MUSIC AND NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS:  
HIP-HOP CULTURE AS SOCIAL PROTEST

A Thesis

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by

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ABSTRACT

Past research in the area of music and social movements has focused primarily on the role of music in framing social movement issues and encouraging movement participation. As such, extant work examines music as the "soundtrack to a movement," but neglects the importance of performing arts culture as movement in and of itself. Drawing on new social movements theory, this investigation uses in-depth interviews with 20 key informants to assess participation in hip-hop culture as part of a valid social movements repertoire focusing on a reconception of identity and challenge to dominant ideologies. The importance of race and class in the identity of the movement is considered along with the strength of the movement over time. Hip-hop participants and rap artists over time have served to redefine the identity of poor and minority groups by challenging the dominant conceptions of these groups. The paper concludes that hip-hop culture indeed clearly possesses important movement traits such as intentionality, contestation, and collective identity.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vita</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapters:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. New Social Movements Theory</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Conceptual Arguments: Performance Culture and Social Movements</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Research Methods</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Results: Hip-Hop as Social Movement</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Conclusions</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendices:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Interview Schedule</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Coding Scheme</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Hip-Hop is a performance culture dating back to the early 1970’s that was comprised, at least at its inception, almost exclusively of young Hispanic and black Americans. The culture incorporates the elements of graffiti writing, b-boysing (break dancing), fashion, mixing records, and most importantly rapping (George 1998). Although the two terms are sometimes used interchangeably, rap and hip-hop are not the same (Boyd 2003). Rap is a poetic and musical form of storytelling that makes use of speaking rhythmically to a beat. Rap is the most widely known and vocal aspect of hip-hop culture. Further, the messages that rap conveys are most often a representation of triumphs and social maladies that are relevant to members of the hip-hop community, as well as groups and individuals that are facing similar situations (Powell 1991). The focus here is on the factors that caused rap to take this form and what implications this form has for the community that it represents.

Some people have argued that hip-hop is a post civil rights social movement in America (Boyd 2003; Rose 1995). Hip-Hop developed in major cities such as New York, Philadelphia, and Los Angeles at a time when poor and minority communities were
facing dire situations. Musical and artistic evolutions are undeniably important factors in the development of hip-hop but these factors should not be overstated. Many feel that participation in hip-hop culture and performance of rap was very meaningful at this time because the intent was to redefine and confront dominant ideologies about poor and minority communities, inform about issues that existed for these groups, and reorient members of these communities so that they would not become too pessimistic about their plights; all issues that were not easily addressed by post civil rights movement America (Neal 1999; George 1998; Rose 1995; Powell 1991). This picture of hip-hop culture is contested by many who feel that the intent of participants in rap music and hip-hop is to entertain and that any secondary consequence is both unintended and overstated. In addition, some argue that hip-hop may originally have had some aspects that are consistent with social movements but that the genre very quickly evolved into homogenized music that reinforces negative stereotypes about poor and black Americans (Hutchinson 1997; Ro 1996). The intent of this paper is to assess whether hip-hop is or has been a new social movement.

Although not embraced by all who study social movements, the term “new social movement” is basically understood to be collective action that focuses on culture and change in the dominant ideology rather than on the political or economic power that is the focus of traditional social movements (Buechler 1995). This distinction between social movements and new social movements is important because new social movements foci suggest that highly structured organizations that rely on political opportunity and the mobilization of resources to gain political and legal change are not necessary for collective action to be considered as reflecting a social movement (Taylor
et. al 2003; Buechler 1995; Larana 1994). From the standpoint of new social movement scholars, groups and activities that use symbols and information to express oppositional ideology and express aspects of modern life through more loosely defined cultural means with the intent of changing attitudes and beliefs are also movements (Taylor et. al 2003, Buechler 1995).

A large body of research indicates the importance of performance and performance cultures to new social movements. Scholars argue that it is possible for performance to incorporate aspects of politics along with entertainment. This means that performing arts cultures, in themselves, can be considered new social movements if the members of the culture accept a collective identity, contest a dominant ideology or mindset, and perform these actions intentionally (Taylor and Rupp 2003; Taylor et al 2003; Cohen 1993). Although no research has analyzed the movement elements of hip-hop research has been done on other forms of music and performance. Past works have demonstrated the importance that certain types of music and particular songs have played in existing social movements (Buffonage 2001; Eyerman and Jamison 1998; Roscigno and Danaher 2001; Powell 1991). I refer to this body of research as “soundtrack to a movement” literature because while it discusses the ability of music to inspire action and frame social movement goals there is no indication that the music and musicians themselves are a social movement. Although this is excellent research that considers a number of the important effects that music can have on groups and individuals it is not exhaustive in its coverage of music. Little to no research has demonstrated a case in which a musical genre itself existed simultaneously as a social movement and entertainment.
In light of this gap in our understanding of the importance possessed by hip-hop culture, the intent of this paper is to analyze hip-hop through the perspective of new social movement theory focusing on issues such as collective identity, intentionality, contestation, race and class identity, and endurance of the movement. Consistent with the criteria established by Taylor et. al (2003) for establishing new social movements this paper will address the identity of hip-hop culture, what ideologies hip-hop culture is contesting, and whether or not these elements are intentional.
CHAPTER 2

NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS THEORY

New social movement theories are a relatively recent phenomena in social movements theory. These theories emerged because of a perception that traditional perspectives have too narrow of a view of the kinds of actions that constitute a movement. In modern society many conflicts are not based on the control of resources or political and legal gain. Instead, some current struggles focus on changes in perceived identity and affirmation of political relevance; collective action geared towards these changes is new social movements (Buechler 1995, Larana et. all 1994). There are many types of new social movements and the difference between social movements and new social movements are numerous. However four important dimensions distinguish new from traditional social movements.

First, in new social movement theories symbolic action is a very important area for collective action in both the cultural sphere and civil society (Buechler 1995). This means that groups or collectives who promote a symbolic understanding of those they represent are movements in that they are efforts to shift perceptions. This approach broadens the concept of social movements. By contrast, traditional social movements
theories do not stress symbolic action and steps towards changing perceptions in the
cultural sphere as social movement activity. This expanding conceptualization of social
movements paves the way for a musical genre to be considered a social movement.
Heretofore, music would not fall under this rubric because the presentation of music and
imagery is symbolic action.

Second, new social movement theorists focus on self-determination and autonomy
as goals instead of gains in legal and economic power (McAdam et. all 1996, Buechler
1995). It is common for musical performance to be dismissed as a “soundtrack to a
movement” because members of the musical culture are not attempting directly to acquire
political, legal, or economic gain. New social movements, however, are aimed at helping
members of the movement and others understand or reconceptualize their beliefs and
stigmas about themselves. This difference is very relevant to the study of musical genres
and participants as social movement. For example, hip-hop may be attempting to bring
about changes in parts of society that legal change cannot address.

