Department of Anthropology and Sociology
University of the Western Cape

Ezase Kasi:[1]

Spaza Hip Hop in the Townships of Khayelitsha

Sikelelwa Anita Mashiyi

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Supervisor: Dr. Jung Ran Annachiara Forte

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[1] Township things

DECLARATION

I declare that this mini thesis; *Ezase Kasi, Spaza hip-hop in the townships of Khayelitsha*, is my own work. It is submitted to the University of the Western Cape in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Arts Degree in Anthropology. At no other University or institution has it been submitted as a requirement for a degree or any other qualification.

Full name: Sikelelwa Anita Mashiyi

Signature……

Date……

I dedicate this thesis to my little brother Thobelani Ndlovu

who I lost at the beginning of 2018.

Your spirit has kept me strong, I hope you are looking down at me and feeling proud.

I love you little bro'.

Till we meet again.

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ABSTRACT

Since the arrival of hip-hop in Cape Town and indeed South Africa in the 1980s, a diverse and vibrant range of hip-hop sub-genres has developed in Cape Town. Scholarship, however, have approached hip-hop mainly through a linguistical angle focusing mostly on Cipha hip-hop in the Cape Flats. This ethnographic work looks at performances and practices of Spaza hip-hop. It explores the musical genre of Spaza hip-hop in the township of Khayelitsha, discussing ideas advanced by scholarship almost ten years ago and re-assessing issues of language, citizenship and ethnicity from today's perspective. It looks at Spaza hip-hop not only as a musical genre, as it explores questions of identity, ethnicity, race, and gender. My research discusses how Spaza hip-hop music is consumed today, how it is produced and how it circulates. Across two years of fieldwork, I followed park sessions, open mic sessions and events; I have interviewed artists, producers and audiences. I argue that Spaza hip-hop in 2018 had changed drastically from its first apparition. Not only most of the artists are now older, but also the Spaza hip-hop scene is now invaded by trap hip-hop artists. Across my research I explore issues of gender in hip hop which is generally perceived as a "masculine" music. I illustrate how female artists constantly challenge norms and negotiate a space of their own, paradoxically transforming Spaza hip hop in a space for freedom.

Keywords: Spaza hip-hop, hip-hop, popular culture, South Africa, African music, township life, isiXhosa, race, ethnicity, gender, performance.

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Introduction

I do not remember what particularly drove my interest to "township life" during my undergraduate years. Perhaps, it was the third-year research paper that I wrote questioning why women became militant in the riot that happened in the township of Masiphumelele on the 28th of September 2015. Singing, women took the forefront in a strike that broke after a young boy was brutally raped and killed in his own home. Maybe, it was because I grew up in a township while I spent most of my days in a predominantly white high school. I was made to feel inadequate both in the township and at school. During these weary days music was my refuge. When I did my Honours research on "Dance and Music in the *Shebeens* of Masiphumelele," it was clear to me that music played and continues to play an important role for post-apartheid South African youth, and I started wondering about the music made in townships.

Growing up in the township meant playing singing games with friends until you saw the sun go down; then you would run back home. This was a female thing, I never saw boys singing and dancing, they would rather play marbles or take the jaw of a sheep's skull and use it as a gun or play with a car. At the time I did not put any specific meaning to the songs that we sang. It is only now that I am older that I realise that most of them were about what happened in the past. Some were about the dark days of apartheid and others about love, but mostly these songs sung the life of the township. They show how knowledge and history are passed down from generation to generation and illustrate the importance of oral forms of expressions, even today. This made me think about Spaza hip-hop and the young boys rapping about their struggles and life in the townships.[2] In this regard, Spaza hip-hop artists are not doing anything new, as for many generations people have been expressing themselves through singing, incorporating stories in music, narrating what was happening to them at particular times and places. Singing games were bringing forth an awareness that I did not recognise at the time. Most notably, Spaza hip-hop does the same.

[2] For this research I am particularly focusing on Spaza hip-hop artists who are identifying as Xhosa. During my time in the field I did not encounter any person who was doing Spaza and was not of Xhosa ethnicity. On the contrary, trap artists who are also rapping exclusively in isiXhosa are from different ethnicities.

It was only in high school that I heard about Spaza hip-hop in the townships. I had no particular interest; I only remember those people we used to call "my nigga" because of the way they dressed imitating American hip-hop artists. And honestly hip-hop was never my thing. I was rather a fan of Beyoncé, Céline Dion, Brenda Fassie and Lucky Dube. It was only after I did my Honours research that I became interested in Spaza hip-hop. I spoke to my supervisor and read up on Spaza hip-hop and I felt that there was a need to do research about this musical genre in 2018. I decided not to do Spaza hip-hop in Masiphumelele, the township where I grew up, but to challenge myself and travel to a different location, a township where Spaza was known to be booming, Khayelitsha.

When traveling around Khayelitsha I realised that music was everywhere. We heard it in the streets, the hair salons, in people's houses, taxis and cars passing, and in the *shebeens*. Music is also a dominant topic of discussion amongst people in Khayelitsha, especially the youth. In most townships, music is a movement; it never stays in one place. It always transforms. Spaza hip-hop music is not different. It is a movement happening throughout the black townships of Cape Town.[3] Even though my main research location was Khayelitsha, it soon became clear to me that music moved and moves from one township to the next, and so did I. Music travels in physical and virtual spaces and this is not something new. This was stressed by Phoenix, a Spaza rapper, in one of our interviews. Spaza hip-hop never happened only in Khayelitsha. He remembered having to walk to the train station with other artists and travel to Langa to attend free Spaza sessions. The content of Spaza hip-hop songs also plays with movement. Tracks do not stand alone, they are in dialogue with one another; responding to each other, debating the same issues and talking about life in the townships. Spaza hip-hop is "conscious music" that addresses the social ills of the townships. At the same time music is also about love, it is humorous and shows that there is more to the township than its troubles. Spaza hip-hop is about the life of the township not only because it talks about it, but because works as a memory bank. These songs bring forth phrases, old traditional songs, the things that people say in the streets on a daily basis.

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[3] Black township is a term employed locally to mark spaces that are generally considered as not inhabited by so-called "coloured" people.

Hip-hop in Cape Town started in the 1980s during the most violent period of apartheid (Haupt 1996, 2008; Nkonyeni 2007; Warner 2007; Watkins 2000, 2004). It was first practiced in marginal spaces, such as backyards and street corners. By 1982, across the city of Cape Town, a hip-hop community was forming, visible in the practices of DJ-ing, rapping, graffiti writing and break-dancing. Today, most of the hip-hop that is considered "local" is sung in local languages and is produced in the townships (Spaza hip-hop) and the Cape Flats (Cipha). "Spaza" is commonly understood and widely used in South Africa to refer to the unlicensed tuck shops which were set up by the township residents during the apartheid era in order to challenge the economic deprivation of black people (Becker and Dastile 2008). Based on the idea of resistance that is implied by the origin of the term, "Spaza" is taken as a general attitude or posture that characterizes hip-hop—the essence of the message conveyed through music and, as scholars have indicated, the resistance to the American influence. Spaza hip-hop artists are seen as developing their own understandings of what hip-hop should be like in a South African context by rapping in their local languages to convey messages deemed important to the communities in which they live (Becker and Dastile 2008).

Spaza hip-hop sub-genres is loosely defined as Cape Town Xhosa rap. It originated amongst the youth in the townships around Cape Town, South Africa, and it soon became a creative form through which youngsters expressed their thoughts and emotions. Most of the artists were influenced by American "conscious" hip-hop while others were influenced by local kwaito music. Apart from a few artists, it is quite clear that Spaza hip-hop has failed to travel and reach consumers beyond the Western Cape and the Eastern Cape, where isiXhosa is widely spoken. When the emcees were starting up, at the beginning of the 2000s, making money was not a real concern. However, many of them are now older, and they are trying to find means to make money out of their music. Others found regular jobs and kept music making as something they do on the side. Since the beginning, Spaza hip hop has been a male-dominated space. Still today producers, artists, emcees and audiences are men. Notwithstanding the hostile conditions, female artists and fans have emerged through the years.

Spaza hip-hopers are underground artists. "Underground" is a term generally employed to indicate a sub-culture in opposition to a dominant culture (Kerr 2017), and in the case of music it indicates those artistic spaces that are excluded from the mainstream or commercial

industry. Simply put, following Kerr (2017), "underground" in Spaza indicates the rappers' inability to record due to the lack of funds. Reuster-Jahn (2008:56) defines "underground" as rappers who have not yet released an album. On the other hand, Englert defines "underground" as "those who have not yet experienced success on a larger scale" (2008:75). Spaza hip-hop has been around since the 1990s however, it reached its peak of popularity in the early 2000s. Only a few artists like Rah Rattex and Driemanskap got formal contracts with a record company, Pioneer Unit. For the rest of them, when they have money, they contact independent record companies which are owned by artists in the township. The "underground," independent record companies are profiting from the late developments in digital technologies and the Internet more than commercial music.

There is a limited scholarship on Spaza hip hop. Becker and Dastile (2008) approached hip-hop music to discuss identity and global cultural flows. In their work they show how through Spaza hip-hop, youths negotiate and create a new urban African identity in post-apartheid South Africa. Along the same lines, Williams and Stroud (2010) argue that Cipha performances, especially looking at the linguistic and discursive features, show how rap music and hip hop in the Cape Flats engage with larger core issues of multilingualism, agency and voice. Haupt describes various digital practices of Cape Town hip-hop artists—such as sampling and remixing, producing, video production and the use of social media—and question them in terms of agency (2008; 2012). In South Africa there has been a long debate of whether kwaito should be considered a South African version of hip-hop (Schonmann 2015; Steingo 2005 and Swartz 2003). Kwaito is generally not considered as hip-hop because it lacked political commentary. Watkins (2012) argues that most scholarship on hip-hop in South Africa focuses on Cape Town and that there is a need to focus on other provinces as well to fully understand South African hip-hop.

My research explores Spaza hip-hop not only as a musical genre but it addresses questions of identity, ethnicity, race, and gender. It illustrates how Spaza hip-hop music is produced, circulated and how it is consumed today. Across two years of fieldwork, I have followed park sessions, open mic sessions and events; I have interviewed artists, producers and audiences. I argue that Spaza hip-hop in 2018, in the space of a decade, has changed drastically from its first apparition. Not only are most of the artist older now, but also the Spaza hip-hop scene is being "invaded" by trap hip-hop artists. The main question that rang throughout my time in

the field was: is Spaza hip-hop becoming extinct before it has had the opportunity to properly emerge?

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My research maps the underground world of Spaza hip-hop, starting from Khayelitsha. I attempt to understand and portray the live scene of Spaza hip hop in 2018, looking at the performances and the events. I explore how the music is locally produced, by who, how it circulates and how it is consumed. In so doing I try to understand the specificity of Spaza hip hop: can it be considered a genre? Is it possible to trace its history across the last twenty years? Who are the artists who "made history"? Which kind of imagination does Spaza hip-hop open up? What are the meanings of using your "own" language instead of English? How are we to understand the fact that Spaza hip-hop, even though it has been around for years, has not yet established itself within the national and international market? What are the differences between Spaza hip-hop, Trap and other hip-hop music? How is Spaza hip-hop existing in 2018? In my research I have met and engaged with artists, producers, agents, and audiences. How does an artist become famous? What does "famous" mean? Why does this musical genre appeal to people?

My research argues that many significant changes have occurred since the beginning of Spaza hip-hop in the early 2000s. Today new meanings and understandings of what I called the "Spaza hip-hop project" are emerging. While Spaza artists and fans explain that one can clearly distinguish Spaza hip-hop from other hip-hop due to a number of elements—the language used in performances, the quality of beats and the content of the lyrics—, artists are challenging this labelling process, protesting against the "boxing in" of their music. In the face of these transformations, my research shows that the trajectory of Spaza music could be understood as a coming of age tale, a generational story of boys that started rapping while in high school, and that by going through traditional rites of passage became men. They are now adults with family responsibilities but still remain passionate about music. Furthermore, my research also shows how female presence is growing in Spaza spaces; by singing their stories on stage, female artists are bringing up issues of gender representation at the core of South African hip-hop.

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In chapter 1 I discuss existing literature on African hip-hop. I have limited my review to scholarship on African and South African hip hop, discussing issues of resistance, politics, consciousness, youth, and popular culture. Moreover, I also look at Cape Town hip-hop. In Chapter 2, I present the fieldwork and the methodology that I employed in the research. I reflect on the different spaces that I have visited during my fieldwork, the challenges I encountered and the difficulties of finding artists and establishing important relations. In Chapter 3, I map the scene of Spaza hip-hop in 2018. The chapter introduces the reader to those who make and produce Spaza music in the townships and I explain what the artists, producers, and audiences understand Spaza hip-hop to be. I discuss the role played by the advancements in technology which have allowed Spaza hip-hop artists to emerge but also have limited them. In an era in which Trap music is booming, Spaza hip-hop artists are struggling to exist. In chapter 4, I focus on how Spaza hip-hop music is consumed and how it reaches the audiences, examining events, performances, jam sessions, and the work that they entail. In Chapter 5, I look at the gender politics existing in Spaza hip-hop as hip-hop spaces are male-dominated; most of the artists, the audiences, and the producers are male. While scholars have theorised hip-hop spaces as violent spaces for female artists, I illustrate how Spaza hip-hop has also been perceived as a safe space of freedom and, paradoxically, of emancipation. I show how female artists are today, working hard to gain recognition while facing many challenges because of their gender.

