracted to music that facilitated social activities like dancing.

> *South Africa is a dancing nation, you much more likely to sell if your song has a bit of a movement thing. (Jack, p. 11)*

The Hip Hop community seemed to have a different set of aesthetic criteria for evaluating expression. Hip Hop performers were measured according to principles of authenticity and technical skill. Each performer needed to be able to represent aspects of their personality as well as be true to the place and culture that they came from. The performer is also required to be competent in the skill that they had chosen. The process of negotiation between the authenticity and skill required each performer to be creative.

The principles reflected in the public evaluation of Rap music artists seem analogous to some key foundations of democracy. The experience of these social activities also emulated other aspects of broader society that included capitalism, dynamics of marketing and competition. This was logical as Rap music reflected many of the dynamics of the American society that it emerged from. However it was also important to take into account the local meanings attached to these social dynamics.

South Africa was a democracy that functioned with a financial system based on a capitalist economy. There were some unique meanings that were attributed to these important social systems in South African society that cannot be taken for granted. The public had only had the opportunity to vote regarding important issues for the last ten years. Previous to 1994 only white people were permitted to vote despite being a minority. The freedom to play an active role in a democratic society could be an advantage to South African youth but it also required a great degree of change as there was no previous template for social behavior. The first generation of youth in the New South Africa broke new ground as they experienced the freedom to maneuver within the democratic society. Furthermore it was the first time that youth in South Africa could represent them-selves in relation to global youth culture in a manner that was not connected to the struggle. The youth in South Africa also experienced a change in terms of the liberty to compete in society for financial success. Under the Apartheid regime there were many educational opportunities that were not granted to black people. Furthermore the majority of high paying jobs were monopolized by the white population. In contrast to the capitalist system in the new South Africa that was based on egalitarian ideals of individualism and competition. There were many benefits to this capitalist system although it also appeared be considered incongruent with certain traditional aspects of African culture. Many of the South African cultures shared an emphasis on community and extended families. Thus although capitalism allowed all South African's the chance to establish a career and be successful there remained an inevitable conflict with more traditional South African ways of living.

It is plausible to assume then that certain of the unique meanings attributed to a capitalist and democratic society in South Africa were enacted through the local Hip Hop community. Rap culture appeared to provide a space where there were many shared meaning and social activities. In order to gain social affirmation a performer would take on a role within the community. However these positions of influence were contested and they were often judged by the Hip Hop audiences based on skill and authenticity. It is also interesting to consider the similarities between these activities and western social systems as well as the implications for unique South African meanings. The tension between the communal and competitive aspects of Rap culture provided communities for youths to develop a social awareness as well as knowledge of self. These important developmental lessons could play a role in facilitating progress into adulthood.

4.2.6. Critical Versus Easily Influenced

> *For me its kind of hard because I'm trying, I need to know who I am, what I like and what I don't. (Jack, p. 25)*

The final theme noted in the data referred to the temporal nature of being involved in a youth culture. This process could occur over several years although the nature of engagement with Rap culture changed over time. It seems as if a youth could gain knowledge of aspects of a youth culture at a young age and than as he grew older he could become more discerning regarding his opinions. There was also a tension between these two extremes that was reflected in Rap culture by old and new participants. This was ever present and dynamically changing as young people were introduced to Rap culture.

The tension between being easily influenced and being critical interacted with all of the other themes that had emerged in the data. Although this theme emphasizes that the negotiation of the different themes occurred over time and that often the opinions of the youths evolved. This was illustrated by applying these concepts to some of the themes that were developed throughout the formative section of this chapter. This section concludes by noting the parallel process between becoming more certain of ones location within Rap culture and the process of individuation that marked a youth's transition into adulthood according to Erickson (1950).

Interestingly, many youths started to show an interest in Hip Hop culture from an early age. However, The majority of Hip Hop activities are held in clubs that do not permit people below the age of 18 in South Africa. Furthermore the nature of Rap music seems complex and it would be hard for a child to gain an accurate understanding of the full spectrum of Rap culture in relation to broader society. The following quote from the data explained that this Rap listener started listening to Rap as a child.