Third, while the focus of traditional social movements is on material gain and
access to resources, new social movements focus on post materialist values; problems
that cannot be fixed by monetary compensation or legal change. Conflicts in new social
movements are not over material resources but understanding identity (Buechler 1995). It
appears in modern society that law has changed much more quickly than perceptions and
the dominant ideology. A focus on post materialist values indicates that it is not
necessary for a social movement to be a collective that pickets in front of the White
House or gets petitions signed in order to get a law added to the docket; instead the ideas,
and intended goals, can be more abstract.
Fourth, while social movement literature often focuses on centralized organizational forms as necessities in the creation of successful social movements, new social movement theory accepts that loosely formed temporary groupings are often instrumental in creating collective action (Buechler 1995). In many ways this is the most important distinction between the two perspectives because it broadens substantively the scope of activities that can be considered social movements. New social movement theorists reject a narrow concept of social movements harkening images of organized bodies holding picket signs on capital square. New social movement theorists believe that while many of those more traditional movements are successful there is another group of movements that receives little to no attention in the literature, and are also experiencing success.

These four dimensions provide the foundation for new social movement theories and are critical to conceiving of the social movement aspects of musical cultures. This paper argues that while many scholars have accepted the important role that music and culture may play in inspiring movement participants, few scholars have accepted that participation in music as an artist, secondary member, or even as a fan can embody the elements of movement participation. The intent of this paper is to move from thinking of music as the soundtrack to a movement to thinking of music (in this case, hip-hop), potentially itself, as a movement oriented towards affirming and redefining poor and minority identity.

Taylor, Rupp, and Gamson (2003) provide a standard by which to judge cultural expression as collective action. They identify the following three standards as important when judging how culture and performance serve as social movement:
First, and most important, the degree to which a performance is demonstrably a site of contestation where symbols and identity are forged, negotiated, and debated by groups with different and competing interests; second, whether the performance is staged with intentionality, or deliberate, conscious, and strategic use of cultural entertainment as the medium of expression for political ideas; third, whether the performance is acted out by collective actors, however transitory, for whom culture serves as an arena for the enactment, reinforcement, or renegotiation of collective identity (p. 14).

These three criteria will provide an excellent standard by which to judge performing arts and music as social movement and are consistent with new social movements literature (Taylor and Rupp 2003; Buechler 1995; Larana 1994).

These three standards will be used in considering hip-hop as a collective action repertoire focused on protest and negotiating identity. Contestation examines whether the images and messages conveyed are in contrast to common beliefs and ways of thinking about the group presenting the images. This is an excellent standard to consider because without points of contention it is difficult, if not impossible for a movement to possess goals and create a unique identity. Contestation is essential to proving that performance as protest (Taylor and Rupp 2003; Taylor et. all 2003). Intentionality considers whether or not the movement elements of performance are in fact deliberate and strategic. In most social movements, intentionality is never called into question because the movement consists of highly structured organizations with a focus. When examining performance cultures it is necessary to consider intentionality because often the performance and performers will have multiple functions (Taylor and Rupp 2003). Collective identity is a consideration of whether or not identity is renegotiated and reinforced by collective actors. It is generally understood that one person is not a social movement hence considering collective identity is essential to understanding whether a performing arts
culture consists of some individuals doing meaningful work or a group of individuals with a goal (Taylor and Rupp 2003; Taylor et. all 2003). These three criteria provide unique and fair considerations in the discussion of performance culture as social movement.
CHAPTER 3

CONCEPTUAL ARGUMENTS: PERFORMANCE CULTURE AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

What follows is a review of literature that is most important to the development of this research. First, I discuss literature that deals with music and performance in a way that I will refer to as "soundtrack to a movement." Some prior investigations discuss musical and performance cultures in a manner that portrays them as inspiring movement participation, but this body of work does not acknowledge the movement elements of the music itself. I also review complementary research that advances the discussion of cultural performance as social movement by discussing music and performance as having social movement implications in and of themselves. This section concludes by clarifying the importance of issues such as race and the strength and focus of hip-hop over time.

Previous Literature: Soundtrack to a Movement

In the past a number of important works have demonstrated the truly important and revolutionary effect that music can have on inspiring insurgency and political change. Roscigno and Danaher (2001) studied how music and song, as advanced by radio and public performance, inspired collective identity for southern textile workers in the
early part of the twentieth century. Through the use of interview and archival research, the authors determined that music not only inspired collective identity but also was able to frame action by proposing a shift in accountability and solutions to a problem. Roscigno and Danaher's work is very important in the study of music and social movements because it demonstrates the power of music to inspire. However, their analysis does not address directly the issue posed here for two important reasons. First and foremost, Roscigno and Danaher's work analyzes action through a traditional social movements perspective with workers attempting to gain legal and economic power. Secondly, this work really focuses on music as the "soundtrack to a movement" instead of as a movement in and of itself. Roscigno and Danaher do not attempt to argue that the musicians themselves were part of a social movement because of their performance. Instead, they demonstrate that they inspired action that is tantamount to a social movement.

Eyerman and Jamison (1998) discuss in depth the topic of music and social movements. After conducting extensive historical research the authors conclude that music such as country, blues, and bluegrass are very important in framing social movement goals and demonstrating political opportunity. In addition, the authors argue that music also is important in defining identity for those who are part of the music and act as secondary parts of the music. This argument relates closely to the concepts of new social movement theories although the authors do not mention this connection outright. Eyerman and Jamison also specifically mention rap. However, unlike their discussion of other genres of music, they fail to document how hip-hop might affect those that
participate in it and listen. The limitation of their assessment of this musical form implores further research.

A number of scholars have discussed the power that rap can have over its audience and the goals that exist for those that participate. Powell (1991) discusses rap music as an education with a beat. This research, which considers the importance of numerous artists as well as rap lyrics, argues that there is a function to rap music in addition to entertainment that informs and redefines stereotypes about poor and minority communities. Rose (1994; 1989) argues that rap music expresses an agenda that is tantamount to collective identity for poor African Americans. Pointing to rallies for Martin Luther King Jr. day in Arizona and riots in Los Angeles, Rose also argues that artists and music inspire political action. Although many people have discussed the power of hip-hop culture none has viewed it, thus far, through the tenets of new social movements and few have viewed it through a sociological perspective.