CHAPTER 1

Literature Review

Emceeing—rapping or chanting, rhyming lyrics that are accompanied by a strong rhythm—, beatboxing or DJing—the art of producing drum beats rhythm and musical sounds using one's mouth, lips tongue, and voice—, breakdancing and graffiti art are the main components of hip hop (Forman & Neil 2004; Perry 2004; Quin 2005; Ntarangwi 2010). Hip-hop is also a style of dress, a language, a way of looking at the world, a body movement, a way of life and a form of identity (Perry 2004; Quin 2005; Alridge & Steward 2005). Although hip-hop originated in America, in the 1970s, it has today spread worldwide. The existent literature on hip-hop is massive, spanning across various disciplines; it would be impossible to give a full, comprehensive account of it. In this chapter I will therefore focus on hip-hop in Africa. There is a growing body of scholarship, encompassing a plurality of disciplines, that illustrates the various forms this musical genre and culture takes across the continent, mobilizing a plurality of languages and cultural sensibilities. I focus on the literature that concerns with globalisation, the context in which this music emerge, looking at the new development of technology. Contrary to the narrative that excludes Africa from the access to new developments in technology, these have been crucial to the emergence and growth of hip-hop music on the continent.

This chapter looks at hip-hop as a form of expression that is particularly associated with youth; it presents the literature on hip-hop in South Africa and shows how music has changed over the years. Studies on hip-hop in Africa have generally focused on male artists, as hip-hop is often seen as a masculine space. Scholars have mostly written about masculinity in connection to music and have paid attention to the ways in which women are portrayed and seen; very limited scholarly work has been discussing female artists.

Hip-hop in Africa

Hip-hop culture has potentially become the most profound movement of our times; and has become a rapidly growing tool of expression for the youth in Africa. Hip-hop in Africa has been largely influenced by different parts of the world, largely America (Clark 2018; Adedeji 2013; Charry 2012; Ntarangwi 2009; Saucier 2011). Through globalization hip-hop has reached the African continent. The diffusion of hip-hop in Africa is in fact linked to the opening up of local markets to foreign goods and cultural products such as movies, music, fashion and satellite television (Ntarangwi 2009). Television brought changes as it was a platform where hip-hop artists in Africa visualised the way of embodying hip-hop; it influenced fashion, music making and the mimicking of the attitude that came along with hip-hop cultures.

Globalization carried the promises of the economic growth, yet these neo-liberal policies brought forward by of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) destroyed the small industrial sectors, and deeply affected national services such as education and public health. While the African experiences of the neoliberal policies are country specific, hip-hop has become a transitional medium through which socio-political discourses are articulated (Ntarangwi 2009; Adedeji 2013). This influx of foreign goods and exchange had two major factors: the weakening of the nation-state and the diminishing of the role of the nation-state as a legitimate agent for the socialisation of youth. Hip-hop artists emerged during this time, taking advantage of the political fragility and getting the opportunity to address the problems they were seeing around them. Even though the problem of limited opportunities for hip-hop artists on the continent is still relevant, these artists are today taking advantage of the fluidity of the global space to produce and disseminate their projects and their art across geopolitical boundaries. For Saucier (2011), there is a dialectical relationship between globalization and the localization of the hip-hop culture across the world.

Despite the existence of evidence of cultural hybridization over time, because of the American hegemony, there are still debates around appropriation and borrowing. Though initially African hip-hop started by mimicking American culture, overtime music adapted to the contexts, bringing forth cultural tastes and traditions. In such regard, it could be argued

following Clark (2018) that hip-hop belongs to everyone who is willing and able to write, produce and communicate cultures and localities in the expressive ways of hip-hop. Linguistic anthropologists have discussed how hip-hop is only perceived as global when it is in English and is understood as localised when it is in vernacular (Adedeji 2013). It is limiting to say that American hip-hop is different from African hip-hop only through the angle of language. Other differences exist which include the experiences the African artists bring to the music.

While the influence of African American hip-hop has been largely illustrated in the literature, lately there has been an ongoing debate on whether hip-hop, like other examples of black Atlantic music, should not on the contrary be rooted in Africa (Clark and Koster 2014). Clark (2012) argues that hip-hop's association to African cultures have been discussed in three major ways: by linking hip-hop music to African rhythms and drums (Appert 2016; Manning 2009; Keyes 2008), by linking hip-hop music to African forms of rapping or poetry, and by drawing parallels between the hip-hop emcees and the West African griots (Clark 2018; Appert 2016; Penna-Diaw 2013; Gueye 2011; Tang 2007). Scholars have been stressing how slavery and the plantation in the Americas were the pivotal experiences that forged these continuities. As the years passed African Americans incorporated African music traditions into new forms of music and self-expression. For instance, scholars have shown the similarities existing between early hip-hop drumbeats and those found in many African music, or within local forms of rapping like for instance Tassou which is found in Senegal and Gambia (Clark 2108; Appert 2016; Penna-Diaw 2013; Gueye 2011; Tang 2007). Storytelling, and oral traditions are one of the most distinctive forms of literacy that existed in African and African American communities. The vocal style of the griots of West Africa—who are a group of traveling singers and poets who are part of an oral tradition dating back hundreds of years (Dagbovie 2005; Appert 2011; Osumare 2011; Tang 2012; Fredericks 2013; Clark 2018)— is in certain aspects compared with the one of the rappers. Fredricks (2013) suggests that rappers take the forms of a modern-day griot when making juxtaposing modern rap and African oral history. By writing lyrics that are critiquing what is happening in the current political environment and in society, rappers, just like griots, are keeping alive oral histories (Dyson 2004; Tang 2012; Sajnani 2013; Fredricks 2013; Appert 2016; Clark 2018).

In contrast, Charry (2012) argues that Africans did not embraced hip-hop because of a deep historical and cultural connection. For Charry (2012) the origins of local hip-hop genres in a number of African countries can be traced to the access of African elites to imported goods. It was those who were exposed to the international markets and had family living or traveling overseas that had the privilege of accessing American hip-hop tapes and CDs. The youth that was exposed to this new music began to rap, directly imitating what they were hearing (Clark 2012). Clark (2012) in her examples on the emergence of hip-hop in Ghana and Tanzania in the 1980s also shows how young people started rapping in English, mimicking the American hip-hop artists, rapping on exactly what was being said. African rap did not gain a voice on its own until rappers began to do away with some of the American influences, which for them entailed rapping in local tongues and on local issues. It was the second and third generation of continental rappers that changed the scenery of hip-hop by making a hip-hop of their own, transforming the very same one they learn from American artists. They did this by using American hip-hop but connecting it with traditions, local languages, local issues and to the culture from which they come from. For Charry (2012), this added a degree of linguistic and cultural sophistication that moved the genre to a whole new level. This happened in the early 1990s when hip-hop artists began to incorporate local sounds, and, more importantly, began rapping in local languages about topics of significance to the local populations.

It would be too simplistic to view African hip-hop simply as an expression of African American culture (Mitchell 2001; Haupt 2003; Clark 2018). Hip-hop "[…] has become a tool for global youth affiliation and a tool for reworking local identity all over the world" (Michell 2001:1). Clark (2018) in her interviews with some African artists illustrates how these debates on origins are still present within the hip-hop community. While some denied the idea of hip-hop being African and only saw it as an imitation of the American culture, others felt that it should be qualified as "African" only if African artists are performing in their local languages over African produced beats and rhythms (Clark 2018). For Clark (2018) these claims are problematic as they simply look at hip-hop as music but ignore the culture that surrounds African hip-hop. "African hip-hop's influence is found in new slang emerging from various urban centers in Africa and the graffiti that colours African cities and towns" (Clark 2018:11). For example, the hip-hoppers in South Africa during apartheid were not only influential because they rapped in political campaigns, but also because of their visual impact

and contribution: the lively spray-painting of love messages, personal tags asking for a South Africa free of military rule and white racial hegemony decorated the walls of the townships in Cape Town (Watkins 2012). Today we must also take into account of the contributions of the African diaspora to African music, such as *mbalax* (Senegalese dance music), highlife (West African dance music), or Afrobeat (Nigerian dance music), all of which were heavily influenced by the US diaspora. What is quite clear with hip-hop is that its notion of roots in the modern world is negotiable, changing and subject to the tenuous nature of contemporary life (Watkins2012). There are also those who argue about location. These "locationists argue that unless one's experience as an African emcee originates from living in Africa, one cannot represent oneself as an African emcee" (Clark 2018). For Clark (2018) these definitions rob the African emcee power to self-identify as African. There are in fact many artists that were born in Africa but grew up in America or whose families moved to America and had children born in America but still identify as African. "To deny African emcees their ability to represent Africa would be to reject an important part of the African experience" (Clark 2018:13). When attempting to understand African hip-hop one has to look at the notion of the "global black experience" which is linked to oppression and resistance (Haupt 2008 in Clark 2018). Though one has to acknowledge that hip-hop is consumed all over the world, meaning also in places where people do not identify as African, it is important to note that this does not mean that "hip-hop is not rooted in an African past" (Clark 2018;12).

The question of authenticity in hip-hop is important and is an issue that is debated globally. Hip hop is understood as a medium through which to consider local engagements with globalising influences (Clark 2012). Important as it may be, it seems that is it quite difficult to concretely define what authentic hip-hop is as this musical genre takes different forms within different spaces (Clark 2012). In attempting to define "authenticity" McLeod explains that it is "staying culturally authentic, rejecting the mainstream and having knowledge and appreciation of hip-hop's traditions and values" (2012:28). Adding on McLeod, Gilroy regards authenticity as an evaluation of music that expresses the "absolute essence of the group that produces it" (1991:114). Clark (2012) argues that the debates that have been surrounding authenticity in hip-hop have to do with content versus flow. Some have argued that content—speaking on local issues and the hard life—is defining the authentic. While other argues that the skill of great flow in your music is on the contrary more authentic than

the content itself. There also seems to be a difference within the content in the determination of authenticity (Clark 2012): some scholars have stressed how social and political consciousness qualifies "true" hip-hop, while others have looked at the lyrical traditions of storytelling and celebrated the power of words and creativity as a way of measuring authenticity (Clark 2012).

It becomes important to clearly define "authenticity" also in relation to other contiguous musical genres and sub-genres which are however seen as not hip-hop (Clark 2013). For example, Hip-life and Bongo Flava are understood to be different from the hip-hop done in their respective countries, Ghana and Tanzania. However, both Hip-life and Bongo Flava emerged as genres influenced by hip-hop with specific languages, beats and styles (Clark 2013). What is interesting is that both of these genres are overshadowing hip-hop in their countries; Ghanaian artists seem to have largely accepted that Hip-life outsells hip hop and have in turn used Hip-life to deliver socially relevant messages. In Tanzania, hip hop artists are fighting back and trying to challenge the producers of Bongo Flava. It is also clear that these pop music artists are making more money than hip-hop artists, who still want to play their hardcore music that challenges the status quo; gatekeepers of the mainstream media and musical industries ensure that underground hip-hop is not played on radios and other main media, determining what will and will not be played. What is considered as trending right now is a great beat and music that people can dance to (Clark 2013).

Though globalization hip-hop reached Africa; this granted young people great opportunities to express themselves through this hip-hop cultures. However, this same global village is also blocking hip-hop artists from moving forward. Mitchell (2000) argues that "the flow of consumption in rap music within the popular music industry continues to proceed hegemonically, from the USA to the rest of the world, with little or no flow in the opposite direction." Hip-hop artists in Africa are not receiving the same recognition as American artists; American artists are more well-known than African artists. Also, American artists receive more international air play of their music on different media platforms compared to the African artists. The benefits of new media and the development of independent labels should not only be seen as an advantage, Clark contends (2013). Though these platforms seem to be working well for American hip-hop, things are not going the same way for African artists. Financial stability also plays an important role in this regard, most African artists are

unable to afford air play on different platforms as they lack the financial means. Also issues of authorship and copyright are standing in the way of African artists (Haupt 2008). If you sample someone's beat for two seconds or more the artists can be sued, unless the artists got permissions to sample. This is hard for struggling artists as they used to sample before with not issues of copyright, now artists have to worry and be conscious with everything that they do.

African hip-hop youth

It is the youth that found hip-hop to be an ideal tool to "articulate their everyday experiences, aspirations and engage in a broader local and global discourse" (Mawuko-Yevugah and Ugor 2016:182). Youth in Africa is a central concern of interest. One main reason is that Africa is continent demographically full of young people, with most of the population under the age of 30 years (Ntarangwi 2010). Youngsters are central to societal interactions and transformations, and to nation building (De Boeck and Honwana 2005) and therefore scholarship has conceptualised the category of youth as too deeply connected to issues of power, knowledge, rights, agency and personhood (Fredericks 2013; Durham 2000). However, we find that the youth is located at the margins of the public sphere and major political, socio-economic and cultural processes. (De Boeck and Honwana 2005). Unable to get adequate access to health and good education which results in high rates of unemployment, the youth find themselves with not much to do (Fredricks 2013; De Boeck and Honwana 2005). Because of this the youth then "search for a narrative that provides a territory for free play of their imagination and political consciousness: a space for their coming of age in a neo-colonial Africa" (Saucier 2011: xvii). This then explains why hip-hop is arguably the fastest-growing component of youth culture today. To some, it became a hobby which took them away from the street while helping them move away from crime and self-destruction which includes the use of drugs and alcohol. For example, Kenyan artists Chiz 'n' Brain, credits Kenya's hip-hop group Ukooflani Mau Mau for his ability to avoid a life of self-destruction. "Ukooflani has changed me. I would have been lost in alcoholism because I had nothing better to do" (Ntarangwi 2009:5). On the other hand, to some it is an occupation which puts food on the table, and which has granted economic opportunities. Hip

hop people are able to start small businesses like being producers or try to sell music, starting brand names and sell clothing (Ntarangwi 2009).

Most importantly, hip hop has played as significant role and has become a potent voice of expression, bringing African voices which reflected on their social surrounding (Ntarangwi 2009). Through hip-hop music the youth documented the life of hardship they grow under. They do not only reflect on their personal lives and African realities but also question the nature of the structures in their societies. They make commentary on cultural, economic and political issues in places where they often struggle or are unable to participate to the political life (Ntarangwi 2010; Saucier 2011; Charry 2012). For example, in many African countries like Senegal, South Africa and Tanzania, the youth have used hip-hop to critique the government and to take part in politics (Fredericks 2013; Charry 2012; Saucier 2011). Others have used hip-hop to address issues of HIV/AIDS, moral corruption and neo-colonialism (Saucier 2011). Music educates and brings awareness to the ordinary people. Hip-hop offered to young people a different lens to look at society.