> *The thing is that I started listening like the age of 9 so I really have been into Hip Hop for quite a few years. (Bongi, p. 20)*

The participant explained that she began listening to Rap music from the age of 9. At the time of the interview this youth had been listening to Rap music for over ten years. It was evident from the data that youths interacted differently with Rap culture as time progressed. Hence it is plausible to assume that the implications in relation to identity and meaning also had an influence on adults that continued to enact Hip Hop cultural activities.

> ***Interviewer: You 20 now, how long do you see yourself listening to Hip Hop for?***
> *Participant: Oh forever man. (Jack, p. 39)*

Given that Rap music is a global media agent that presented its listeners with a broad selection of content, many youths engaged with Rap music initially from a more naïve perspective that accepted things on face value. The following quote from the data acknowledged that the participant's behavior was initially naively influenced from listening to Rap music.

> *I didn't notice it but, you know, I'd swear a lot and you know swearing is not a good value to show because you got to talk to the kids, teaching them than they suddenly will just sponge it in extract it out at the wrong time and you don't want that to happen because of you. (Mbuso, pg. 20)*

The participant also recognized that in retrospect his behavior was not socially productive for the young children around him. Hence from his position at the time of the interview the youth had changed his stance regarding this type of behavior. This was also pronounced in one participant's consideration of his changing views on the status of women.

> *when it comes speaking bad about woman that's really bad, that's really bad. Because like it's degrading the levels of a woman, degrading our woman, degrading our mothers, ladies. (Jabu, p. 3)*

For this participant, it seemed important for a Rap listener to have an informed opinion as Rap participants wield power within the Rap community. Rap listeners could have the option of participating as a performer and also often chose as a community the artists deemed worthy of social affirmation. The following quote displayed a process of analyzing a Hip Hop song and deliberating on whether the song seemed authentic for a particular performer.

> *But in order to understand, that's when I contextualize, so who is this guy? His name is so and so, what is he talking about? What's his history? You know, you know he was born in parow then was deported his parents came to the states and he grew up in the states, he went to jail a couple of times because of his attitude he was a very aggressive child and he grew up being influenced by Hip Hop and you know what I'm saying. So where is this guy? who is he? where is he? why does he say that? (Jack, p. 23)*

One of the participants in the study was a promoter that organized poetry sessions where the audience would have the opportunity to debate topics relevant to Hip Hop culture. This was a more formal example of the debates that occurred on a day to day basis where youths were able to discuss their opinions. The following excerpt from the interview provides another example of a different youth that had used Rap music as a framework to generate his opinion regarding degrading language towards woman.

> *It helps me to be able to choose what's good and what's wrong in terms of, I'm still able to listen to Hip Hop with people swearing talking about woman like this but it's not what I do though, so it helps me to choose to differentiate. (Jack, p. 29)*

The youths in the sample also discussed the challenges that they faced regarding interpreting the contents of different songs and coming to their own decisions regarding personal meanings. The broad nature of the content of Rap music often introduced socio-political topics to the youths in an accessible format. However many of the youths may not have had informed opinions regarding these topics. The following quote from the data explains that this youth started learning about world events through Rap music.

> *I found that I knew so much more that was going on around type of thing., but not necessarily from CNN's perspective because like what was going on not overall but like may be what was going on in a certain situation or what was done at a certain place. I found myself listening to whatever they said and not questioning it.* (Thumi, p. 22)

This youth also acknowledged that he often accepted what he heard as the truth. Over time this participant began to become more critical regarding the sources of his information. This Rap music listener embarked on a process of learning more about the topics that he heard about in Rap songs in order to make up his own mind. In the next quote this youth explained that he came to an understanding that he was not always confident regarding the information that was expressed in a Rap song and that he became more critical of such content over time.