*Previous Literature: Advancing the Role of Performance Culture*

As New Social Movements become a more accepted field of study, people are conducting research that relates more closely to culture, specifically music and performance, as social movement. Buffonage (2001) analyzes how the Rastafarians, a cultural movement in Jamaica, managed to utilize political opportunity to link themselves to the Jamaican poor and focus on political change. The effect that reggae music had on its listeners and participants in Jamaica made the musical genre an important part of the movement. Buffonage found that Reggae musicians intentionally contested the political situation in Jamaica through the use of music. This work is valuable for it steps up the current research by analyzing participation in music, which is part of a culture, as protest.
However, there are important issues that demand further research. First, Buffonage analyzed the Rastafarians though a traditional Social Movements perspective. Arguably, if Reggae music was not closely linked to the Rastafarians, an entity on their own, then he would not consider it social movement. Second, although Buffonage argues that Reggae is important, it is clear that the Rasta movement would exist, although potentially with less strength, without the existence of Reggae. In brief then, additional research that discusses musical culture as the central component of movement existence is still necessary.

Perhaps the most important work examining performance culture through a new social movements perspective is that of Taylor, Rupp, and Gamson (2003). The authors discuss the importance of drag and drag shows as social protest. Their research is based on interviews and observations of drag performers and audiences. They conclude that drag is important for both the performers and the audience in understanding identity and culture (Taylor and Rupp 2003; Taylor et. all 2003). This piece creates a theoretical bridge between popular culture and new social movements. It is one of the first works to consider members of a performing arts group a social movement. By assessing drag from a new social movements perspective, the work lays the foundation upon which the current assessment of hip-hop culture is based.

*The Question of Race*

In a discussion of hip-hop, a music and culture that is closely associated with black and Hispanic Americans, it becomes imperative to discuss how the issue of race is related to the question of hip-hop as a social movement. Taylor et. all (2003) argue that:
In cases where performers draw audiences composed of groups with different and competing interests—such as drag, which attracts heterosexual as well as lesbian, gay, and bisexual participants—performances may promote the internal articulation of collective identity among the performers and segments of the audience who share the performers’ interests. At the same time, cultural performances can contribute to the external articulation of collective identity between members of the different groups who gather to participate in the event, on the one hand, and the larger community, on the other (pg. 13).

I believe that this rationale may apply to hip-hop in the context of black and white audiences. Hip-hop from very early on has attracted large numbers of African American and white audience members (George 1998). Issues of race and class surface in an analysis of hip-hop and rap in two very meaningful ways. First, race and class help articulate the collective identity of artists and other members of hip hop culture because it is the primary uniting force of the members. Second, rap articulates this identity to other audiences. Assuming that hip-hop is a new social movement, a central question of this paper is what role does race play in the movement’s development and character?

*The Decline of Hip-Hop?*

Hip Hop has arguably been in existence now for over a quarter of a century which makes the issue of its evolution over time very important (George 1998). There are many who will argue that at its inception, hip-hop was a genre of music that incorporated many political and cultural overtones that stemmed from social conditions that existed in poor and minority areas at that time (Boyd 2003; Tate 2003; George 1998). According to these authors, hip-hop participants, through their actions, reclaimed social and cultural space in major cities by providing visual and auditory images that represented their community at the time (Rose 1994). Hip-Hop attempted to provide a release to members of a community that were suffering horrible conditions in the 1970’s and 1980’s. Rap music
served as a way to represent local occurrences so as to connect one community to another through music. In addition, rap served as a way to contest the stigmas and stereotypes that existed about poor and minority communities. Rap celebrated diversity and shed light on social inequality in an attempt to attack discrimination. These ideas would seem to be consistent with a new social movements perspective.

As hip-hop grew older, rap became more commercially viable. To some, the result was a loss of rap’s value as movement in favor of becoming a business like most other types of music (Ro 1996). With the increase of record industry participation, artists began to make more money and the music became more homogenized, leading many to argue that hip-hop culture died and rap music lost its potential for redefining poor and minority identities (Kitwana 2003; Dawkins 1998; Ro 1996). Today, it is not uncommon to argue that rap music does more harm than good in relation to how it changes the perception of identity because many feel that it creates stereotypical images of minorities (Ro 1996; Dawkins 1998; Dyson 1996; Samuels 1991). Although this point has its opponents (Boyd 2003), the issue is clearly important to this research and begs the question: if there ever was a movement, does it still exist today? This research investigates the strength of hip-hop as a social movement as it became more commercially viable.
CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODS

The intent of this research is to answer three main sociological questions. First, is hip-hop now or has it ever been what sociologists would call a new social movement, and if so, what are the goals and influence of the movement? Second, has the growing success of rap music affected the content and representation of hip-hop in America, and if so, what are the results of this change? That is, do movements that are affiliated with popular culture eventually become subordinate to the logic of commercial rationality? Third and finally, does the fact that young, middle to upper class, white Americans account for the majority of the rap consuming population hinder or help the advancement of the hip-hop movement and the African American population, with which hip-hop was originally identified?

Research Methods

I conducted in-depth interviews with key informants associated with hip-hop culture to answer the above research questions. This approach lends itself well to the research issues because the interview is an excellent method for discovering social movement concerns such as contestation, intentionality, and collective action. In addition,
interviews are the best available and most feasible tool that can be used to understand the processes by which movements rise and decline.

I interviewed 20 individuals that are deeply involved with the music genre. I relied on a purposive sampling strategy because the potential population is small and gaining access to the potential population is difficult. In this case, the purposive sampling strategy yielded high quality data, from respondents who are deeply involved with the genre, knowledgeable of the music’s history, and have the potential to impact how others view hip-hop. I identified potential subjects through historical research, web searches, and snowball sampling. Gaining access was difficult, as most of these individuals are not easily approached by phone and are often very busy. I began with a list of about 40 individuals and attempted contact through phone and email. As targets responded I scheduled interviews that were conducted via telephone. I utilized snowball sampling as people that I interviewed early in the process suggested others that I should speak with. In the end, the sample of 20 individuals is a group of people who cover the range of relevant groups related to hip-hop and hip-hop culture.

During the selection process, I attempted to maintain a degree of diversity in gender, race, age, and job type. The sample population is skewed towards African American males (N=11), who are the largest group of participants in hip-hop. In addition, white males (N=2), white females (N=2), Black females (N=3), Latino males (N=1), and multi-racial females (N=1) are also represented in the sample. I secured interviews with respondents in four broad occupational categories: (1) rap artists (N=5), including independent and more mainstream rap artists and performers; (2) gatekeepers with commercial interests in rap music’s success (record executives, radio executives,
television producers, etc.) (N=5); (3) hip-hop movement organizers (N=6), consisting of individuals that play leadership roles in organizations that consider hip-hop to be a defining characteristic of their group; and (4) cultural critics and historians (N=4), who study and write about hip-hop’s history and power. Individuals in this category also tend to be long time fans of hip hop.