By definition hip-hop is a tool of self-expression and is often used as a tool of resistance (Ntarangwi 2010; Clark 2012). Just like in America, hip-hop in the continent of Africa which has been confronted by colonialization, World Bank and SAPs, has been used as a weapon of resistance where the ordinally people have fought for emancipation through hip-hop music. The African hip-hop artists are also resisting in the way American artist do their hip-hop. They have resisted by using their own local languages, making their hip-hop specific to those that understand the language. They have used African beats and drums to bring forth their Africanness in their hip-hop. They also had changed their way of dress, incorporating their culture in their music. Every culture and community has a way of making their hip-hop different from the rest. The context in which American used hip-hop as a tool for resistance is not particularly the same as the in the African context. In Africa hip-hop brought people who were living in dark day entertaining them and healing their souls. Through hip-hop the different artists brought light bringing hope, restoring confidence that one day the negative situation will change for the better (Ntarangwi 2010; Saucier 2011).

Though hip-hop has been a refuge and a platform of hope for the youth it has created challenges for them. Artists are considered as lazy, misfits and not wanting to have a job.

Most parent do not dream for their children to become artists due to the fact that hip-hop not considered as stable career that can sustain a family (Ntarangwi 2009). As much as there are internal factors affecting the youth in hip-hop, there are also external factors, which are factors beyond the homes and communities in which these artists come from. So, these factors are larger societal issues such as the digital divide and racialized class inequalities (Haupt 2012). Research has shown that technological power limits access rather than promotes it particularly in developing countries (Haupt 2008). Haupt (2008) explains that the new technological advancement has created a digital divide because those who cannot afford it like underground hip-hop artists are then excluded to partaking in order to promote their music. These artists are not the only ones affected, their audience is largely affected as not everyone can afford these different technological gadgets, WIFI and other platform that will allow them to access the music, as they are marginalized by this digital divide. This in turn, affects these underground hip-hop artists because without an audience, they artists cannot make a living of their music. It should be made clear that regardless of these internal and external factors, the youth still use hip-hop and it still provides that with the power, they are unable to get through other avenues. Some do attempt to find other economic mediums to sustain themselves while doing their music on the side. Prophet of da City artist is a university student and has used this platform to write about hip-hop and also take part in other gathering that promote the hip-hop scene outside the academia. Others see hip-hop as something that one lives and breathe and do not want to partake in any other external means apart from their music.

Hip-hop in South Africa

With eleven official languages, it is quite clear that language plays an important role in South Africa —from defining an individual to the various aspects of society. While there has been a great deal of scholarly work done on hip-hop in South Africa, the majority of these studies have focused mainly on Cipha hip-hop in Cape Town, where people rap in Kaapse Afrikaans (Williams and Strout 2010). What these hip-hoppers showed was that it was possible to use language to claim authenticity within the global hip-hop arena (Williams 2017; Modiko 2015; Williams and Strout 2010; Magubane 2006).

During the final years of the apartheid era in South Africa, The Prophets of da City (POC) and other groups formed a musical identity based on resistance to the oppressive laws of apartheid (Haupt 1996). During this time the government used its power to ban music and literature that opposed it. Anything that was deemed as a threat to the state was dealt with quickly and sometimes violently (Watkins 2012). POC witnessed this when releasing the album *Age of Truth* in 1993. Though they won numerous awards overseas which included the Best Music Video Award, the album was banned in South Africa for challenging the National Party (Haupt 2012; Watkins 2012). It was clear that if hip-hop referenced language and political content, one would have minimal access to mainstream radio playlists and TV exposure (Haupt 2012). However, after the apartheid era most of the youth moved away from "protest political music" (Modiko 2015) and used Kwaito—which is in many aspects similar to hip-hop—to move away from serious issues and just have fun (Swartz 2003; Steingo 2005).

Kwaito's origins can be traced back before the 1990s in Johannesburg almost 10 years after hip-hop was emerging in South Africa. During this time hip-hop was still small. Kwaito became visible as a music of choice for most black young people because of its use of the local languages and informal street slang (Steingo 2005; Swarts 2003). There has been an on ongoing debate on the comparison between kwaito and hip-hop hop (Steingo 2005; Allen 2004; Swarts 2003). Some scholars have argued that Kwaito is a style of hip-hop that uses indigenous South African languages (Swartz 2003; Steingo 2005; Magubane 2006), a form of rap music (Swartz 2003; Ntarangwi 2010). The main similarities seen between kwaito and hip-hop is the shared characteristic of ''rapping'' in verse (Steingo 2005). It is without a doubt that there are cultural and structural similarities between Kwaito and hip-hop. Swartz (2003) was able to distinguish three of them. The first is that they both use pre-recorded backing tracks over which lyrics are spoken and chanted. The second is that they both make use of liberal sampling of music and employ visual and proactive dance and videos to accompany tracks. The last similarity is that they both use sexual and vulgar language (Swartz 2003).

On the contrary, Swartz (2003) argued that Kwaito is not a South African hip-hop but rather a local genre that was created to fulfil the needs of the youth living in South Africa. Conducting an analysis on hip-hop and Kwaito using Hall's (1997) framework of the "circuit of culture,"

the research explored the five elements of meaning: "production, representation, identity, consumption and resistance" (Modiko 2015:20). Clark (2018) agrees on this position saying that Kwaito is in fact a unique genre which blends sounds from hip-hop and other music. Moreover, Kwaito, just like the Tanzanian Bongo Flava, is known as dance music which lacks political commentary which plays on the contrary an important part in hip-hop in South Africa (Clark 2013; Clark 2018). "Hip Hop came about as an evolution of those who were the underprivileged minority that was not empathetic to the American dream and amalgamation of classicism and on the other hand Kwaito was the genre of the underprivileged majority that lived in South Africa's population that could not relate or even identify with American Hip Hop culture" (Magubane 2006 in Modiko 2015:21). It is then quite clear that at that time Kwaito was also more accessible than American hip-hop as it was locally produced. After interviewing early kwaito artists like Arthur and M'du, Steingo (2005) argues that actually most artists were influenced by Bubblegum artists of the 1980s and that therefore Kwaito should be considered as a mixture of Bubblegum, Mbaqanga, and Kwela South African pop genres.

"Keeping it real", the representation of who the artists are and where are they from are the core principles of the hip-hop culture (Clark 2018; Dowsett 2017; Kerr 2014; Smitherman 2006). This is why the localisation of hip hop concerns the rapping in local languages but also the addressing of local concerns (Haupt 2001). Artists need to have knowledge of the self, which refers to a form of self-reflexive consciousness which engender awareness through introspection (Haupt 2008). Knowledge of the self is also associated with Black Consciousness: artists engage with their reality in order to move beyond the oppressive discourses (Haupt 2003). Pritchard (2009) indicates that most South African rappers are based in South Africa because it is important for them to be "authentic" and be able to represent the spaces they come from. Artists have been booed off stage (Pritchard 2009) or lost rap battles (Williams and Stroud 2010) because they were seen to be too American in their rapping styles. Pritchard explains that: "hip-hop cannot be viewed simply as an expression of American culture and, in Cape Town at least, it takes on new meanings and provides a platform for local experience" (Pritchard 2009: 54).

There are two categories of hip-hop that are consumed in Cape Town, namely commercial and underground hip-hop (Pritchard 2009). Commercial hip-hop tends to have lighter lyrics,

it is considered more "artificial" and it is loved mostly by a female audience. On the contrary, underground hip-hop—and I believe Spaza hip-hop falls into this category—is more interested in a "cultural" background, it is more abstract, and darker. Hip-hop can be broken down into two traditions: conscious hip-hop and gangster rap. The conscious hip-hop has an underground appeal as it focuses on awareness and it is informed by Black Consciousness. In contrast gangsta rap is commercial hip-hop, has little evidence of "knowledge of self" and does not challenge structures of domination. It only focuses on promoting "thug life" which promotes misogyny and patriarchy (Haupt 2008). One can see that gangsta rap does not offer any form of advice or solutions but is driven by commercial gain (Quinn 2005). Because most of the underground rappers—like Spaza hip-hop artists—are mainly coming from poor backgrounds, they usually do not have funds to distribute their music. From the 1990s artists were using P2P (Peer to Peer) technology to distribute their music and to get access to samples (Watkins 2005). Now, issues of copyright have come up and most of the underground hip-hop artists are excluded from this kind of ownership (Haupt 2014). Apart from the fact that gatekeepers are ensuring that underground and conscious hip-hop is not played in mainstream media, they are now also using money and laws like copyright to exclude them.

The choice of language in rap music seems to lay claim on the authenticity of artists "to reflect on their roots, their social standing and their multiplicity" (Watkins 2012:66). The importance of representation and authenticity in hip-hop means that the African hip-hop emcee must honestly "keeping it real," represent themselves, their community, country and continent (Clark 2018). "Keeping it real" sometimes means not agreeing with what your community, country or continent is doing. For instance, hip-hop artist have been critical of and challenged the "rainbow nation" of South African politics (Watkins 2012).

Various factors go into the crucial choice of the language in which an artist decides to perform in. Artists choose the languages in which they are fluent in (Clark 2018). In addition, the artist has to consider what language the audience wants to hear and what social statements the artist is trying to make (Clark 2018). These factors can determine a good rap from a bad one. According to Iain, "good rap" represents the individual's personal expressions, and it must be in the home language (Watkins 2012). Language becomes important because artists use the language that is spoken and written in the community. It is from the locality, often an

"extreme locality" (Williams and Stroud 2010), that performances and battles derive their authenticity and credibility. Those who do not rap in their own language are at times at risks of being called "fakes." However, singing in only vernacular can be limiting, especially in terms of audiences. English becomes important especially when artists want to move out from being known only locally and aspire to reach a broader public, finding ways to speak to everyone else.

Gender and hip-hop in Africa

Scholarship on hip-hop in Africa tends to reflect a masculine bias. Not only has hip-hop culture been criticised for being male-centered and for casting out the contribution of female artists and female fans (Williams 2017), but also, in fact, most of the research done on female artists is largely seen through the masculine lens, and a lot of attention is put on how women are portrayed in hip-hop. A very limited scholarship exists on female artists (Williams 2017; Clark 2018) and the little written focuses on how in hip-hop women use their voice to challenge gender oppression, craft their own narrative, speak about gender and sexuality by bringing feminist and queer voices to African hip-hop (Clark 2018; Haupt 1995).

There is a tendency to see female artists as passive or as sexual objects (Ntarangwi 2009), which tends to underplay the agency of the female artists. Williams (2017) for instance while discussing the importance of "extreme locality" and multilingualism in post-apartheid South Africa in freestyle rap battles in Cape Town, shows how the male artists silence female voices, reproducing heteronormativity. Women's bodies are sexualised through language in "body rapping" (Williams 2017). Body rap's main theme is "the sexualization and often the denigration of women's bodies being used to the pleasure of men" (Williams 2017:174).

In the hip-hop industry there is a limited space for females and often they are not payed attention to or seen as people who can hold the microphone. Instead, the only role that is deemed suitable for them is being present in the making of music videos where their role is dancing half naked. Though one can clearly see that women in hip-hop have been represented through the male lenses, other scholars such as Clark (2018) have shown how females represent themselves in hip-hop. For example, when it comes to a female artist's sexuality,

there is usually a debated around the use of the body, which is both viewed as a disadvantage and an advantage. While it is clear that female artists are policed in the expression of their sexuality—for instance female artists are encouraged to emphasis their sexuality as a key to a successful music career (Clark 2018), or female artists have been told that producers will only take female artists seriously if they present themselves in "appropriate ways" (Clark 2018)—,several female artists have expressed their sexualities in ways that challenge social conventions (Clark 2018; Ntarangwi 2009). For some, using your own body become a way of expression that gives the artist her power back. In countries that are predominately Muslims like Senegal, female artists tend to be more reserved in expressing their sexuality. In anglophone West Africa and urban Africa the expression of sexuality becomes more relevant and explicit. Artists like Godessa, Sarah Jones and others have even used "conscious" hip-hop to challenge the misogyny of both gansta rap and mainstream media representations (Haupt 2008). Females emcees are using their voices as an opportunity to speak about gender oppression and bring feminist voices to African hip-hop (Clark 2018a). These female artists have created a space where they can represent themselves in hip hop where the commodification of the black female bodies and the policing of black women's sexuality are the norm (Clark 2018).

Studies of hip-hop in Africa have not thoroughly engaged in conversations with African feminist scholarship even though for decades African feminists has provided a framework for studies of gender in Africa. Clark (2018a) shows how African females artists and their music speak strongly on the way feminist scholars think. These songs engage on themes such as "feminism, patriarchy, and sexuality, themes that run parallel to the conversations occurring within African feminist thought" (Clark 2018a:384). What becomes interesting is that most of the artists interviewed do not necessary define themselves as feminist. The reason being that feminism is viewed as more academic and limited to an academic audience, whereas for these artists they feel that they are representing their lives and lives of others which speaks to the everyday people. Also, feminism is often perceived in specific ways and the artists do not want to be boxed or labelled. Most female artists are interested in presenting women's stories through women's point of view. Some female artists use strong language in their music to show and warn against imposed patriarchy. In many of these songs' braggadocio is used to show credibility through the performance of their skills, rather their material possessions like

American artists use braggadocio for (Williams 2017; Clark 2018a). It was clear that women have to put extra effort to be recognised and it is at time those who are well known that get all the glory and attention.

Haupt (2016) in his research on Dope Saint Jude— a queer MC from South Africa, Cape Town in Elsies River—reminds us of the complexities of gender and how there is still work needing to be done beyond when it comes to hip-hop. Haupt (2016) using Dope-Saint Jude's music video "Keep In Touch" shows how during the apartheid regime in South Africa, gays were using a secret language called Galye. This is due to the fact that being gay was prohibited. What Dope Saint Jude does in her song, is to use this same language today to show how gay people are still marginalized. What Dope Saint Jude also does by using Gayle language in modern day times is to take back the power of showing that queer also belongs to hip-hop.