> *Because a lot of those guys have facts but where are the facts from..*
> *And like I had facts and I didn't actually even know where my facts where from. (Thumi. p. 24)*

The participant also expressed that this process of becoming more critical was not an easy one for him. Engaging with different aspects of society and making decisions as an individual facilitated this youth's ability to function in an adult like manner. This was similar to the process of individuation described in Erickson's (1950) theory which occurred as a youth was able to establish his own place in society that was based on personal decisions that were often distinct from a family of origin. The developmental stage between adulthood and childhood was considered a moratorium where youths were permitted to define their identities in relation to the society around them.

4.3. Conclusion

Sharing in Hip Hop culture therefore appeared to play a role in allowing youths to begin to experiment with the freedom to make choices as an individual. Participating in Hip Hop culture was seen as itself a political choice. The culture of rap music offers youths' access to a global community that shares information and social activities. Rap music functions as a framework that balances a variety of different tensions that need to be negotiated by participating youths. Perhaps it is analogous to the somewhat turbulent nature of adolescence that hip hop as a youth culture must juggle these various tensions. The youths chose to extend their identities through their affiliation with Rap culture. Through the process of having to negotiate tensions within a separate community the youths created the

opportunity to experience being an individual within a community and also having to take responsibilities for the choices that were made. It appeared that the challenges that these youths faced when learning about society had become more complex in today's cosmopolitan and global world. Rap music per definition seemed to offer them the social and ideological tools to facilitate a path through which to navigate the tensions faced by contemporary South African youths as they progressed towards a search for authenticity and adulthood.

Perhaps here, Hip Hop can be a forum for reconciling seemingly conflicting definitions of who you are and that is necessarily an imaginative and associative process rather that an exact science (Neate, 2003, p.93).

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1. Introduction

This final chapter provides a brief synopsis of the major findings of the research. The strengths and weaknesses of the study are then reflected upon in order to gain a realistic perspective of the ramifications of the results. The chapter concludes with several recommendations that appear useful for future research projects to investigate.

The themes that emerged from the analysis were all interconnected. The point of their common intersection could therefore be read as an identity nexus. Each theme was represented as a range of meanings that emerged through a process of negotiation between the two poles. Hence the relationship between Rap music and social identity for youths' in South Africa was framed as a process that required coming to terms with six different dilemmas that captured the experience of participating in Hip Hop culture for this sample of youths.

5.2. Global and Local Tensions

5.2.1. Glocalised Culture from a South African Vantage Point

The themes discussed in this section involved the participants' perceived *positioning between the local and global influences of Rap music*. Identification with hip-hop certainly provided the participants with a sense of global location. This global positioning was offset by their strong articulation of the way that hip-hop provided them with a uniquely South African voice. This was particularly evident in their more specific interrogations of the global and local meanings of blackness. Consequently Rap music appeared to provide a symbolic segue between global and local blackness. Through Hip Hop, South African youth appeared to be afforded possibilities of connecting to a global matrix while negotiating their regional and national identities in the aftermath of apartheid voicelessness.

5.2.2. Aspirations of blackness: Kwaito vs. Hip-Hop

The context of Hip Hop in South Africa only made sense in relation to the most popular form of South African youth culture called Kwaito. Hip Hop and Kwaito were both agents that emphasized and extended black identities. The cultural activities offered through Kwaito seemed to display several characteristics that differentiated South African youth from Western understandings of blackness. "Kwaito than like Hip Hop, seemed to be a significant battleground between Western and African culture" (Neate, p115). Kwaito had evolved within South Africa and was positioned as an authentic expression of South African popular culture.

Consequently there appeared to be a rigid demarcation of acceptable activities and behavior for authentic South African youth identities that were in opposition to global popular culture. Despite the inevitable influences that youths were exposed to through wide spread multimedia distribution via countries like America. Ironically the reason that South African youth possibly resisted the American formulations of blackness seemed related to the ubiquitous presence of American media. Hence the youth in South Africa appeared to fear that their unique South African identities could be eclipsed by the shadow the Rap icons of America conveyed as the essential representations of blackness.