The interviews lasted on average about one hour and fifteen minutes and consisted of a number of open-ended questions that identified; the person’s role in hip-hop, feelings about rap’s success, effect on listeners of different racial backgrounds, evolution as an art form, commercialization, and uniqueness. I also asked a number of questions about the intentions of rappers and fans in the hip hop process focusing on what caused rap to come about and what value rap music has in excess of entertainment. Appendix A contains a general list of questions that were used during the interviews. However, the reader should keep in mind that the questions listed are not an exhaustive list. The interviews were indeed open-ended and the array of questions varied somewhat depending on the knowledge and responses of the interviewees. Still the attached interview schedule provides, an efficient representation of the major themes that were addressed during the interviews.

Analyzing the data consisted of a number of steps. First, all interviews were transcribed within thirty days of the original interview date and I sent a copy of the transcript to the person that was interviewed for their own personal use and to correct any mistakes that might have been made during transcription. Second, I entered the transcripts into Nudist, a qualitative data analysis package that allows researchers to group text into different themes, to begin coding. I used a coding scheme that was
designed to identify a number of issues of relevance to the study of new social movements. As I made my way through the transcripts I highlighted excerpts of interviews and assigned them to different themes. Some of the themes that were coded include: intentions of artists, reasons rap is unique, collective identity effects, commercialization over time, contestation, movement organization, important events in hip-hop history, underground versus mainstream rap dichotomy, political influence, rap's meaning for white and black audiences, successes and failures of the movement, change in content of lyrics over time, and similarities to other forms of African American music such as jazz and blues. Appendix B provides a comprehensive list of the forty-two themes that were considered during data analysis.

From this process I was able to easily identify recurring or consistent themes in the texts of the twenty interviews. First, I made simple calculations identifying how many members of the sample held a similar view on specific issues/areas regarding hip-hop. This provided a basis for judging whether there was a consensus on the issue. Second, I chose sample quotes to illustrate the emerging themes. In the selection of quotes to be used in this paper I attempted to not ignore the mundane while still highlighting the exceptional. Rough drafts of the paper were sent to general respondents so that they could read the paper, provide comments, and identify areas where subjects might have been misinterpreted. This information was used to prevent a complete misinterpretation of a subject's comments; however, the reactions of the respondents to the paper did not significantly change the structure of the paper or the general interpretation of the data.
CHAPTER 5

RESULTS: HIP-HOP AS SOCIAL MOVEMENT

Is Hip-Hop A New Social Movement?

All 20 of the interviewees expressed opinions that were consistent with the idea of hip-hop culture as social movement. Although there are degrees of variance that make it impossible to conclude that hip-hop is in fact a new social movement, there are themes that emerge in these data which make it clear that hip-hop is more than “just” the soundtrack to a movement. Talking with genre participants revealed that hip-hop contains contestation, intentionality, and collective identity, the three essential elements of collective action repertoires and new social movement transformations (Taylor and Rupp 2003; Taylor et. all 2003).

Recall that contestation refers to the forging of symbols and identities among groups with competing interests (Taylor and Rupp 2003; Taylor et. all 2003). Evidence of this process was clear in a number of ways in the interview data. First, when discussing how hip-hop came about, a common theme is to discuss hip-hop as a response to adverse social conditions in poor and minority neighborhoods. As Jerry, a tour manager and promoter notes:
How it came about, hip-hop was born from a political climate; you know, a time when, you know, the common person across the board was just tired of abuse by the political infrastructure; you know, the police department, the judicial system, um and it really was a cry, you know, to hey pay attention, this music is not just for fun.

Historian and writer Gregory Tate demonstrates how important rap is to identifying points of contention when he argues:

I mean hip-hop in a way again, is like you know, this is something you know that steadily, we’re talking, is a way that almost every social contradiction you want to name and every kind of sector of American society is affected by race in some way or another and hip-hop has a way of creating a flash point around it, of drawing attention to it, you know what I mean; you know whether it’s, you know, because it has a kind of a way of making it’s way to the Congress or the Supreme Court; it has a way of generating attention to issues that already exist in society, I mean it dramatizes it basically; I mean that I think that’s the power of it, one of the powers of the form, I mean, because it does operate, you know, from such extremes that, it exaggerates everything to the degree that it no longer can be kind of shoved under the rug.

These examples reflect typical themes of respondents and clearly indicate a view of contestation by those who participated in hip-hop culture against the conditions that existed at the time.

Contestation also became clear when looking at the specific messages of some rap artists and participants. Rap artist Saigon talking about hip-hop legends Run DMC states:

Man when I first saw Run DMC that shit was on point because these guys looked like us, from the streets, wearing our clothes, rapping about how they proud to be black and I was like thank you. It was nice to see some brothers saying this is us and fuck anyone who can’t handle it. Being a fan of Run DMC made me feel like I had someone with me you know; they’re why I entered the game and stayed with the game.

This statement is also representative of the viewpoints reported and clearly indicates the importance of rap imagery as contesting and wrestling with the dominant images of the time. A number of people pointed to NWA’s *Fuck the Police* and its relation to the Los
Angeles riots. Others specified a line from Public Enemy's song *Fight the Power* where rapper Chuck D states "Elvis, was a hero to most but he never meant shit to me, he was straight up a racist, his music was simple and plain" and then rapper Flava Flav interjects "Yeah, Fuck him and John Wayne." These acts are clearly designed in some respect to entertain and spark controversy but also to contest dominant white images and reorient the way people think about heroes in society. Of the three criteria being considered; contestation was the most clear and present in the interview data regarding hip-hop culture.

As a characteristic of new social movements, collective identity refers to quality of using culture as a venue for creating or redefining collective identity and this process was evident with respect to much of hip-hop culture. Evidence of collective identity in hip-hop was found consistently throughout the data. All interview subjects got involved with hip-hop because they liked the music and/or grew up around the genre and considered it integral to their lives. Most subjects in the population have a number of friends that are "hip-hop heads" and who feel that it is a part of them. April, a hip-hop activist and public relations worker, echoes this point stating that:

Really and truly it came out of the young black and Latino youth in the South Bronx needing to give themselves a voice, needing to validate their existence, needing to give credence to their perspective of the world because that is really, all of that is what was not going on in the South Bronx in the late 60's and early 70's when hip hop was birthed by young people of color; black and Latino youth in particular. So if one looks at the political disenfranchisement just the abandonment of that particular urban community by the government, by the educational system, just, you know, on every level, various institutions in society just turned its back on that community and others throughout the country; but if you look at it from that standpoint and you see that people, the young people
created this again, as an effort to give themselves their own validation, then what came out of that is hip-hop.