There is still a need for more scholarly work to be done on female artist to attempt to understand female artists on their own terms. There is also a need to look to those female artists that are starting up now and to understand their perspective on hip-hop in Africa today.

CHAPTER 2

The Fieldwork

To consider fieldwork as a "rite of passage" (Watson 1999) is not something new and it comes with its own shortcomings (Karp and Kendall 1982). Yet, I felt that by being in the field I was finally experiencing "the real thing" that is anthropology. I had to accept that fieldwork can take a life of its own and one needs to constantly negotiate and perform different "selves." Before beginning my research, I had a clear picture of my fieldwork. I knew where my research site would be, and that was Khayelitsha ePakini. Someone told me that Spaza hip-hop artists performed ePakini every Sunday. I was excited about embarking in this research. Unlike my Honours research, I did not know much about Spaza hip-hop and I was not familiar with Khayelitsha township apart from the well-known Kwa-Ace and Rands.[4] But then everything changed, I had to adapt, re-shape my project and accept that the field took unexpected turns.

I was lucky to have found a sort of aide for the field, Mr Gee, who said he could accompany me and take me to the places where things happened. A year before I started my fieldwork, I decided to present my work to first and third-year anthropology students at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). After the presentation I received emails from some of the students who were involved in Spaza hip-hop and from two artists. It turned out that one of them, Mr. Gee, who became my research assistant and informant, had started off as a Spaza artists but has more recently moved to Trap. The other artist, Nela, is a Spaza hip-hop artist who is currently working with known Spaza artists like Rah Rattex.

After having imagined how my journey in Khayelitsha would be and how I would get to know more of the Spaza hip-hop world, I finally travelled from the Hector Peterson residence, UWC campus, to Khayelitsha, Site C Kwamsiya for my first session ePakini. It was a sunny Sunday in March 2018. Finding a taxi was easy, as I am a regular person who takes taxis to commute, yet I was worried that the taxi driver would not drop me off at the right place. When I got to Kwamsiya, Mr Gee was already waiting for me. We were walking

[4] Kwa-Ace and Rands are two well-known lifestyle spaces in Khayelitsha.

when I saw a shop selling *vetkoeks* or *amagwinya;*[5] at this point I wondered if I should have eaten one to prove Mr Gee and the other people that I enjoyed township food. On our way to the session, Mr Gee informed me that it was no longer happening in ePakini and that if I wanted to find Spaza artists we needed to travel around the township to find them. It looked like most Spaza artist were no longer performing in sessions. My first attempt in getting into contact with the artists did not take place as planned. I was blatantly rejected and told that they were not Spaza hip-hop artists. At that point it was not clear to me how the research would unfold. Was Spaza becoming extinct? Was I at the wrong space? Was a new type of Spaza taking form? All these questions were going through my mind until I got a break-through.

To locate the Spaza artists, I had to sit for hours in front of the laptop searching for them on the social media. With the help of Mr. Gee, I was able to track down a couple of artists on Facebook. However, this was not easy. When you are not someone's friend on Facebook and invite them to become one, it is possible that they will not accept you, especially if they do not know you. I decided that it would be better to leave a message explaining that I was doing research on Spaza hip-hop and that I would have loved to meet up with them. Most of the artists did not respond. It was only Pro X and Ndlulamthi who responded to my messages. For the artists that I interviewed, I made sure to watch their music on YouTube and listen to the songs that Mr. Gee sent me from his collections. Most trap artists grew up as big fans of Spaza hip-hop and this is why in most trap events they will always try to find Spaza artists to perform as guest artists. I spent time with the artists after work or during the weekends; if they went to a studio session or just relaxed at home with friends I was always there, I then conducted the interviews once I felt that I had created good rapport with the artists.

The fieldwork for this thesis was done over a period of 5 months, between March 2018 and September 2018. However, I have been hanging out at sessions and performances for two years around Cape Town. Research activities differed for every month in the field. There were months where I had three interviews to organise, four sessions and one event to attend,

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[5]*Amagwinya* also known as *vetkoeks* is a South African traditional pastry. It is a mixture of flour, yeast, warm water, sugar and salt which is made into small balls and deep-fried until golden brown. *Amagwinya* are sold in the streets of the townships in small shops that looks like Spaza shops. You can buy *ingwinya* together with liver, burger patty or polony.

whereas in some months I was only meeting one artist. The methodology that I employed more consistently was what Geertz's (1998) calls "deep hanging-out." I also conducted as many informal interviews as possible and collective chats that could be classified as "focus groups," yet they were not formal sessions.

Methodologies

I combined participant observation and "deep hanging out" which I believe were the best methods for the sessions I took part in where numerous artists were performing and the audience—of whom I was also part of—was watching and engaging in different ways. Geertz (1998) describes "deep hanging-out" as the immersing of oneself in the culture, group, social experiences on an informal level. "Deep hanging out" allowed me to be around the hip-hop spaces with the participants and gave me the opportunity to understand how my informants went about their daily lives. In so doing I built new relationships and created social networks. Ultimately, I wanted my informants to see me not only as a researcher but also as a person that they could relate to. I found most of my informants by asking help from people, what is generally called a snowball sampling method. People that I interviewed also gave me other contacts.

I sought to interview a wide range of participants to get a holistic understanding of Spaza hip-hop. I was able to conduct seventeen interviews—six interviews with male artists, two with female artists and members of the audience, four with producers and one with a sound engineer. I also conducted an informal focus group, which involved a collective, informal, long conversation, with people who were a part of the audience. Most of my interviews happened where the participants wanted to be interviewed, in Khayelitsha, in participants' homes, in bedroom studios and at Chris Hani, one of the residences at the University of the Western Cape. I ensured that the interviews were a process of discussion, rather than a simple provision of information (Kerr 2014). This allowed me to get a deeper understanding of how the artists discovered their love for Spaza, how they produce themselves, and how Spaza has changed today from its beginnings. I was interested in learning about the artists' lives and how they combined being an artist and being "grown up" people with family responsibilities.

How are they making music? How are they able to fund themselves? What are their hopes for the future? How is Spaza hip hop produced and consumed today?

During my time in the field I found that most of the hip hop spaces were occupied by men, and most producers were males. Sometimes I felt quite uncomfortable to be the only female in the room, being pressured to smoke weed, *oka pyp,* or drink alcohol. Finding female artists was hard because there are only a few of them. The majority of the audience and artists mainly mentioned Kanyi Mavi as the main Spaza female artist who is still active today. I tried numerous times to contact her, but I did not get any response. I was able to get the contacts of four female artists, but only one of them responded to me, Mic Substance, a former Spaza hip-hop artist. Only later in my research I also got into contact with another female artist who was just starting out her career, Artsailey.

I was very interested in the lives of the female artists, as I wanted to understand how they made their careers and how their professional and personal paths diverged from the ones of the male rappers. Life histories "give a rich documentation of personal experience, ideology and subjectivity" (Connell 2005:89). I wanted to find out what made them stand out, how were they able to negotiate their presence and work within male-dominated hip-hop spaces and how they felt about Spaza hip-hop. I wanted to know their pasts and how it influenced and contributed to the way they are today. I wanted to know why they chose Spaza particularly and their journey in becoming Spaza artists. What challenges and opportunities did they have to face? Life stories allowed me to understand women's perspectives, how they were and are perceived and how they understood their contribution. Additionally, they also help me learn "how people make sense of themselves, how they construct their identities and relate to their bodies as gendered subjects with gendered identities" (Connell 2002: 47).

Self-reflexivity

Anthropology places emphasis on reflexivity. This implies that the researcher is aware of the position—determined by gender, class, religion, age, etc.—she occupies and which carries social meaning and how this affects the research. While working with artists I recognised that they had their own personal agendas and agency. It was then important for me to be aware of

Robben's warning on the dangers of ethnographic seduction, the “ways in which the interviewees influence the understanding and research results of the interviews” (Robben 1996:72). This happens on the bases of emotions where the interviewed appears friendly to get their argument across and the interviewer confuses it with good rapport (Robben 1996).

This made me think of the challenges I faced with Mr Gee. Mr. Gee was the one who was on my side in the field, I travelled around with him and he helped me to find Spaza artists. Though we had travelled in good spirit, I soon realised that Mr Gee had his own agenda in mind. He wanted to collaborate with Spaza artists. As an emerging trap artist from Khayelitsha Town Two, finding collaborations would be ground-breaking for his career. Thanks to my research, not only was he meeting well-known Spaza artists like Rah Rattex and Ndlulamthi, but he was also engaging with well-known producers in the townships like FiveSix, Phzo and Dj Lubz, something he had been dreaming of. However, in most instances, when we were engaging with these artists, he was disheartened by their views on trap music. What made him feel very discouraged was the Ndlulamthi mix-tape pre-launch (Chapter 5) in which most of the artists—rappers and poets—that he had admired dismissed trap artists and labelled them as “fakes.” After that I struggled having informal chats with him even when I assured him of the importance of his music. Mr. Gee ended up stopping travelling with me. Other artists assumed that doing interviews with me would help Spaza hip-hop and memorialise artists and their stories. And this is something this work does, even if it does not do so in the ways in which they imagined. I was even asked to gather all the artists together so that they could discuss together and define what Spaza hip-hop is once and for all—indeed there is a great deal of confusion and sparse knowledge on what Spaza stands for and how this hip-hop genre came into being. Because of the difficult politics that exist in Spaza spaces and for not wanting to change the nature of the field, I decided against the request of the artists. For these reasons I chose not to be an active participant as Kerr was in his research on hip-hop in Dar es Salaam where he was not only “gaining knowledge from the research participants but he was also viewed as a potential source of knowledge and a representative of opportunity for research participants” (Kerr 2014:11).

One of the aspects that had a profound influence in my time in the field was my gender. Watkins (2000) argues that in his research he was granted access to Cape Flats hip-hop crews only because he is a man. I was also granted similar space because I am a woman. This is to

say, being a woman in a male-dominated field, did not limit my access to artists, performances and events. I was usually given phone numbers or Facebook names as a way to contact informants. I was specifically told not to call, but to WhatsApp them, as calling is perceived as professional, and most of the participants do not want to take part in these kinds of activities. Generally, in my WhatsApp messages, I would write an introductory paragraph explaining my research and I would ask to see the artist's at their preferred location. Contacts would immediately reply by asking if I was a male or a female. Once I indicated my gender, I was assured that I would be given all the information that I wanted. On one occasion one informant even asked me to send a picture with the excuse of being able to recognize me at the taxi rank. *Awusembi ubeka ubuhle apha!* (you are ugly, you beautiful thing), he responded. This is an isiXhosa expression employed to say that one is good-looking. All my male informants fetched me at the taxi ranks and dropped me there again after we met at their homes or studios to ensure that I did not get lost or get robbed in the street. I was also constantly asked if I was hungry and offered beverages. My position as a Xhosa woman, the fact that I grew up in a township like my informants, and my mastery of isiXhosa, which is my first language, made me an "insider" and offered me a special "angle of vision" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2012:127). The participants felt free to speak isiXhosa and express things in the way in which they intended and conceptualised. However, I was also an "outsider" with regards to the fact I don't know much about Spaza hip-hop. Because I was not a "Spaza expert" people gave me extra information on the songs as they didn't take anything for granted.

There were times when my gender was challenged. On two occasions after interviews with male artists, I was asked if I could date them. I was told that I am beautiful, intelligent and doing research on such an interesting topic. They asked me if we could date once I had completed my research. Though on normal occasions I am a master in dealing with *ikuplitwa*,[6] on these instances the situation was completely different. I couldn't answer no, as I did not want to offend my informants as I knew that while writing my chapters there would be a possibility that I would need to chat with the participants again. I then chose to be in an in-between space, not interested in a relationship but still a friend.

[6] The expression *ukuplitwa* refers to when a guy asks a girl out.

Another instance was on a Saturday in April 2018 when I attended one event that took place in Stellenbosch, eKayamandi, at the Emahleni *shisa nyama* from three in the afternoon till three the next morning. This event was mainly for trappers, but the last performer and guest artist was Pro X one of the well-known Spaza artists in Khayelitsha. This was the first time I saw a Spaza artist perform live. I was excited, I finally saw a breakthrough in my research. Instead of going straight to Stellenbosch, the informants I was travelling with had decided that we would first go and relax in OD's bedroom studio in the wetlands of Khayelitsha, Site C, to have "pre-drinks" and smoke *oka pyp*. I was the only female among the eight guys. We were having a great time singing to the beats, when some young women who were going to travel with us came into the room. They were not happy to see me in the room. They assumed that I was there to snatch their boyfriends. This was a recurring experience in the field. On this particular instance, Mr. Gee explained that I was doing research and from there the girls started to see me and treat me differently. Before we left for Stellenbosch, I asked Mr. Gee where the toilet was, he asked the girls to take me. They were very anxious when we went out, as they were worrying about me. I calmed them down saying that I also come from a township and I do not mind peeing anywhere. These are just few examples of the kind of interactions I had in the field, I kept moving between my many "selves": I was a researcher, a student, a young woman, a person who grew up in the township.

Places

Spaza hip-hop is a movement. Even though my research was mainly located in Khayelitsha I spent a lot of time travelling to different townships in Cape Town to meet people and artists, go to events, performances, and studio sessions. I will attempt to map out my movements during my time in the field.

The name Khayelitsha means "new home" and it was conceived and founded in a violent and repressive environment. Established in 1983, it became a home to those from rural homelands who moved to the Cape and to the masses that were forced out of Crossroads by the Witdoeke violence. Bloodshed was a foundation of this new home. Khayelitsha was planned to be a home for 30,000 people, by 1990 the population had grown to 450,000 inhabitants. Khayelitsha comprises of eleven main areas, which are: Site C, Site B, Ilitha Park, Lingelethu

West, Green Point, Mandela Park, Harare, Endlovini, Makhaza, Kuyasa and Enkanini. The 2011 census estimates that the Khayelitsha population is up by 391 749 people. In 2011, the official unemployment rate when we look at males aged up to 23 is 50%. For working people, in the same year, the median monthly income was R2 116 for employed males and R1 526 for employed females.