5.2.4. Using Global Culture or Being Used by Global Culture?

The participants were aware of the complexities of many aspects of South African culture. It seemed unrealistic for the participants to embrace a mono-tonal conception of global black identity that was synonymous with globally distributed images. The participants seemed to indicate that this would negate many of the realities of South Africa's rich and some times tragic social legacy. The location of South African Hip hop identity in relation to the global matrix of popular culture appeared to mirror many of the tensions of a globally aware South African youth.

The term 'remix' was a creative tool frequently invoked by the participants. In their understanding of the way that Hip Hop culture sought inspiration from other music genres with the aim of reinventing material so that it could be accessible from within a Hip Hop framework (Nutall, 2004). This creative term appeared to be incorporated into the way that the participants lived as a way of remixing the self (Nutall, 2004). Thus the youths seemed able to find inspiration in contemporary and retro South African culture. This unique social legacy comprised a gamut of possible identity accessories.

Consequently a mode of appropriating South African influences into Rap culture seemed to be provided for within the global template of Hip Hop living. Furthermore, the youth in the sample

appeared committed to assimilating South African culture into a global framework. It could also be framed in such a way that provided evidence for the argument that the global framework of Hip Hop culture had been integrated into South African culture. Consequently it appeared that being rooted in South African culture provided a force that resisted global homogenization (Huq, 2006). What seemed clear was that the South African youth interviewed were conscious of this global tension to varying degrees and maintained an active commitment that connected them to glocal culture. Moreover, developmentally, the influence of global society appeared to imply new variables that must be taken into account in order to make sense of a youth's passage into adulthood.

5.3.Private and Social Tensions

5.3.1. Public and Private Lives In a South African Hip Hop Community

Participants voiced differences when considering the way music was engaged with in public and private spaces. Certain private rituals were enacted through music that enabled provisional identities that a youth was not yet ready to show to other Hip Hop listeners. Furthermore, music also appeared to be a medium that youth use to display aspects of a youths' identity or aspiring identity (Nutall, 2004) to friends or family. Notably, the participant would also often compromise and engage in social activities related to other genres of music in order to fit in. Thus music functioned as a social tool for navigating social hierarchies related to Hip Hop culture and also extending towards the parameters of other South African youth cultures (De Nora, 2000).

5.3.2. Hip-Hop: Between Group Interactions and Permeable Social Boundaries

The results related to judging groups of youths that listened to other kinds of music were conflicting. Several of the youths made judgments of other people based on their taste in music although the majority of the participants refrained from voicing generalizations about other youths based on their taste in music. The youths could have been trying to create positive images that did not depict them as being judgmental perhaps best explained by them being sensitive to the socio-historical context in South Africa that had left a legacy attached to making generalizations. These results conflicted with the Social Identity Theory that hypothesized that members of an out group would be perceived in a negative fashion. It was interesting to apply the principle of remixing in relation to membership of a social group. The boundaries of the Hip Hop community were permeable as Rap culture acknowledged that it was interdependent on other social groups. Because inspiration for Rap songs are often sampled from other genres in order to remix songs in an accessible manner. Consequently many Rap listeners

become interested in other social groups through their interest in Hip Hop. This reflection of remixing in the social lives of hip hop youth is an important generative contribution to social identity theory gleaned from this study. It was also interesting to consider that Rap identity could itself act as a nexus that could assume a multiplicity of other social identities. Rap culture seemed per definition to facilitate access to a vast network of globally possible identities.

5.4. Authentic Versus Local Tensions

5.4.1. Keeping it Real or Keeping it Bling

Authenticity as a theme was prolific in the data and seemed to be a fundamental concept within Hip Hop culture. On the alternate end of the spectrum were the commercial aspects of Hip Hop culture that could be defined as engaging in behavior in order to gain popularity and financial success. In the case of the latter, the participants felt that the aesthetics of Rap music were often compromised in order to create music that was contrived as a financial commodity and lauded underground Hip Hop as a space to enact creativity that was based on authentic experiences and opinions of Rap artists. Thus authenticity as a cornerstone of Hip Hop culture was embraced as a powerful identity marker by the participants.