This statement addresses issues of contestation and intentionality but also clearly indicates that collective identity is present because rap music came about as a way to elucidate and validate the situations of groups that are misunderstood. Rap artist Skillz elaborates on this point:

Because it was the music of the oppressed youth, you know what I mean? It was what was going on right then and there and so you could definitely relate to it right out of the gate, you know what I mean? It was relatable, like. Like when, “the Message” came out we was dead in the middle of the Reagan Era, like, that’s how Black people was feeling, that’s how we were living; not just black people, just minorities in general, you know what I mean, so they captured that. So it couldn’t be, it was something that you couldn’t help but gravitate yourself to, you know what I am saying?

Rap music has the ability to highlight issues that are important to poor and minority communities, thus making artists and participants capable of reorienting and redefining the perception of poor and minority communities by others as well as uniting people together and expressing their concerns. Website manager and historian Greg Watkins states:

Hip hop has the ability to let kids know, ok, look, we all feel the same way you do, we all are upset about this because it’s an emotional musical form it’s an emotional art form; that’s why NWA came out with Fuck Tha Police and two years later fucking L.A. burned down because so many people were subjugated to that behavior, to those kinds of conditions, you understand what I’m saying?

Greg Watkins is further demonstrating the theme that hip-hop, rap music specifically, has the ability to connect people and vent frustrations for the people that have been connected; this is the essence of collective identity.
A second theme that emerged which is directly related to collective identity is that hip-hop culture is open and accepting such that it is conducive to creating a large collective that can work towards challenging identities. A writer/artist who chose to remain anonymous explains:

What makes hip-hop unique is that anyone can do it, anyone can be part of it, ahh... and you're saying but wait isn't that what the critics say sucks about rap; yeah, but they don't get it. Hip-hop heads don't want to exclude people, everyone can be part of it, everyone can participate, cuz being part of it is something special. If you can't rap, maybe you can mix, if you can't mix, maybe you can dance, you know, if you can't dance, maybe you can tag, shit if you can't tag you hold the damn spray cans for the tagger, its all about spreading the culture, being proud of differences, who we are, everything. The fans, people who write about hip-hop, like me, we're all part of it, part of the movement, finally saying who we are and who we aren't and that we are here to stay.

This is once again a statement that encompasses all of the aspects of collective action repertoires but most importantly talks about collective identity as one of the defining characteristics of hip-hop culture. This statement reflects sentiments presented by many others; thus there seems to be very little debate about the openness of hip-hop and its expression as a statement of identity, especially when talking about early hip-hop.

Intentionality refers to the deliberate use of culture as a way to express political and social protest. It is with respect to this issue that the greatest amount of disagreement occurs, with most of those interviewed implying its presence but some arguing that it was not central to the culture. When subjects were asked what the goals of artists and members of hip-hop culture are when acting out the culture, a frequent (six respondents represent this theme) response was “I don’t know if they really had any goals; I think they were just having a good time and wanted people to think that they were bad.” However, upon further prodding or later in the interview goals were mentioned. The
inability of some respondents to identify goals as an immediate response to a direct question places some doubt on socially conscious intentionality as a high priority in rap culture. Still, the data contains numerous indicators of intentionality.

Movement organization representatives provide the most compelling case for intentionality as they run organizations that are dedicated to promoting social change through the use of hip-hop. One example is Toni Blackman, artist and art activist, of the Freestyle Union in Washington D.C. who encourages children and teenagers at a community center to learn how to free style rap because she believes that it will make them quicker thinkers, more eloquent speakers, and better overall leaders. Blackman, and other interviewees clearly use hip-hop with the intention of promoting self-autonomy so as to promote a better identity for those in the hip hop community. An activist that wished to remain nameless states:

> Hip-hop heads, well man, we are all about telling people what is real and really giving it to the people that are hurting friends of hip hop culture, the poor, black, Hispanic, umm, and you know anyone who needs a voice. This is hip hop and we try to do our best to make sure that hip hop participation actually means a lot.

This statement is very representative of the view of movement organization members in this sample and indicates that there is a level of intentionality that exists in hip-hop participation and all those surrounding it.

Producer and historian Johnny Juice demonstrates the essence of intentionality when explaining how artists realized they needed to use their words to inform:

> Yeah because believe me man, when the graffitti writers started going downtown and they hooked up with Deborah Harry of the Blondie game and she was part of the punk movement and as you know, punk dealt with a lot of political undertones; also, that’s why punk and rap almost fit hand in hand, and Blondie came, when Blondie sang like Fab Five Freddy all these cats up town, she was like yeah, that’s what we do, we just do it for a different part of town, she wanted
to know what was up, so the graffiti writers came down and started doing their graffiti on canvases in the art areas in Soho and down in Green St. and those areas, the whole village art scene; and there were very rich white people that didn’t understand what made these guys tick; so eventually everybody was like, it was obvious that some people just really don’t know what we’re going through, these cats in the Bronx they’ve never been anywhere but the Bronx; Brooklyn cats they lived in Brooklyn, and it wasn’t until rap came out that we started traveling for a reason, aside from going to work or whatever, saying yo the cats in Brooklyn live just as bad as we do, and that’s when we were like yo we need to say something.

This passage indicates a turning point and an intentional decision to use lyrics and other forms of hip-hop culture to inform and not just entertain.

Another theme that emerged is the view that artists realize that although they are entertaining they also want to have socially conscious content that represents a perspective that goes outside of their individual beliefs. Artist Skillz states:

I try to cover all areas; I try to make sure that people understand what’s going on with me in my life; I try to cover what’s going on around me you know. I try to cover how I feel about certain issues, and I just make sure that I talk about what I feel like people want to hear from; like, I might be that rapper that they go to when they want to be socially conscious so I make sure that I don’t step too far outside of my boundaries as far as what they want to hear from me. Even if you want to preach a little bit, its cool but with an artist like me you have to spoonfeed them a little bit. I reach more people by spoonfeeding them a little bit at a time.”

Ice Cube echoed this intentionality in an interview with bell hooks when he states “White kids need to hear what we got to say about them and their forefathers and uncles and everybody that’s done us wrong. And the only way they’re going to hear it uncut and uncensored is rap music” (1994, p.129). This statement clearly indicates an intentionality to contest and represent collective identity that is independent of the entertainment value of rap music. Although clearly a debate exists, there is a general consensus that hip-culture includes an element of intentionality.