Makhaza is one of the areas in the township of Khayelitsha and it is where DJ Lubz' bedroom studio is located. DJ Lubz even claims that it is one of the quietest places he knows in Khayelitsha. He lives with his family and has his own room at the back which is also his studio. He has two dogs that guard the house as his equipment had been stolen twice and he is not willing to take chances again. I attended most of the music sessions in his bedroom studio in the company of Spaza artists such as Rah Rattex and Nela. These Spaza artists are under his independent record company (Chapter 4). DJ Lubz left his good paying job to pursue his dreams. He decided to stay home and be a full-time DJ and a producer: this is what he loves, he expressed that money means nothing if you are not happy. He makes a living from organizing events, crafting beats and producing artists.

I often went to the Zolani center, in Nyanga where I attended open mic sessions which took place on Thursdays and Fridays in March 2018. I also attended the event of Ndlulamthi's mixtape prelaunch which took place on the 25th of August 2018 (Chapter 4).

Nyanga has been described as one of the most violent, and amongst the oldest, townships in the Western Cape. It is approximately 15 kilometers away from the center of Cape Town. The Zolani Center where I attended the open mic sessions is situated just opposite the Nyanga bus and taxi rank. It is a community center that was built in the 1950s and still stands today. In an interview with Samora—one of the Spaza artists and a poet— remembered how growing up, him and his friends used to help out in the community center teaching young children how to play basketball and soccer. Moreover, he explained that the center used to have Wi-Fi and this was one of the things that attracted the youth. After the Wi-Fi was cut off the number of youth coming to the center decreased drastically. To counter this problem Samora and others introduced poetry sessions to attract the youth back. During this time Spaza hip-hop artists also started occupying the space seeing that there was more youth to influence. Another place I spent time in was East of Nyanga, where FivSix lives. He is the producer of Ndlulamthi and

Artsailey. Like Dj Lubz, he also has a bedroom studio where he makes beats for a variety of artists. In the very same bedroom studio, I also attended a few studio sessions.

I also travelled to the township of Delft for poetry and open mic sessions that took place at the Rent Office hall. This hall is used for a variety of purposes which include events, birthday parties, ceremonies and funerals, as it is up for hire. Buntu Jobela is a former hip-hop artist who started the poetry and open mic sessions at the Rent Office. He started in the early 2000s creating a platform for different artists to showcase their talent. This was due to the immense pressure from the community of Delft which had no space for artists to perform. These sessions played a significant role as they were a space that took the youth away from the streets and brought them together towards arts and performance. These sessions still take place today, however Buntu has shifted his focus from these open mic sessions to organizing events in the community. This is mainly because these events bring in more money than the sessions. I attended three poetry and open mic sessions where the entrance fee was R5.

I attended one event in Kayamandi—a Fanakalo name which can be translated to "happy home"— in Stellenbosch, at the Emalahleni *shisa nyama* (a place that sells *braai* meat). The concert was organised by Natyy D Dycee, a trap artist. He organized the event to make money but largely he wanted to provide a space for upcoming artists to perform and establish relations with older artists who have been making music and who know the ins and outs of the industry. This was an opportunity for artists to build off of each other and market themselves, enlarging their brands. This event was not limited to performances only it was also a space for *Kasi* designers to sell their products.

Language and translation

As an isiXhosa speaking woman, not only I was able to conduct interviews in the language spoken by my informants, listen and transcribe Spaza songs, but I was also able to experience proximity and familiarity in my fieldwork because of the shared language. I was able to enjoy and respond to the banal exchanges and jokes of which conversations and simple chats are made of. Interviews were relaxed, and people felt that they were able to express themselves freely, switching from English to isiXhosa and back. Language also allowed me to enter a

different linguistic space, the “Spaza space.” I had not anticipated the different layers of meanings and the depth that isiXhosa words and phrases can have. IsiXhosa cannot be translated directly into English, there are multiple translations that come to life. Often, I would struggle with some song, feeling that I was missing the point and I was not able to bring forth the meanings of the lyrics. As I illustrate in the following chapters there is a significant difference between the isiXhosa that is spoken in the townships of Cape Town and the one that comes from the Eastern Cape, which is often referred to as “deep Xhosa” by scholars (Dowsett 2017) and as isiXhosa e*sintsokothileyo* by people. I felt compelled to go back to the field to my informants and collaborate with artists, producers, audiences and local, musical experts over the songs’ texts. Rappers and friends helped me in rendering the depth of the language and the plurality of meanings.

CHAPTER 3

Spaza Hip-Hop in 2018

To illustrate what Spaza is and how it looks today, this chapter brings together the life stories of the people who make it, produce it, and listen to it. Spaza hip-hop artists started building momentum in the early 2000s in the black townships of Cape Town. However, it is only from 2008 to 2012 that Spaza made a name for itself nationally (Dowsett 2017). Though hip-hop in Cape Town had existed long before the 2000s, approximately since the mid-1990s, most artists chose to rap in English. Influenced by Tupac, Biggie, Common and many others—whose rap is known as "conscious music"—local artists connected to the hard life sung by American rappers and saw how it was closely related to the conditions in which they were living in the townships. Many artists, however, felt that English was limiting them, as they were not able to fully express themselves. Most of the artists went to local schools in the townships where they were taught in their home language, isiXhosa.[7] IsiXhosa is the mother tongue for most of the Spaza artists and the primary language spoken in the black townships of Cape Town. Artists felt that by singing in their first language they would be able to relate better to their audiences which were and still are mainly local: the choice of phrases and terms would speak well to the public.

While Spaza hip-hop started as an underground movement, where albums, mix-tapes and singles were popularised through the transferring of MP3 files via Bluetooth, and free P2P exchange (Haupt 2008; Dowsett 2017), few artists managed to work with record companies. Rah Rattex released the first Spaza album *Bread and Butter* which was produced by a Cape Town record company, Pioneer Unit in 2008. This was followed in 2009 by Driemanskap's *Igqabhukil' Inyongo* also produced by Pioneer Unit (Dowsett 2017). Though not all artists were able to work with record companies, they were making a name for themselves recording independently.

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[7] According to the Census (2011) people who attend school in Khayelitsha amount to 8.55% of the whole population; less than 5% of the population has any tertiary qualification; more than 50% have not completed grade 12.

In this chapter, I narrate how these artists discovered their love for hip-hop. Informally and disorderly they adhered to the "Spaza project" without knowing much about what it was. Many of them just heard songs, felt inspired, and began to rap. These are the stories of young Xhosa boys becoming men, surviving in the townships, and still hoping for a future for Spaza music. Many of them started rapping when they were young, in high school; now they have grown up, made families and found stable jobs. When they do music, they feel the power of hip-hop. Somehow, the stories of these individuals replicate the story of Spaza itself, a musical genre that has been a part of the everyday life in the townships for the past ten years and is now on the brink of transformation. Trap music is becoming very popular amongst youngsters and Spaza rappers have to share the stage with these new emerging artists.

The chapter questions the meanings attached to the label "Spaza hip-hop" which is often contested by the rappers themselves. Instead of taking definitions for granted, it tries to see how the people who make music signify it, across time, starting from their own experiences. It also offers some reflections on almost a decade of the existence of this musical genre. The chapter tries to reproduce as much as possible the conversations I had with the artists, producers and audiences. I have therefore chosen to include dialogue, extracts of the interviews, the lyrics of the songs to make their voices and music heard.

Spaza hip-hop from today's perspective

In 2008, when Uzwi Kantu—"the Voice of the Nation" or the "Xhosa voice"—released *Unotshe* (Never) from the album *Unendlebe nje unetyala* (Since you have ears, you have an obligation), the artists were seeing a great future for Spaza. If you know the struggle of black people, and since you heard about it, what are you going to do about it? Questioned Zanzolo, one of the members of the group. This is the duty of the artist: to rap about what they have heard and ensure that other people listen to it. That momentum and enthusiasm for the emergence of a new hip-hop is well expressed by the chorus of the song: "We will never leave Spaza!"

Unotshe![8]

Unotshe!	Never!
Esi Spaza soze sis'yeke	We will never leave Spaza
Unotshe!	Never!
Sxolel'ulima phantsi ngenyeke	We would rather harvest the ground with our lower lip
Unotshe!	Never!
Stru God sfung'istulo sodaka	We swear to God on a chair made out of soil and dung
Lathi likhithika sphume phandle sihamba ngogaga	With the cold outside, we will go outside with our tops off.

To celebrate what music has done for them, the artists vowed to never leave Spaza. To express their love for Spaza, the Uzwi Kantu Crew—a group of young artists who mostly grew up in the Eastern Cape— swore that they were willing to go an extra mile, even if they got weary and lost their strength, even if they fell; lips on the ground, they would not stop rapping Spaza, they would not back down, they would tackle their problems head on. Even when it is winter and everyone is warm in their homes, these artists were willing to go outside and finished what they started. This was a metaphor of pushing for what you want regardless of the circumstances.

The second part of the song emphasizes the value of music: Spaza helped artists and the youth in townships to move away from crime; Spaza encouraged them to write lyrics and make music instead. They did not care about people talking about them because they knew that they were doing something with their music. The *Uzwi Kantu Crew* is based in Khayelitsha and Spaza became a getaway and a space of refuge for them. The song flashes out the everyday reality of young boys in townships.

[8] "*Unotshe*" from Uzwi Kantu's album *Unendlebe nje unetyala*, 2008.

Thanks to those who started the music benza sizidle ngolwimi lethu	Thanks to those who started the music, who made us take pride in our language
Squqe sbuyelele'ephepheni, sibhentsis' izimvo zethu	We rush to our pages and spit our thoughts
Ndikholelwe xa ndisithi sani, Spaza is the future	Believe me boy when I say, Spaza is the future
To each and every township sayxuth'interest yolutsha	To each and every township we snatched the youth's interest
Satshintsh'ii-Ghetto youth from crime makers to street bangers	We changed the Ghetto youth, from crime makers to street bangers
Kasi niggas to rhyme spitters	From township niggas to rhyme spitters
Even your cheesy negative comments, can never defeat us	Even your cheesy negative comments, can never defeat us
Abagxeki only build us to wake up and uplift your minds	Haters only build us to wake up and uplift your minds
That's why you get Cats like Invisible, Maxho and the Tribe	That's why you get Cats like Invisible, Maxho and the Tribe
How can I forget the Drie, Maniac Squad and Lam Petter Clan	How can I forget the Drie, Maniac Squad and Lam Petter Clan
Cats who influenced the youth to pick up the papers and a pen	Cats who influenced the youth to pick up the papers and a pen
Ngoku iSpaza s'nabalandeli khazi, kwingingqi ngengingqi	Now Spaza has followers my friend, from township to township
Abancinci nabadala bas'nik inkxaso	The young and old who support us
Kuze mfethu s'qhubekeke s'bhala	In order for us to carry on and write
You can keep yapping all you want, Kuzokohlulek'othandayo	You can keep yapping all you want, it's the one who gives up who will be defeated
Staff the critics man izinja zkhonkotha ehambayo	Stuff the critics man, the dogs barks at the walking

Spaza is a term commonly understood and widely used in South Africa to refer to the unlicensed tuck shops in the townships. Yet the origin of the term is not clear. According to the South African Information Service (1990), Spaza is a Zulu word meaning artificial,

something that reminds one of something else or hidden. It is suggested by Spiegel (2002) that the term is derived from the isiXhosa word *ukuphazamisa* which means "to interrupt" (Becker and Dastile 2008). Becker and Dastile (2008), have therefore interpreted the term as something that has the aim to interrupt or disturb the oppressive political laws that prohibited black people from having their own retail businesses. The term Spaza connected to hip-hop expresses a sort of resistance that it is materialised in the use of an African language.

When I started with my interviews in May 2018, ten years after the release of *Unotshe!* I had assumed that every artist and every person in the audience knew well how Spaza hip-hop came about. Scholarship has defined Spaza as a sub-genre of hip-hop from the black townships of Cape Town. Spaza is considered as a music that allow artists to express themselves through words, using a language, which is mostly composed of a mix of isiXhosa, Tsotsitaal Zulu, English and some Afrikaans. According to the literature, most of the lyrics speak about the struggles that black people face in Cape Town. Humour is employed as a way to "forget" and to express the desire to succeed. However, when asking the artists what Spaza is, most of them replied that in fact no-one knows why the musical genre is referred to like this, no one knows where the term originated from, and no one knows what Spaza hip-hop precisely is.

> I can tell you now that no one knows what Spaza hip-hop is. Some people will say I do Spaza and some will say I do not do Spaza. I feel like once you say I am a Spaza artist or I do hip-hop I am boxing myself. I did not learn this from school. Spaza originated from Khayelitsha, there is this one guy who rapped about Spaza. They might have done the session next to shops, where they wanted to get electricity.[9]

This extract from an interview with Ndlulamthi, known by his fans as a second generation Spaza hip-hop artist, illustrates how the naming may have happened by accident and how definitions and labels are constantly changing in value and meanings. What may appear as

[9] Ndlulamthi, interviewed in May 2018, in Nyanga New Cross.

clearly defined in academic literature does not necessarily correspond to the realities on the ground.