5.4.2. Being Real through Consumption and Performance

The participants in this sample were both producers and consumers of Hip Hop culture. As performers they assume the responsibility of finding a unique voice that represented their personality within the context of Hip Hop expression. A resolution to the dilemma found betwixt the tension of the authentic and commercial manifested through decisions made by each youth to follow an ethos ingrained into the culture of "keeping it real". To this end, a range of vernacular languages is also utilized in order to expand the pallet of South African expression.

5.5. Gender and Social Responsibility

The participants also engaged some of the prominent identity stereotypes in Rap music that ranged from being *conscious and socially aware to being hyper-masculine and destructive*. Drawing on the stereotype of the gangster rapper, the South African participants seemed less inclined to endorse hyper-masculine behaviors even if these were narrated as being grounded in the realities of urban life. Rather than being convinced that hyper-masculinity was the primary building-block of a Hip Hop identity, the

participants insisted that Rap music provided the means to greater social and political advancements for the public at large. This in turn allowed them to delve into debates surrounding history, race and class that are not easily accessed by non-Rap listeners.

5.6. Competition and Community-The Conflict of Western and African Social Practices

One of the most interesting results of the study concerns the way in which Hip Hop identity seemed to mirror political tensions inherent in reconciling capitalist South Africa with a more communally focused idea of traditional pre-colonial Africa. While insisting that Hip Hop culture provided a strong sense of community, the participants also believed that competition was essential to growing the culture. Thus the feeling of belonging to a culture was only ensured through a willingness to compete within it. Part of this tacit social contract implies that you are only able to participate and extend Hip Hop if you are able to publicly demonstrate that you command the confidence, authenticity, creativity and technical skill required for cultural inclusion. This finding is significant as it is extracted from a sample of first generation South Africans engaged in the process of becoming adults in the new South African democratic and capitalistic Society.

5.7. Leading or being led

Without exception, the participants understood that Hip Hop identity made provisions for temporal change. Thus as a Hip Hopper, youth are open to developmental change. One of the key markers of this identity change over time was expressed as the difference between naïve consumption of lyrical content and other forms of Hip Hop practice and a mature critical suspicion thereof. According to the participants, over time young Rap listeners learned and were able to discern to a greater degree what was being said in a song and that Hip Hop promoted rather than prohibited critical engagement with the culture. In essence Hip Hop culture seems to reflect the mandated individuation so powerfully highlighted in Eriksonian psychology.

5.8. Remixing the Self

Perhaps the most significant results of the analysis concerns the Hip Hop specific concept of remixing as it plays itself out across each of the above themes. Constantly drawing on the concept of remixing, the participants appear to mobilize this fundamentally Hip Hop mode of creating into their everyday selves. The ability to remix aspects of the self (Nutall, 2004) by molding elements of inspirations from other cultures seem to create ways to explore and possess aspects of contemporary and retro South

African and global culture. Hence a Hip Hop listener did not seem tied to the rigid confines of a particular youth cultural practice but rather could navigate the entire scope of glocal culture in a dynamic search for relevance. The aptitude to remix the self also sampled and shaped certain private aspects of ones life into public view as a way of striving for authentic living and expression. A further application for identity extension seemed to occur in relation to membership of group identities. The Hip Hop listeners appeared to possess fluid social identities that allowed them to acknowledge their interdependence on groups outside Hip Hop culture. Rap music listeners appeared to possess a curiosity about other cultures that fostered ties to other social groups.

5.9. Considering the Findings in Relation to the Broader Field

This research project was exploratory and located within a multidisciplinary area of study. However, it also attempted to contribute to the growing area of the psychology of music by applying some of its foundational findings to the South African context. The study's attempts at applying classical Social Identity Theory, with Ericksonian principles alongside more post-modern constructions of identity as a theoretical lens that aids in viewing the functions of Rap music in relation to the identity of South African youth and the results yielded some potential contributions to the literature.