26
To summarize briefly, the evidence presented above provides strong support for the claim that hip-hop culture and rap music contain new social movement characteristics of contestation, collective identity, and intentionality. Interview data indicates that hip-hop was created and maintained (at least in the early stages) to contest and debate dominant images of poor and minority communities and persons. This culture also serves as a way to reorient and renegotiate the collective identity of those individuals that are part of the culture. And, the data indicates that not only has hip-hop had vast impacts but that these impacts are the intentions of artists and other parts of the culture. Based on these findings, hip-hop culture would indeed appear to have the elements of new social movements.

*The Question of Race*

When interviewing participants in a musical genre that is so closely associated with African Americans, even more specifically African American males, I expected respondents to feel comfortable talking openly about the topic of race. My initial findings were quite contrary to this expectation. Indeed, most Black and Hispanic respondents found it impossible to talk about the issue of race and rap with me, a Caucasian male; instead people were more comfortable talking about class:

I think there is a difference like with white audiences, well I wouldn’t say white, because I know some white people who grew up in the ghetto like me, they just happen to live in the community where the shit was at... so I can’t really use the race card; I like to use the class card.

This type of response was a consistent theme and demonstrates the hesitancy to discuss the topic of race and rap music. The general consensus however was that hip hop is important for poor and minority audiences because it belongs to them. *White and upper*
class people can learn from hip hop when it is at its best; this relates to the idea of
reforming negative identities associated with poor minorities.

Although the issue of race was often dodged there were clearly areas where hip-
hop cultures’ relation to black audiences and contestation of white ideology were
obvious. For example, a number of people interviewed discussed how white participation
in rap music was a major contributing factor in its homogenization. One writer and
website owner states:

You know man, you know I hate to say it, but I really think that when rap music
started to go downhill is when white people started buying it. It’s like then we had
to make their parents happy and start creating the genre to be more friendly; well I
hate that though, cause that’s our music.

The theme that race is an issue that defines the protest characteristics of hip-hop culture
emerged in most of the interviews. Along these same lines, many were critical of Artist
and Repertoire representatives (A&R’s), which are essentially image consultants who
makes a lot of important decisions in the promotion of artists, in the record industry and
how they hurt music. Multiple interviewees quoted artist Gza from the Wu-Tang clan
who in the Wu-Tang song Da Mystery of Chessboxin’ asks a rival rapper “whose your
A&R? A mountain climber who plays an electric guitar?” This depiction of the A&R is
clearly a depiction of a white executive that has no conception of how to promote a black
artist and the theme is echoed often throughout the interviews. Clearly there are divisive
racial issues related to white participation.

There was also concern indicated by some interviewees about how hip-hop is
interpreted by white consumers. When asked what risks are involved in young, middle
class white consumers that have little interaction with African Americans listening to
mainstream rap music, the responses revealed concerns about misogyny, violence, and
materialism being too closely associated with poor and minority groups (Harrison 2000).

Activist Jordan Bromley states:

There’s definitely a danger in that. And now that I think about it that can
proliferate somebody’s racism when they listen to 50 cent talking about, you
know, shooting people and doing this and that. It could definitely proliferate the
racism so I agree.

Although everyone in the sample does not share this concern it is worth mentioning and
represents another racialized issue that comes into play. Although race is not a topic that
hip-hop interviewees typically like to discuss, it is in fact an important part of how hip-
hop culture and identity is defined both inside and outside of this “new social
movement.”

Race and class issues cannot be separated from the goals of the hip hop
movement. Activist April summarizes the general consensus of the interview population
that rap music is closely identified with poor and minority communities and that rich and
white audiences can only listen but not really understand hip-hop:

Well the African Americans and the Latino community, they’re the co-creators of
hip hop so that says a mouthful right there in terms of the relationship; white
people came to hip hop after it was founded by these two communities and I think
that for the most part white communities observed hip hop, some tried to
understand it, but it’s really from an observant type of point-of-view; generally
speaking, the experiences between people of color, specifically black and Latino
people in this country and that of white people or white youth is different, with
regard to racial politics, with regard to economics, how we’re socialized, what
we’re told about our history if we’re told anything at all; so there’s definitely
going to be a difference so white people just grew to observe the culture, I think
they were fascinated by it, became the largest consumers of the genre musically,
tries to imitate it and that’s locally as well; but that having been said firmly I
believe there are some white people who can really identify with some of the
themes in hip hop; I think they’re in a minority and when I say identify I don’t
just mean from an objective stand-point; I think there are some, clearly white
people who are oppressed in this country as well; I don’t think this is just a nation
full of oppressed black and brown people, but I think for the most part, you know, that white people just tend to observe it and really can’t identify with what gave birth to it.

According to the respondents of this study, rap and hip-hop are forever identified with poor and minority groups; others may simply be observing.

*Is Hip-Hop Still A New Social Movement?*

One of the most interesting discussions that took place in the interviews was about the current state of hip-hop music and what it means for the movement implications of hip-hop. A very small part of the sample (N=2) believe that even as rap has become more commercially viable and materialistic in nature, it has retained its importance and meaningfulness for renegotiating identity. Academic Greg Dimitriadis states that:

I’ll give you a more personal response to that, which is that before I started doing the ethnographic work that I did, which was predominantly with poor black teenagers, many of whom were involved in gangs, I would’ve said the record company, this being driven by white consumers, it’s white record companies selling the worst kind of images of black folks to white people and that’s kind of moving this entire industry forward; I would’ve had that sort of narrative and it’s squashing out the diversity and all that, the intense involvement that the kids that I had with this music, really made me see that more in terms of these sort of hyper kind of violent narratives really being, a way that these kids were able to mitigate against all the ways that they were invulnerable, or excuse me vulnerable, in the world; so the intense vulnerability that these kids felt that kind of every sort of contingency that would come their way any sort of disruption economically anything around losing a job and in that context these kind of super invulnerable characters who speak to very local contexts as well, there was this intense kind of draw to these figures; I saw a very strong sort of local popular swell around folks like Master P, Triple Six Mafia a lot of the Memphis groups, I mean I think it was TuPac; I think he blended the invulnerability and the vulnerability, you know, I think that sometimes, you know, I think yeah...That’s mine where I came out of four years of fields group, and I would’ve went in with the traditional left response that companies are kind of squeezing out the diversity and sort of selling these horrible negative images, and it’s being promoted only by white consumers, and there’s an element of truth to that, I don’t want to say there’s no element of truth but if you quote me on this, don’t say that I didn’t say there wasn’t an element of truth to that. But at the same time I think folks need to really understand that there is a tremendous popular investment in these figures and it
comes out of an intense sense of invulnerability that these franchise kids feel; so I do sometimes think that people want to hear that there isn’t this popular support of these kind of gangster images and it’s all this kind of fabrication sold to suburban kids and I think that’s just not true, although there is an element of truth to that to have that sort of dollar flow to that but that does not tell the whole story.