Ndlulamthi, whose name means giraffe, comes from Nyanga East.[10] He likes to dissociate himself from Spaza; in an interview he explained that the term was given to him because he raps in isiXhosa. In his music, he said that he was influenced by Biggie, Parker and Tupac, American rappers. Ndlulamthi told me how much he loved the "concepts" of Tupac and how he used to record, rewind and write Tupac's tracks. When he was young, Ndlulamthi was not a rapper but rather a *Pantsula* dancer. In one of his dancing performances in Gugulethu he heard someone rapping in isiXhosa for the first time and he decided that he also wanted to rap. Growing up, he did not contest the fact that people thought he was a Spaza artist, though he never said it for himself. Today, Ndlulamthi is working, he is married and has three kids, but he still feels that being called a Spaza artist is limiting him artistically. He is growing and his music changes. The fact that an artist rejects to be classified as belonging to a specific genre and expresses criticism towards the limiting power of labelling shows us the fluidity of the boundaries of Spaza music. While by default artists who rap in isiXhosa are considered as Spaza rappers, their artistic projects may differ.

Most of the old Spaza music was made by young people who were still boys, *amakhwenkwe*.[11] During this time, they were financially supported by their family members. When they underwent *ulwaluko*—a customary rite of passage from boyhood to manhood (Ntombana 2011; Mfecane 2016, 2018) that usually takes place in the final years of high school—most of them felt the need to distance themselves from Spaza music. After the completion of the *ulwaluko* ritual, a Xhosa initiate is reintegrated into the community and officially regarded as *indoda,* a man (Mfecane 2016). He is allowed to marry, build a homestead and actively participate in community discussions and rituals (Ntombana 2011; Mfecane 2016). Because most Spaza artists started off young, when they came back from *ulwaluko* they believed that Spaza was "childish." When *amakhwenkwe* become *amadoda*, they are told to leave their old ways and clothes behind. All the artists that wanted to continue

[10] Nyanga East is another black township in Cape Town.

[11] *Amakhwenkwe* (boys) refers to uncircumcised Xhosa speaking males. They are not allowed to marry or perform rituals. On the topic, see Mfecane (2016).

with their music while being *amadoda* chose to be poets rather than Spaza artists. Many first-generation artists stopped rapping when they came back from *ulwaluko.* Their music was not recognised because of the weaknesses of the verses and the predictability of the flow. Only a few first-generation artists like Rah Rattex continued with Spaza. This is mainly because at that time Spaza was starting to get recognised in the townships.

> Everyone is running away from iSpaza. At some point Spaza was all over the place, if you didn't do iSpaza you ain't shit, and then, we as artists we forgot that we are artists. There were no boundaries between artists and fans. We started treating us artists as if we are fans, we started making fans as artists. There was a time when in the early 2000s, where the fan had a say. Telling us to rap about this and that. And then once there are females we as males we became weak and we started doing *izinto zasecaleni* (things that are wrong). That is why everybody ran away from Spaza. Most people who ran away did not know what Spaza is, they just joined without knowledge. Spaza is Spaza, Spaza is hip-hop, it is not a particular genre of music, it is hip-hop. The reason it was called iSpaza because it was something that started from the corners of the township which are Spaza shops. People who usually sit in the corner, talk slang, isiXhosa, mix English, Afrikaans and every other language that you know. It's just a mixture and that is how Spaza name came about.[12]

Rah Rattex is part of what is known as the first generation of Spaza hip-hop artists. He is in his mid-thirties and he is recognized as one of the artists who made Spaza hip-hop from Khayelitsha popular. He became famous for his song *Welcome to Khaltcha* which was also part of the soundtrack of the South African movie *Four Corners* which is about coloured gang violence in the Cape Flats. His name has a particular meaning: "Ra" is for the Egyptian god of the sun; he then added an H for the name to be also an acronym of "Rise Above Hate"; "Rattex"—which is the name of a brand of rat poison—comes from a friend who called him "poison" because he used to win all his rap battles. He grew up in Khayelitsha, Site C and he still lives there. He considers hip-hop as something that you live and breathe, for him it's a

[12] Rah Rattex, interviewed in May 2018, Khayelitsha, Site C.

lifestyle. Through Spaza he was able to travel to Switzerland, Germany and France thanks to the independent record company Pioneer Unit. The contract ended after a while. He is now currently part of another independent record company called Pipeline Music which was founded in 2014 by Dj Lubz, one of the producers I interviewed. Rah Rattex saw Spaza hip-hop as place to fall into, a refuge where he was able to speak about the social ills happening in his township to the people that knew about it. It is quite significant that Rah Rattex used the term *iSpaza* in the interview: he made Spaza hip-hop a language.

Pzho also does not want to be called a Spaza hip-hop artist. Pzho is a well-known producer and a Spaza artists in his mid-twenties. He was an influential member of the Lampiter Clan and the Nyked Mind. He has produced many albums and worked with many artists, such as Mic Substance, Uzwi Kantu and others (Dowsett 2017). He grew up in the Eastern Cape and in 1991 he moved to Kraaifontein in Cape Town where he did kwaito for some years. It was only when he moved to Khayelitsha that he saw people doing Spaza and that he started rapping as well. He is known for his sound-breaking and humorous song *Nolitha*. Interestingly, I first heard this song from a friend who claimed it was from another artist from the Eastern Cape. She said that both songs were similar, but she knew a different version. At this point no-one can say who the legitimate owner of the song is. This clearly shows how Spaza hip-hop has been moving with the people who had the music in their phones. In an interview, Pzho explained that he just joined the "Spaza train" because everyone was doing it at the time and everyone who did Spaza was famous in the township. Now that Spaza has lost its momentum, artists like Pzho are calling themselves "hip-hop artists."[13]

> *iSpaza asikhosho sonke ukuba saza nabani. uDAT* (No-one is sure who came with Spaza, DAT) claims that he came with it. However, when he started rapping he called it *Ringas* not Spaza and was part of the group. But I started when DAT was about to stop. DAT claims that Ringas was the first segment of iSpaza. There was no difference but the name was not the same. I sing hip-hop, for me Spaza is a movement not a genre, just as Motswako is a movement.[14] There are no Spaza

[13] Pzho, interviewed in August 2018, Bellville, Tyger Valley.

[14] Motswako is a seTswana word meaning mixed it indicates is a cultural movement of some sorts involving hip-hop rapped in seTswana.

> awards just hip-hop awards. It's a movement in which Cape Town artists understand, differentiate themselves from other hip-hop artists. *Ndi'influenswe ngu'* Buster Rhymes (I was influenced by Buster Rhymes) you can even hear it in my beats. Locally *ngu*Rah and Driemanskap. I don't do Spaza. I was just part of the Spaza movement, it is not a genre.[15]

Like Ndlulamthi, Pzho claims that no-one knows who came up with the name Spaza. There is a contestation of whether DAT is the "father of Spaza" or not. All the artists and audience I interviewed said that this is just speculation with no proof. They believe that Rah should be considered the father of Spaza as it was his music that they first heard, and it was ground-breaking. It is interesting to emphasize how Pzho attempts to distinguish between a movement and a musical genre. At the same time, Pzho is trying to move away from Spaza, he emphasises that he was influenced by Buster Rhymes (an American hip-hop artist) in the attempted to keep the authenticity of his music.

Samora, who is a third generation Spaza artist and a poet has a different view on what Spaza is:

> So, if you rap *ngesiXhosa* and you sound like a storyteller, I am a storyteller, be it poetic, be it a rap, be it whatever. It is funny that people get confused at what Spaza is but the same thing that Motswako is, that is what Spaza is. It is vernacular rap in isiXhosa. Cassper Nyovest is a Motswako rapper, but the problem always is whether the artists themselves would align themselves to their vernacular raps even though they rap in vernacular. Spaza is our recognition of our vernacular tongue.[16]

Samora believes that Spaza artists are storytellers, poets and rappers. What he does not understand is why Motswako, which is raping in seTswana and seSotho, is recognised, but when it comes to Spaza, artists are running away from that name. Perhaps the main reason for

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[15] Phzo, interviewed in August 2018, Bellville, Tyger Valley.

[16] Samora, interviewed in August 2018, in Nyanga, New cross.

this is because Motswako artists like Cassper Nyovest, Fifi Cooper and Khuli Chana are nationally and globally known and Spaza artists are only locally known.

One might also attempt to understand the move away from Spaza music by looking at the similar trajectory of the Spaza shops as Mashonisa, a hip-hop producer and Spaza artist, suggested.[17] During the time in which Spaza hip-hop was starting off and becoming well-known, Spaza shops were owned by South African people. At this time Spaza shops were always open, and people could go in and out as they pleased. One was even able to take what they wanted to buy by themselves from the shelves and then go and pay for it at the counter. Today, most Spaza shop are run by Somalians. There has been a drastic change in the securitization of the space, also as a consequence of xenophobic attacks (artists like Rah Rattex have sung against xenophobia).[18] Burglar bars separate customers from goods and owners. Most of the Spaza shop customers lament that they cannot see what they are buying until they have paid for it. This is also caused by the increase in robberies. It is interesting to think that these transitions—of the Spaza shops and the Spaza music are happing at the same time. Most Spaza shops moved from African names to Somalian names and Spaza artists are wanting to be called hip-hop artists, poets or just artists. The consumption in both Spaza hip-hop and Spaza shops has changed: sellers have become musicians and both shop owners and musicians have lost the touch with the consumers.

The characteristics of Spaza Hip-hop

What is Spaza? How is it different from hip-hop? Are there any differences? By presenting the characteristics of this musical genre—language, quality of the beats, content of the lyrics, the audience—from the point of view of those who make it, the artists, I am trying to flesh out what has changed over ten years. This helps us in understanding why artists are today running away from the original way in which Spaza hip-hop was understood to be.

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[17] Mashonisa, interviewed in September 2018, in Khayelitsha, Site C.

[18] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L06aKbP9FQ4&t=0s&index=7&list=PLc90AckxcWYsNPKjciggJnRMKp9b0KJgB, accessed March 2018.

Language

> Me: When you listen to a track, how do you know it's Spaza? What are the characteristics of iSpaza?
>
> Lifa: The language is very important, isiXhosa, Zulu, English. Anything spoken in the township, they [Spaza rappers] rap with. Also, Spaza has a flow, has hook and its flow is not limited. In Spaza any beat goes, *soyibona phambili ndizobe ndityhala okwa ngoku* (we will see that later on, it will rap for now). There was no mixer or mastering at that time. The fans did not care of the quality of the beats. They did not care if it was good or bad because in itself it said something, it's shitty living here. But we related to the tracks, they spoke to us.
>
> Nko: The first shops here in South Africa in the black townships were called Spaza. Spaza is easily accessible, it is local. Spaza hip-hop started when there were Spaza shops. Everyone knew that if they needed bread they would go to the Spaza shop, instead of going to town. So even for the music, I think the intent was to be sold over the counter. It was quick delivery *ukuba mazifumaneke apha elokishini* (to be received easy here in the township) by it being done by the people of the township. Who are the people of the township? They are Xhosa people, you will never say that they are Sotho or Tswana because even if a person is Sotho, they need to learn isiXhosa in the townships. Zim people even learn isiXhosa themselves. That is why the lingo of Spaza was isiXhosa. The language was then important.

Emcees use language to claim authenticity, to reflect roots, their social standing and their multiplicity (Williams and Stroud 2013, 2014). Authenticity in hip-hop means that the African hip-hop emcees are supposed to honestly represent their hood, their city, their country and their continent (Clark 2018:183). As explained earlier by Ndlulamthi, the mere fact of rapping in isiXhosa makes you recognised and described as a Spaza artist. Rapping in the home language creates a space for authenticity as most of the audience of Spaza are isiXhosa speakers. Though Spaza is multilingual, and occasionally consists of borrowed words from the other languages, the main language that is used is isiXhosa.

> I have nothing against rapping in English, it's just that it can be a very limiting language. There is only so much you can say; people just start saying the same thing. I cannot really get into things or get into my audience the same way without using isiXhosa. It is just a more comfortable language for me to use, isiXhosa.[19]

All the artists I interviewed were isiXhosa speakers from the Eastern Cape. They believed that rapping in isiXhosa would allow them to relate to the masses.[20] Even those who went to Model C schools choose to rap in isiXhosa so that they do not look like snobs fearing to be labelled as "coconuts."[21] Rapping in their local language allows them to be authentic and different from other artists.

Not only is there a difference in using isiXhosa instead of English, but there also exists an important difference between the isiXhosa spoken in the Eastern Cape and the one of the Cape Town's townships.

> *IsiXhosa sasezilalini sintsokothile, ungena nzulu. Esalapha eKapa* (isiXhosa from the Eastern Cape goes deep and hard to understand, while the one from Cape Town) is a mixture of Xhosa, Tsotsitaal, Zulu, Afrikaans and anything else spoken in the township.[22]

Some of the artists and audiences at times struggle to understand the Spaza rapping if the emcees use the isiXhosa spoken in the Eastern Cape—isiXhosa *esintsokothileyo*. On the

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[19] Samora interviewed in August 2018, Nyanga, New Cross.

[20] Census (2011) established that Khayelitsha is ethnically and linguistically homogenous with 98.7% of the population describing themselves as Black and 89.8% specifically identify isiXhosa as their home language.

[21] This derogatory expression is used to label people that are considered to be "black outside" and "white inside." Usually the black youngsters who attend model C schools are seen as "coconuts" also because of the way they speak English, like white people.

[22] Lifa, interviewed in July 2018, Bellville.

contrary, the isiXhosa spoken in the townships is easily understood by the people who live there. There was an uncertainty by the respondents in the interviews on whether the isiXhosa spoken in the Eastern Cape—could be considered as Spaza hip-hop.

The language used in Spaza can be seen as a form of memory. Firstly, artists and audience alike relate to Spaza hip-hop songs because they speak of something that they have experienced, or something that they are aware of. Secondly, they use phrases that are employed on an everyday basis. Thirdly, some of the lyrics include well-known Xhosa songs. An example of this is the song *Camagu* by Driemanskap. The song includes a Xhosa traditional dance called *ukutyityimba*[23] and there are references to many traditional Xhosa songs like *Majola phum'entilongweni* (Majola come out from jail) —Majola being one of the Xhosa clan names. The song *Majola phum'entilongweni* as Mashonisa remembers, comes from the Xhosa TV series called *Ityala lamawele* (the lawsuit of the twins) which is based on the book by S.E.K. Mqhayi, which is considered the first existent novel in isiXhosa, which is set in precolonial times. Artists like Driemanskap re-work traditional Xhosa songs which become part of a new memory.