The nature of Hip Hop culture; its emphasis on self-expression, authenticity, individuation and critical social awareness dovetails with many of the traditional Ericksonian theories of identity during adolescence. The foregrounding of the way that Hip Hop culture in some ways provides the perfect musical vehicle for an expression of youth as a period of intense reconfiguration of identity towards, resolution implies at least in part the potential contribution that a developmentally-driven social psychology can make to music studies.

In addition, the socio-cultural milieu of South Africa has seemingly exerted a powerful influence on a locally appropriated Hip Hop culture. It is in this context that 'remixing' as a governing musical principle in Hip Hop seems to resonate as key mode of identity and identification amongst its South African consumers. This reification of a musical mandate does well to illustrate the way that local appropriations of musical culture are intimately tied to some of the governing political discourses in which they are located. Thus, it seems fitting that a youth in the midst of cultural, economic and political transitions would embrace an eclectic rather than rigidly bounded genre of music with such enthusiasm. In some ways Hip Hop in South Africa, allows youth to remix past and present, old and new, global and local, self and other.

5.10. Recommendations

The framework that emerged in this project could perhaps be applied and or extended to wider populations through its recalibration as a questionnaire that could be widely disseminated across different ages and areas of the country. For example it could be interesting to assess the nature of these relationships in a context with youths that are not students. Alternatively the thematic framework could be used to make sense of qualitative data for youths that are Rap listeners from other countries.

This research project could also provide the conceptual foundations for other social psychological studies of other musical genres such as Kwaito. Furthermore, the study could be mobilized towards more traditional psychological studies such as renewed research on Ericksonian theory as a useful starting point to explore the permutations in the process of adolescent identity negotiation in relation to membership of specific local societies that have experienced wide spread local transition such as South Africa.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Participant Information Form

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

UMTHOMBO WOPHUHLISO LOLUNTU
School of Human & Community Development

Psychology
School of Human & Community Development
Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa. Telephone: +27 11-717-4513 Fax: +27-11-717-8324

Dear Student,

My name is Dror Cohen and I am currently working on my Masters Research report in clinical psychology called: The role of Rap/ Hip Hop music in the meaning and maintenance of identity in South African youth.

The aim of this project is to explore the ways youths observe social groupings in society according to identities that are influenced by music taste and identification. The focus of this project will be on interviewing youths that identify themselves with the contemporary music genre of hip hop or rap music. The nature of this research is to gain more information on rap listener's perceptions of their own personal and public identities in society in South Africa. Music is an important part of life, so the act of listening to music is a potential window to explore some of the identities that are being shaped.

Your participation in this research project would be greatly appreciated. If you are interested in volunteering, your participation will consist of an informal interview. The interview will take place at the University of the Witswatersrand and will be one hour long. All information will be treated as strictly confidential. The participants' names will not be published and all the information will be kept by the researcher in a safe place until the completion of the research project. You have right to decide not to participate at any time. This project is not affiliated with your school and your academic marks cannot be affected.

You are welcome to address any further questions to me before or during the interview. The results of this project will be available to you at the time that the thesis is complete. All participants are welcome to correspond with the researcher via e mail and the results can be sent to the participant if requested.

All of the interviews will be recorded onto an audio cassette. This will only be done after each participant has granted permission for a recording to take place. It will also be necessary for you to grant permission for the researcher to print quotes from the interviews. This research will be part of a Masters thesis and it may also be presented at a conference and/ or published as a journal. The tapes will be kept by the researcher in a safe place and they will be destroyed on completion of the research project. It is not anticipated that the interview will trigger any sensitive issues. This interview is not about right or wrong answers it is about how you experience music. If you are interested in participating please SMS me or e mail me and I will contact you in order to set up an appointment.

Yours Sincerely

Dror Cohen

drorstar@hotmail.com

082 969 0836

Supervisor- Dr Brett Bowman 011 717 8335

Appendix B: Consent Form

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

UMTHOMBO WOPHUHLISO LOLUNTU
School of Human & Community Development

Psychology
School of Human & Community Development
Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa. Telephone: +27 11-717-4513 Fax: +27-11-717-8324

Dear Student,

My name is Dror Cohen and I am working on my Masters thesis in clinical psychology.