Academic Todd Boyd discusses how certain artists have contested dominant beliefs over time up until the present:

In the late ‘80s Public Enemy was real prominent in other groups and this was at a time when people were starting to use hip-hop as a way of being heard because they’ve been silenced so much by the Reagan era. So this is when you got that sort of thing, but at the same time you’ve got NWA and West Coast hip-hop and gangster rap so-to-speak that was a different response to the same condition; so that political component is always there, you know, and then even now when I hear somebody like Jay Z, to me what Jay is saying is political because, you know, nobody intended for a young urban black man to be wealthy; that was not the plan, this happened through the genre hip hop, you know, these individuals are saying, hey I’m wealthy and I don’t give a fuck, you know, and I got money, so I can act like somebody who’s got money, I have a certain amount of freedom and liberation but that to me is political but a lot of people can’t see it.

These comments are representative of what I will call the academic perspective. However this theme is highly contested by others in the sample.

What follows is an explanation of the process that most respondents feel has occurred during the last twenty-six years. Due to factors such as musical evolution, lack of collective identity, and adverse social conditions hip-hop was born and prospered from about 1977-1986 when the record industry and white audiences really began to take notice. At this time hip-hop started to become more commercialized and homogenization took place with rap changing from a diverse musical form to a highly commercialized, violent, misogynistic, materialistic, and egocentric genre. This might displease many involved with the genre, and one would expect such a transition to kill the movement elements of hip-hop.
The surprising finding from the interviews is that at a point over the last eleven years a real split began to happen where rap became more commercialized but an independent and more socially conscious form of hip hop emerged underground that was in many ways more like a social movement than any hip-hop had been up to that point. This type of phenomenon is not uncommon in social movement activity (Koopmans 1993; Brand 1990). There are three explanations for when this split occurred. One respondent believes that in 1992:

When Dr. Dre’s The Chronic came out it changed rap forever because it was violent but also danceable; it made it into all of the frat parties. After that, violence, partying, and sex to a dance beat became the norm and everything else had to go underground.

One historian feels that the important turning point was in 1995 and 1996 when:

the death of Biggie and Tupac changed rap completely, I mean it changed the world but especially hip-hop. There’s a lot of brothers that walked away from that flashy style when they saw what it could be at its worst. Now these guys are taking that conscious route.

Finally, one movement organizer feels that recent political situations have spurred the more radical sect of hip-hop:

I think that the big underground movement in hip hop is a reaction to this shit that you are hearing on the radio now but also that conditions are getting worse for a lot of people (he laughs). Hell, whenever hip hop starts to suck all we gotta do is elect a Bush to office and look what happens.

All of these present viable perspectives on the emergence of a radical sect of hip-hop and so 1995 is used as a reference point and is a compromise between various opinions.

The new underground style in hip-hop is characterized by four principles. First, the emergence of active social movement organizations such as Hip Hop Speaks, Hip Hop Generation, Hip Hop Summit Action Network, Freestyle Union, and the Hip Hop
Congress which use hip-hop to promote social change. Second, lyrics are more politically radical and message oriented. One example is that in their music, groups such as Dead Prez and the Coup have recently come out in support of executing the President because of his actions towards minorities. Third, lyrics are also focused in a strong way towards reinforcing collective identity and positive reinforcement. Respondents consistently discussed how this sect of rap music attempts to avoid common areas of negativity in rap such as misogyny and glorification of crime and violence in favor of calls to action aimed towards members of poor and minority communities. Fourth and finally, a heavy emphasis is placed on respecting hip-hop history. At first glance, an uninformed individual could easily believe that rap is not what it used to be. However, the interview population feels that hip-hop is still strong and that more conscious rappers will become popular again in the future.

The current state of hip-hop fits very well with a new social movements perspective. Although there is debate over the current state of mainstream rap music neither side of the debate is incompatible with the idea that hip-hop is a new social movement. Both sides of the debate indicate that sections of hip-hop are still consistent with a new social movements perspective.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this thesis has been to assess the proposition that a musical culture (in this case, hip-hop) can be a social movement. New social movement theories provide a basis for thinking so. They do so by allowing for a broader definition of activities that signal the desire of collective actors for change. By researching whether hip-hop culture, most specifically rap music, is used to contest dominant images of poor and minority communities and define space and culture for those groups, my intent was to identify whether the genre has the elements of a new social movement even though it does not incorporate a highly structured group trying to achieve legislative change or redistribution of resources.

There are three main conclusions that can be drawn from this research. First, hip-hop has throughout its history contained elements identified as criteria for determining if performance culture is a new social movement; contestation, intentionality, and collective identity. Thus, my findings are consistent with a new social movement perspective. Second, race and class are both very important issues in defining hip-hop identity because
redefining how race and class categories are conceived is the primary focus of the movement. Third, although commercialization and the homogenization of mainstream rap lyrics is at an all time high, much of what currently exists in the world of underground hip-hop is even more political and identity-based than earlier periods in the evolution of this cultural form. This indicates that in the future, hip-hop will continue to exhibit movement characteristics. Hip-hop appears to be an identity movement representing the poor and minorities that is counter to a rich, white dominant ideology.

Important sociological implications flow from these findings. My results indicate that art and artists can function as protest geared towards change in how people and groups are perceived. This means that changes in ideology takes on added interest as a line of research for sociologists interested in the sources of social change. Also, this research adds credence and support to the study of social action repertoires and the political efficacy of performing arts culture as outlined by Taylor, Gamson, and Rupp (2003). Viewed more abstractly, this paper implores research on the goals of all art forms associated with oppressed minorities and the changes that these art forms produce. Finally, these findings illustrate new social movements in action demonstrating the advantage of looking at social change more holistically and valuing ideological change.

Although I feel that the findings are impressive and provide new insights regarding hip-hop culture, the results also suggest additional research questions and point to the need for a more “advanced sample.” Future research should explore issues that could not be given full consideration within the scope of this project. These issues include, but are not limited to: the importance of gender and sexuality as issues of contestation within hip-hop itself, the ability of hip-hop in the early 1980’s to represent
contests, identity issues, and the like that are associated with different regional or urban localities; the political relevance of graffiti art; and, the degree to which rap that takes on a light-hearted nature still serves the function of contestation. Additionally, a weakness of this research is that it does not examine data which measures how consumers interpret and respond to messages presented in hip-hop culture. Future research should consider the opinions of hip-hop consumers therefore allowing an evaluation of hip-hop's success as social protest. In addition; use of alternative research designs and samples could lend credence to my findings. First, an in-depth content analysis of rap lyrics over time would surely provide insight into the nature of rap as protest and how messages in rap have changed over time. Also, rap artists that have received a great degree of commercial success over time were not included in this sample. It is important to assess to what degree their views compare with those of the Rap artists and other respondents of this study. It is my hope that this project will be perceived as providing valuable and legitimate scholarly research on hip-hop culture, and that as such it will facilitate gaining access to successful rappers for future investigations.