The quality of the beats

Most artists started rapping on top of American beats. It was easier that way as they did not have the means to make the beats themselves. The most well-known Spaza hip-hop producers are today are Pzho and Mashonisa. There were many other producers before them, but their beats made waves in the Spaza music scene. At the beginning, most of the beats were not of the best quality because both Mashonisa and Pzho did not have any training and learned by themselves. The audience understood the bad quality of beats as something that had to do with the harsh conditions in which the artists lived in. In Khayelitsha, more producers are emerging everyday with new talents. They are now able to audio engineer and master beats, yet this is something that is not appreciated by the audiences that feel that the augmented quality of the beats diminishes the authenticity of Spaza hip hop.

[23] *Ukutyityimba* is a Xhosa dance that requires the rapid movement of the shoulders.

> Spaza artists want to sound like international or well-known South African artists. But then what is their point of being around? I could just listen to well-known artists then.[24]

The audience feels that Spaza artists are trying too hard to be like everyone else and in the process their music is losing originality. At the same time the artists feel that they need to keep up with the times, hoping that their music will one day be played on a bigger scale. This conflict has caused many people to stop listening to Spaza, as they think that if the music sounds more or less the same, it is better to listen to it on Trace, Channel O or YouTube, rather than look for local artists. With the increased quality of the beats, people are unable to feel the harshness of township life. For them, if Spaza is moving too far away from what it was, it is no longer Spaza.

Content

> Concepts were more on politics, social ills, on mistreatment and abuse, and awareness. Everyone wanted to be clever at that time that was what the competition was about. Now it is like "I am the most stupid *nigga* ever." *Niggas* from back then they used to tell you that hip-hop is something you eat, it's something you breath and you brainwash yourself all the time. You must know who Che Guevara is, all the political *niggas*. I was never interested in those things, but I needed to know them to get along, it worked for me because it helped me know who I am and appreciate my abilities. At times they used to have concepts that were funny, and it was nice when people were sitting and laughing.[25]

> Spaza could not play on radio because of the rawness and rudeness it had. The reason why I loved that was because it's not good to talk about something in a sweet way but what was happening in the township was not sweet.[26]

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[24] Xolani, informal group discussion, September 2018, University of the Western Cape.

[25] Phoenix, interviewed in August 2018, Khayelitsha, Site C.

[26] Ta Slo, informal group interview, September 2018, at The University of the Western Cape.

Being able to educate and inform the audience was important to Spaza artists. The songs were about life in the townships: the good, the bad, and the ugly. Phoenix, a Spaza artist, explained that one needed to be aware of what was happening and educate those who did not know. Artists like Ndlulamthi, Rah Rattex, Nela and many others still believe in this. Spaza music has not been played on the local radio stations of Khayelitsha and Cape Town. A lot of artists have made their music more commercial in the hope that it will be played on radio and be enjoyed more by the fans. Humour is also important, people do not want to be serious all the time, they also want to laugh their worries away. However, today many of the humorous songs are seen as childish. Musicians think that they will not make any difference and impact people if their music does not progress. One of the main reasons why artists are now conscious about what they rap about is because they are now older, and they want their music to sell so that they can feed themselves and their families.

> I have been sitting here at home, most of the time walking around the township. I then saw myself in the station, hitch hiking, traveling to town. I decided to go stand in the line of Capacity and put in a CV and then venture off to look for a domestic job. Knocking at white people's houses,[27] asking just to work in the gardens. They call ADT to kick me out and I drag myself back to the township. When I get home, I throw myself in bed, and my girlfriend comes in and asks "when are you getting a job? I am tired of you feeding off me". She asks, "how can you take me away from home and make me starve *ehokini?*" (in a shack).
>
> "Both my parents wanted me to succeed in life, they wanted me to focus on my books and pass with flying colours. I went hungry to school; it was hard for me to see the board. Unfortunately, I dropped out of university in my second year. So now what must I do? How many times have we been going to interviews and pleading with the Boers. What must I do? I ask for help from the neighbours to

[27] The usage of "white people" has become relative; black people belonging to the middle class and who are able to buy themselves houses or pay rent in "white neighbourhoods," are themselves called "white people." This even applies to black people that own cars. The petrol attendances will call them *mlungu wam* or *mlungu* which means "my white person" or "white person."

> watch my sons eating in that house. If you were in my shoes what would you do?"[28]

This quote from the song *Confessions zika nomeyjen* by Ndlulamthi speaks about the struggles of growing up in the townships. Though most aspire to do better, structural issues affect their progress. Several researchers that have focused on young black men in the township (Langa 2010; Ratele 2013; Bhana 2005) have highlighted the problems associated with poor education, substance abuse and violent crimes that affect youngsters and specifically boys. In his new mixtape, *Hard livings,* Ndlulamthi addresses these concerns that ultimately question masculinity and the identity of young men. In his song *Abahlali* (the community members), which speaks of mob justice, he points out how people in the townships are tired of fearing black young boys and men who are robbing them in the streets and how the community has to deal with them because the police are not doing anything to assist. In *Skeem sam* (my friend) he addresses issues of crime that is rampant in the township and he tackles gun violence in *Gun dubula* where he reflects on how the lives of people who are not directly involved in events are accidentally taken and affected by violence. An example of this is the gun violence that happens when passengers are caught in the crossfire at the taxi ranks. He also addresses issues of fatherhood in *Usengu tatam* (he is still my father). In the prelaunch of the album *Hard livings*, Ndlulamthi explained that the song was meant to be a voice for all fathers: good fathers, those without money, alcoholic fathers and, even those that have left their children and family. It does not matter how and where they are, they should still be considered fathers. For him the struggles that black men experienced during apartheid and the violence they were subjected to had an after effect, it has impacted the ways in which black fathers are today. Though one cannot romanticise young black men in the township of Khayelitsha as if they did not have an agency, it is understandable why men do not take responsibility for their children.

> Spaza came to us when South Africa was a mess, When Cape Town was a mess, when our townships were a mess. *Intwana ziqala idrugs* (small boys starting to use drugs), learners not wanting to go to school, those that go to school no-one is

[28] Ndlulamthi's album *Hardlivings* extract from the song *Confessions zika Nomeyjen*.

encouraging them to continue. All of this was happening in front of us. So, we were rapping about that.[29]

Since its inception, 1980s hip-hop in Cape Town has become a way through which communities have found a space to speak about oppression (Haupt 2001; Williams and Strout 2010; Williams 2011) and Spaza hip-hop is not an exception. When Spaza was booming and artists thought they would be rich and famous, they did not know that their geographical location, history and race would affect them profoundly. Artists had to find other means to make a living, by finding employment. Spaza is still a refuge for them. Some artists are still pushing their music forward, alone, without a waged job, still living with their parents. This lack of financial independence affects the ways in which an *indoda* is socially perceived, but because they are *amadoda* nonetheless, they are still gifted with the honors of being a man regardless of not having their own homestead (Mfecane 2018).

The audience

All these artists we know are doing Spaza and are now saying they are not, you must go tell them that the customer is always right.[30]

I think they started wrong by calling it Spaza because *Ispaza yishop engayi ndawo* (Spaza are the shops that go nowhere). When people are being chaotic in bigger stores they say, "We are not running a Spaza shop *apha*!" That's where they started wrong, so their route was destined to stay in the locations—the townships. They should as well have taken the Spaza route and hustled, Spaza shops never close but they are local, they should have started small, but they just wanted to be big fast. They were supposed to go with their CDs and go sell their music on the street.[31]

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[29] Rah Rattex, interviewed May 2018, in Site B, Khayelitsha.

[30] Ta Slo, informal group discussion, September 2018, University of the Western Cape.

[31] Nko, informal group discussion, September 2018, University of the Western Cape.

Notwithstanding the fact that there is much confusion about what Spaza hip-hop is, there is a general understanding within the audiences on how the name Spaza is closely associated to the Spaza shops—the local, unlicensed shops. Nko in a discussion we had, explained that Spaza artists limited themselves by comparing their trajectory to the ones of the small shops in the townships: they stay small, they will never get bigger and they are just for the local clientele. He also thinks that artists should hustle, just like Spaza shop owners do, and sell their CDs by rapping in the streets. For instance, he mentioned that in Zimbabwe underground rappers work together with taxi drivers who play their music while taking people to work every day. Nko feels that Spaza artists wanted fame, but they did not work for it.

> That is why people are running away from the name, they know that Spaza is not going anywhere. But now they are changing how they are and now even the locals are not listening to their music. They do not listen to it anymore. Maskandi artists do better than Spaza artists when they produce an album and go sing in the taxi rank where people are. You can see them promoting their music in the township.[32]

Ta Slo added that Maskandi artists are hustling better than Spaza artists.[33] They go to taxi ranks where almost everyone from the townships go every day and sing their music. People listen to them and buy their music, even the taxi drivers. The issue is not just about artists rejecting the name Spaza, it is also that their music has changed, and this has made them lose even the local support that they had.

[32] Nko, informal group discussion, September 2018, University of the Western Cape.

[33] Maskandi is a sub-genre of Zulu folk music, born in South Africa. It has been called the "Zulu Blues," as singers often sing about real life experiences, daily joys and sorrows, and observations of the world. Traditionally, a Maskandi musician had one long song, which evolved as the story of the musician's life unfolded. http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maskanda

> Spaza never had a proper vision. The only person who pushed Spaza was Luckeez[34] but there was only so much he could do. He had a one-hour show once a week.[35]

Xolani argued that Spaza lacked vision, they did not sit down and discuss what they wanted to do. The general understanding is that people joined something they did not know anything about. Because they did not have a vision, they forgot the business side of music making. Now that they found themselves struggling to make ends meet with their music, they started to look for jobs. With the change that social media and technology has brought to the processes of music making, production and consumption, artists are finding it hard to keep their local fans who loved their music as it was. They are also struggling to get exposure to the broader audiences that they are attempting to cater for. A good Spaza song can be on YouTube for months and will have as little as 100 views because the international audiences know little about Spaza hip-hop and the local audiences struggle to access downloading music and viewing on it on YouTube as it requires money.

Is Spaza almost facing extinction before it has had the chance to properly come out?

The artists I interviewed are now in their mid-twenties, late twenties and early thirties. I had initially assumed that most of them would still be performing regularly. Because now they are older their priorities have shifted as they have responsibilities to attend to. It is only artists like Rah Rattex and Dj Lubz who still focus on their music, the others are engaged in a variety of different economic activities. For example, Phoenix who is a second generation Spaza artist and a member of the Backyard Crew is now 32 years old and has two daughters

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[34] Thembinkosi Motyholweni also known as Luckeez is a DJ on Umhlobo Wenene FM. During the week he is a technical producer at the production studios of Umhlobo Wenene. http://www.umhlobowenenefm.co.za/sabc/home/umhlobowenenefm/shows/onairpersonalities/details?id=669ba9e2-ec36-482c-9bb4-2cdcd25ef6f8&title=Luckeez%20Matyholweni

[35] Xolani informal group discussion, September 2018, University of the Western Cape.

to take care of.[36] His father passed away a couple of years ago, and left him his RDP (Reconstruction and Development Programme) house where he is currently living. He makes money by building zinc bungalows for the people in Khayelitsha. He mostly buys zinc for the customers and then he builds shacks. Although Phoenix does not live with his daughters, he ensures that they are provided for. Phoenix recently released a single called *Ekasi baba in* which he raps about the struggles of living in the township.

> Where I come from, life is not a child's play, you are in trouble if your mother does not pray. We trying to grow the *kasi* (township) God, please bless the township God.[37]

If he had a choice, Phoenix would have loved to focus only on his music; however, he is now an adult with responsibilities. When he was younger, he was granted the opportunity to travel overseas for his music. Now that he has grown up, he cannot just jump up and leave, he has other people to consider, it is no longer just about him. He also realised that today it is no longer about the quality of one's music, what matters is how much one has. If you do not have money, then your music will not be recognised.

> Before everyone started rapping and a different genre came into the township, Spaza was the only thing that everyone was looking at. At that time, it was easy to produce a track because the producers did things for free. We would buy clean

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[36] "The Backyard crew had five members (Phoenix, Mashonisa; who was also their producer, Van de Merve, Kideo, Axo uphambene and had Pointwo, who rapped in English, as an asset—a feature that wasn't common practice at the time). On the night of July 29, 2012, on their way to a show, there was a car accident that claimed the lives of two Backyard Records members. Van de Merwe, a Backyard Crew member, and solo artist Chankura died on the spot. The Spaza community was devastated by their loss. To this day, the remaining members are still uncomfortable talking about the incident. The tragedy took a great toll on all of them, causing a prolonged estrangement. Phoenix travelled to the United States, and only began releasing music again two years ago. Since then, he has consistently released singles, the most notable being the brilliant "Put'Em Up." See: http://pltfrm.co.za/backyard-crew-sudelela-spaza-hip-hop/
The backyard crew has grown apart and only Mashonisa and Phoenix are left.

[37] Phoenix, single *Ekazi Baba* released in 2018.

> CDs and then copy and paste. The CD would then be given to different artists and they would add their own tracks until it reached the fans as well. We were not making money out of this but our tracks were known. Also, we used international and local artists' beats, now we have to make our own, that also costs money. You have to pay for the quality of music because there is a lot of competition; pay the producers and still hustle for your music to be out there. If you want to get paid you have to register your track, you get paid only if your track does well. Otherwise putting it on soundtrack or social media, your music goes nowhere. Siki, you need to have money, money and money for everything and that is what we do not have. Another thing is that we older now, we have responsibilities, so most of us are working and do music in our free time. Back then you had free time to do a lot of things.[38]

What Phoenix addresses about money is similar to the experiences of underground musicians that Kerr (2015) documented in Dar Es Salaam: a rapper's ability to record and produce music through the various media outlets is linked to their financial means. "If you are in Dar Es Salaam and you want to make Bongo Flava popular you have to have money. That is the first thing, regardless if your track is not very good or meaningful but money first" (Kerr 2015:101). Phoenix explains that when the first and second generations of rappers become locally famous, social recognition was more important than economic value. They just wanted to be listened to and did not care about making money. Because most of the artists gave their music away for free, they did not understand the extent to which their music was moving.