I am aware that participation in this research project will require a one hour interview.

I am also aware of the reasons and that will be used to carry out the research project called: The role of Rap/ Hip Hop music in the meaning and maintenance of identity in South African youth.

- I understand that all information that is provided during the interview will be under the conditions that my identity remains anonymous and that any information I give will be treated as confidential.
- I grant permission for the researcher to print quotes from the interviews. This research will be part of a Masters thesis and it may also be presented at a conference and/ or published as a journal.
- I am not obligated to participate in this research project and I can choose to withdraw at any time.
- Withdrawal from this project will have no negative consequences.
- This research is not connected to the school and will have no effect on school or university marks.
- If for any reason I am uncomfortable answering any of the questions. I am free to refuse to answer the respective question or questions.
- I am entitled to view the completed research project and too request further feedback from the researcher regarding this topic.

I (name in capitals) ……..agree to participate in this research project that will be conducted to as part of masters in clinical psychology programe for the University of the Witswatersrand by Dror Cohen.

Date:
Signature of participant:

Date:
Signature of researcher:

Appendix C: Consent for Audio Taping of Research Interview

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

UMTHOMBO WOPHUHLISO LOLUNTU
School of Human & Community Development

Psychology
School of Human & Community Development
Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa. Telephone: +27 11-717-4513 Fax: +27-11-717-8324

Dear Student,

My name is Dror Cohen and I am currently working on my Masters Research report in clinical psychology.

I am aware that the interview will be recorded on audio tape for the research report called:
The role of Rap/ Hip hop music in the meaning and maintenance of identity in South African youth.

- I understand the information on the audio tapes will be kept confidential and anonymous.
- I am aware that I may ask for the tape at any point should they feel a need for it.
- The information on the audio tape will be used strictly for the purpose of the research project.
- It will also be necessary for me to grant permission for the researcher to print quotes from the interviews.
- This research will be part of a Masters thesis and it may also be presented at a conference and/ or published as a journal.
- The audio tape with the research material shall be destroyed on completion of the research project.

I (name in capitals) ……..agree to allow the interview to be recorded on audio tape. The information will be used as part of a research project for masters in clinical psychology program for the University of the Witswatersrand by Dror Cohen.

Date:
Signature of participant:

Date:
Signature of researcher

Appendix: D: Interview Questions

The questions were used in a semi structured fashion and this list was not conclusive. Some of the questions and prompts were responsive to the subjective information provided during the respective interviews.

Possible Questions:

1) How much time do you spend listening to music per day?
2) What other styles of music do you like aside from rap music?
3) What style of music do you associate with yourself in the past?
4) How does it make you feel to think back to styles of music that you may have listened to in the past that you do not listen to now?
5) What music genres do you think you will listen to in the future?
6) How do you feel listening to rap music is reflected in your lifestyle?
7) How do you feel rap music is reflected in your values?
8) Do you listen to different styles of music while alone and in public?
9) If so what styles are appropriate for private listening and what genres for public functions?
10) How important is it for you to have friends that listen to similar music to you?
11) How often would you attend a club that plays a different style of music to what you enjoy?
12) What are some characteristics that you associate with a rap music listener in South Africa?
13) How do you feel Rap music listeners are treated in South Africa?
14) Are Rap music listeners treated differently by people that listen to other styles of music?
15) If so, how are they treated differently and by music listeners of what styles?
16) What is the difference between a South African rap music listener and an American rap music listener?
17) What are some of the differences between an American rap artist and a South African rap artist?
18) How do you see the role of rap music in contemporary South Africa?
19) What is your opinion on the criticism rap music receives for promoting violent behavior and language that is insulting to women?
20) Describe an example of an individual (Microphone controller, Disc jockey, actor or journalist) that displays leadership qualities within hip hop culture?