Although additional research is needed, the present study has set the stage for future studies in two important ways. First, it is one of the only current works that discusses a performance art culture as protest and social movement, laying the foundation for further discussion of social movement culture. Second, it indicates the importance of art in managing identities and countering dominant ideologies. Thus, although there is a great deal more to accomplish in this research process this project has demonstrated its worthy both in shedding light of hip-hop at collective action and laying a foundation for understanding more about the character of rap as a new social movement.
APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

(1) Can you please tell me how long you have been involved with rap and in what capacity you have been involved?

- Would you consider rap to be your primary musical interest, if not what is?
- What about rap interested you and how did you come to be involved in the rap industry?
- What duties do you perform in your job that have the potential to influence or shape the presentation of rap music in America? Can you give me any examples of how you have affected the industry?

(2) How would you define hip-hop and rap and what is their origin? In your definitions and answer, please discuss any political, cultural and/or musical contexts that contributed to their origin and popularity.

- In your opinion, when was rap music born in America?
- Is there a founder of rap music, and how did that founder perform or envision rap music?
- How would you define rap music? Both instrumentally and lyrically what makes rap music different than other musical genres?
- What, if any, is the difference between rap and hip-hop?
- At its origin, what was the target audience of rap musicians?
- Is rap more than performance and music, is there a deeper element and if so what is this element?

(3) Now I would like to talk about how rap gained an audience and the attention of radio and the record industry. What made rap music popular in America in the beginning?

(4) How do hip-hop and rap differ from other musical genres and cultures in their relationship to their intended audience(s)? In your view, what are the goals of hip-hop and rap artists? Producers’ goals (i.e. are they different from the artists)? Audience goals?
(5) What is the relationship between hip-hop and the African American community? In what ways is this relationship similar to, or different from the relationship between hip-hop and the white community? What do these audiences have to gain (or lose) from the music and culture?

- What rap artists were the most influential in rap music becoming discovered by major record labels?
- What makes rap music different than other genres of music?
- What are the common characteristics associated with rap lyrics in its early existence? Are the lyrics abstract or specific? Is social criticism involved?
- Did early rap artists and producers have goals in mind with the creation of their music? Were these goals those of just the rappers or a larger group of people?
- Please discuss the relationship between rap and culture as well as rap and politics?
- Can you further discuss the relationship between rap music and the African American community?
- Can you further discuss the relationship between rap music and the white community?
- What were common reactions to rap music at its inception, who was favorable to it and who was not and why do you think that these reactions occurred?
- What do listeners gain from rap music? Is this a positive or negative gain?
- What if any, negative consequences came from rap music in its early phases?
- What positives came from the existence of rap in America?

(6) Moving beyond the definition, origin and relationship questions above, what have been the major changes in rap over time in its style, content and culture? How has the genre itself changed, and what changes have occurred in the hip-hop community and industry? What do you see as the main reasons for these changes?

- How has rap music changed instrumentally? How have rap lyrics changed?
- What makes rap music different than other genres of music?
- Has the audience for rap music changed over time and if so has this shift in audience changed the goals and nature of the music?
- Please discuss again the relationship between rap and the African American community and between rap and the white community.
- Please discuss the relationship between rap and law enforcement as well as the government.
- Is rap a homogenous genre or are there different types of rap music? Please detail your example.
- Has the marketing of rap music changed at all over the time period being discussed?
- Does rap music still possess the same goals that it did at its inception? Who are rap artists and rap producers representing in their goals? Has this changed over time?
- What, if any, stigmas exist about rap, its musicians, and other parts of the industry and how have these stigmas shaped the musical genre?
- What do listeners gain from rap music? Is this a positive or negative gain?
- What negative and positive consequences have resulted from the continuing existence of rap music in America?

(7) Continuing this change theme, where have these changes led the industry? What are your thoughts on current rap music and how it may differ from rap of the past? What are your predictions about where its going to go in the future?

- Is rap more than performance and music, is there a deeper element and if so what is this element?
- What currently makes rap music different than other genres of music in the status quo?
- What is the current audience for rap music and has it changed the nature of the music and the way that it is marketed?
- Please discuss again the relationship between rap and the African American community and between rap and the white community.
- Is rap music that is popular today representative of the genre of music? If not please discuss this in more detail. If so, assess the quality of rap in the status quo and please explain your answer.
- Does rap music have the same goals as when it was beginning? Who are rap artists and producers representing in their goals? Has this changed over time?
- What, if any, stigmas exist about rap, its musicians, and other parts of the industry and how have these stigmas shaped the musical genre?
- What negative and positive consequences have resulted from the continuing existence of rap music in America?
- Is rap in a malaise? If so, will it ever make its way out of it?
- What do listeners gain from rap music? Is this a positive or negative gain?
- What contributions does this genre make to society?
- Will rap still exist in five years? If so, what will it be like? If not, why not?
APPENDIX B
CODING SCHEME

1. How Long Involved?
2. Specific Job Duties?
3. Favorite Artists?
4. Hip Hop Uniqueness
5. Why chose Hip-Hop?
6. Origins of Hip-Hop
7. Definitions of Hip Hop Culture
8. Collective Identity- Yes
9. Collective Identity- No
10. Factors in Creation
11. Intentionality- Yes
12. Inentionality- No
13. Contestation- Yes
14. Contestation- No
15. Movement- Yes
16. Movement- No
17. Soundtrack to a Movement
18. Hip Hop Decline? No
19. Hip Hop Decline? Yes- General
20. Hip Hop Decline? Yes-Corporations
21. Hip Hop Decline? Yes- Artists
22. Hip Hop Decline? Yes-Audience
23. Hip Hop Decline? Yes- Lack of Impetus
24. Hip Hop Decline? Yes- When?
25. New Era of Hip Hop? No
26. New Era of Hip Hop? Yes
27. Race Issues? No
28. Race- Yes Audiences
29. Race- Impacts of
30. Class More Important
31. Movement Success
32. Identity- Race and Class
33. Intentionality-Artists
34. Duality- Entertainment and Movement
35. Movement Failure
36. Hip Hop Crossover
37. Homogenization- Diversity Important
38. Rap and Reality
39. Regional Differences
40. Early Skepticism about Hip Hop
41. Participation itself is Helpful
42. Business is Business
BIBLIOGRAPHY


42