> *Zingaphi ibusary* (How many bursaries) that are taken out by the Lutheran churches *zintoni zintoni zintoni uya'understanda* but they will never like give us funds. No corporate will give funds to an artist to uplift and that is why our music is not progressing. Location also plays a factor; we are in Cape Town with few media stations. Motswakho went to Jozi to get big.[39]

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[38] Phoenix, interviewed on the 24th of August 2018, Khayelitsha Site C.

[39] Nela, interviewed in August 2018, The University of the Western Cape.

The Cape Town hip-hop "industry" and the lack of support from mass media platforms are today a big issue. Raw talent is being lost in townships because artists cannot afford to get their music out there. The few that are able to progress go through their own issues and are unable to come back to the townships and give back. According to Charry (2012) the presence of African hip-hop video's on YouTube is equally remarkable and overwhelming. However, even if they have access to these spaces it does not necessarily lead them to an international (or even local) popularity. We have to acknowledge that many Africans have a small audience abroad, but they are hardly competing in the international marketplace (Charry 2012). A few of the Spaza hip-hop artists travelled with their music but they came back to the townships because they were not sponsored properly. Most artists are lost in the township because of the lack of funds. Nela for instance is a fourth generation Spaza artist and is currently doing his second year in Social Work at the University of the Western Cape. He explained that he is doing the degree to fund and make grow his music. The fact is that no churches or corporations wants to fund hip-hop artists. Parents and the community have always seen children doing hip-hop in a negative way. For people in the townships, hip-hop is associated with children who do not want to go to school, who smoke and make a noise. Most parents do not seem to appreciate the positive elements that came with Spaza hip-hop. Nela also complains that Cape Town does not support artists like Johannesburg does. For him the geographical location itself is hindering their music from being big.

What is now booming in the black townships of Cape Town is a hip-hop genre called trap.[40] The spaces in which Spaza hip-hop artists used to perform are now taken over by the trap artists. According to Mr. Gee, a trap artist in Khayelitsha Town Two, trap is a hip-hop style that most people associate with fun. The difference between trap and rap is the style of the beats and the way in which the lyrics are laid. Trap is known for fun and "turn up." It is also much easier than rapping because one mumbles the lyrics. Trap artists mostly sing about fun and brag about things that they do not have. It usually involves singing about cars, smoking, money, booze, and girls.

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[40] Apparently TI came up with the word trap (https://www.channel24.co.za/Music/News/ti-wants-to-highlight-trap-music-with-pop-up-museum-and-album-20180928).

Ndiyayithanda itrap (I love trap) because of the energy it gives. *Spaza siyabora* man (is boring man). You have to be listening to the lyrics, while trap you do not have to hear anything, just the beat alone does it for me.[41]

Yazi I have a lot of problems at home. I have to deal with a lot of things in the township as well. I do not want to be going to a session or event and get depressed because someone is reminding me of my issues. It's not just with hip-hop though that no-one wants depressing things. On Facebook and Twitter, once someone says something depressing, we just joke about it. No-one wants to take an ugly picture with ugly clothes on Instagram. You must look good to feel good. Life now is all about balling, champagne and living the good life. That's what we want to hear about as well.[42]

I started recording in 2010, then we were just exposed to Spaza, and there weren't many young artists because most of us were poor, it was expensive to record. The only music we knew was Spaza in the township and most of the artists then were much older and they believed that we should do *umculo* (music) that is educational. But we had a problem with that because of the kind of music on media we were exposed to, it was different and changing. Hip-hop started becoming big and then divided into styles. When artists started moving with time they were named "fakes," so moving was not easy at all, but I do believe that changing my style is good for me because no-one wants to listen to old school rappers, and I understand that to make it in the music industry, I have to evolve.[43]

In an interview on YouTube, the Driemanskap—one of the few Spaza hip-hop groups that have been big—speak about their journey as artists and how they constantly struggle to stay within the content of Spaza and evolve at the same time; times are changing. They expressed how they were received well at home in Cape Town and sometimes they feel that they are

[41] Noss, Interviewed in July 2018, in Khayelitsha Site B.

[42] Akhona, interviewed in July 2018, in Khayelitsha, Site B.

[43] Mr Gee, interviewed in June 2018, in Khayelitsha, Site B.

seen to be betraying fans because of the changes in their music. Groups like Driemanskap recognise the changing nature of the music industry which is moving forward and away from what Noss and Akhona called "depressing music."

> I have no beef with these new cats, but they must not come near me. I know the people I want to deal and work with, so they must know who to work with as well. Mna (Me) as Rah I will never collaborate with those *laaities*. Things have really changed and to be honest that is what the audience want. If I do not say "Make that money money, make that Money money" no-one is going to listen to me when I perform for the trap audience. Everyone has problems, so they do not want to go out to a performance and be depressed even more. But even though I say this I don't mean that it is right. Not everyone is about money, some other people want to know that there is someone going through the same problem as I am, but that person was able to get through this problem this way and that way and you guided them through it.[44]

What Rah says in this quote is what most of the Spaza artists understand: generations are different and that is why there are trap artists emerging today. Ndlulamthi added that one cannot expect an artist to talk about poverty when he did not go through it. Rah states that he has no problems with trap artists, however he cannot make music with them. If an artist does not rap about having money and material things, they will not be received well by the audience. He however warns the audience and artists that appreciate trap music that not everyone in the township is making money. Some people still want to listen about hard living because this is what life in the township is.

> If niggas don't want to be part of Spaza, who will? Nikkaz don't wanna own the torch given to them by the generation before us. I mean we are supposed to be influencing the next generation as we were influenced by the one before us, but we just want to be shaddy and shit. We cannot dictate what will happen to Spaza hip-hop, but I can tell you that right now is the best time to do good quality Spaza,

[44] Rah Rattex interviewed in May 2018, in Khayelitsha Site C.

> the way it was done. Simply because no-one is doing it. But in doing this quality Spaza you have to be in tune with the new sounds and make music that speaks to the people. Spaza is still there but it needs to be produced better. I know Diemanskap is dropping soon, I hope it's "my people songs." Spaza artists need to learn more of the business side rather than rapping and rhyming. We really need just that one Kendrick Lamar for us to be big.[45]
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> People want to do Trap these days even some Spaza artists because that is what sells. It becomes tricky to box iSpaza especially in 2018, but you cannot say it is dead. Some artists are saying they are doing Trap Spaza or Spaza trap. What I know about human being is that they forget about something now, but 20 years later, someone will revive it.[46]

There is still hope for Spaza hip-hop and Spaza artists. Rah Rattex thinks that the reasons why other artists are running away from Spaza is because they don't know it and they do not understand it. The artists that understand Spaza hip-hop will stay with Spaza. Mashonisa also hopes that one day someone will revive Spaza and it will be bigger and better.

I end this chapter with parts of the track Era by Ndlulamthi, which describes the intensity of the love that the Spaza hip-hop artists have for their music. This track brings together the good, bad and the ugly of being a Spaza hip-hop artist. It tells us how artists started listening to underground music and how parents hated that they loved hip-hop so much. It speaks of an era where groups like Backyard lost members because of a tragic accident and Spaza lost a progressing crew. He ends the song by saying that even if hip-hop artists are changing, hip-hop will never die, Spaza hip-hop will never die.

Era

I'm from the Era *eyay'mamela just iUnderground*	I am from the Era which only listened to the Underground

[45] Phoenix interviewed in August 2018, in Khayelitsha Site C.

[46] Mashonisa, interviewed in August 2018, in Khayelitsha, Site C.

iKwaito ingekabi yhi Hip Hop Genre	When Kwaito was not yet a Hip-hop genre
From the Era *ebeyicaphukela, wok'uMzali into yok'ba, noMntan'othand'uMculo ngaleNdlela*	From the era where all the parents hated when their children loved music so much
I'm from the Era *ibimkhanyela umntu'omnyama ocula ngok'ba nemali enganayo neNkwere*	I am from the Era where it used to rebuke artists who sang about having money when they did not even have a wallet.
iHip Hop *ingu* Life Sentence sound masters *is'gwebo*	Hip-hop is a life sentence, sound masters are the sentence
A moment of silence!	A moment of silence!
Remember the All NY'z sessions, uDaba Losiba,	Remember the All NY'z sessions, Daba Losiba,
TayCee, Maningi-ningi, King David, Bonzaya, Van der Merve, The May Day sessions. Shout out to all.	TayCee, Maningi-ningi, King David, Bonzaya, Van der Merve, The May Day sessions. Shout out to all.
Uthando nenceba. We've kept it going, our Cape Town hip-hop scene will never die will always live on. It's how it is.	Love and Mercy. We've kept it going, our Cape Town hip-hop scene will never die will always live on. It's how it is.

CHAPTER 4

Ziwaphi Vandag?[47]

> "One of the male artists gave me R10 and said 'that is your first payment for your first performance, and you fucked up'"
>
> Artsailey

A lot has changed with how music is made and consumed today, and it is no exception with Spaza hip-hop. With the growth of digital technologies, artists are moving away from "rapping for the people," hoping to explore other avenues to make money out of their music. This chapter attempts to map out the spaces in which Spaza music is made and consumed while presenting my ethnography of the Park jam sessions, events and open mic sessions. I will also explain how tracks are made in this music scene. Spaza hip hop is also a local and informal economy. Park jam sessions are sessions that take place outside, in a park, they are free and usually the music is played on speakers. This is the way in which most of the audience is drawn to the session. Events are organized, people pay to attend them and there is a formal list of the all the artists that will be performing. The open mic sessions are something in between the park sessions and events. Even if they are organised and advertised with posters, and venues are booked, there is a flexibility and an openness around how they operate and last-minute changes can happen. The chapter ends with the ethnography of Ndlulamthi's CD pre-launch event.

In my fieldwork I was often part of the audience, as I am not an artist. It is in these encounters with musicians performing on stage that one can begin to apprehend what Spaza is today. Music has transformed in ten years and is now on the brink of a significant change: some say it is ending, some are saying it is transitioning to something different.

[47] Where is the fun happening today?

Park jam sessions

The first park jam sessions in Khayelitsha started in the early 2000s at "I Section"—a place in Khayelitsha —and were organized by the Intellectual Seed Movement (ISM) (Dowsett 2017). Three of the founding members of ISM were the emcees of Metabolism, Steel and Indigenous. These park jam sessions and events started by the ISM created a strong foundation for the following generation: they inspired other first-generation artists such as Rah Rattex from Maniac Squad in Khayelitsha and Korianda from Gugulethu to start weekly park jams, events and sessions in 2006 (Dowsett 2017). As Samora explained to me, jam sessions were informal, and artists could rap any track they wanted. These park jam sessions were a great opportunity to play new singles and to ensure that the audience knew about them. At the jam sessions artists also played old tracks to allow people to take part in the rapping or to sing along. In a park session the audience is at the same level as the performer. As Dowsett (2017) stresses there is no hierarchical separation between the different participants. This also meant that practically the artists were not performing on a higher stage separated from the audience. Park jam session have granted great opportunities for all artists to perform, become known and for the audience to consume music freely.

Sessions offered opportunities for underground rappers to become local celebrities, to achieve social recognition–"[…] a form of value that is social rather than economic" (Kerr 2017:17). Unlike Driemanskap, Kanyi, Rah Rattex and Backyard Crew that became well known outside the townships of Cape Town, most artists are only locally famous. In 2018, park jam sessions still exist, yet they are perhaps less informal and more structured. Lately artists have been more critical towards such spaces. Pzho explained that, while social recognition is important, it is not enough. This is mainly because free park jam sessions do not allow artists to negotiate economic recognition with their audiences:

> Sessions have always been free Siki. Back in the days we didn't fill the halls for money. We didn't release albums for money. We didn't understand SoundCloud and other mediums. So, our audience was too spoilt. So, people could not wait for me to perform Sunday at Sport Complex. I could not wait to

> make a new song because I couldn't go to Sport Complex playing the same track. I must go home and make another song, record and perform the song. Now that we are getting older *sibhadlela imali* (we are becoming more conscious of the need for money). We saw that we were spoiling them, so we started wanting money for events but only 10 people would come. So, I decided to not do my tracks anymore in sessions. Slowly but surely *sacisha ngolohlobo iSpaza* (that is how Spaza started dying). The fans were used to be spoiled so they decided that they won't go to the hall where they will have to pay because they will see Pzho at the sport complex for free. As we got older we knew that we needed to make money.[48]

The first generation's decision to make sessions free, has made it hard for successive artists to make money out of them. When Pzho started rapping he was only 16 years old. Now, most of the artists have grown up and are starting to be aware of the new ways of distributing music. However, their fans are not receiving the changes well.

> *Sizama* (We are trying) to infiltrate spaces where we will have more audience, and an audience that is willing to pay. That is why we decided to stop going to the free sessions because *azizukwazi ukusinika iicamera, azizukwazi ukusinika isound* (they will not pay for the camera and sound that we need) in order for us to progress in our music. Another problem is that 90% of the attendance in most sessions are artists. All they do is *diss* (to make fun of, or make inferior) each other, they do not care about progress *uyabona* (you see).[49]

The shift from performing for the people towards the attempt to make money out of their art has influenced artists like Ndlulamthi and Pzho to stop attending and performing in free sessions. Free sessions are perceived as spaces that hinder the growth of artists. This is mainly because most of the fans are not willing to pay entrance fees. While before the audience was made mainly of fans, today it is the artists themselves that go to the sessions.

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[48] Pzho, interviewed in August 2018, Bellville Tyger Valley.

[49] Ndlulamthi, interviewed in May 2018, Nyanga East.

Evidently, free sessions are now seen as a waste of time and artists are now trying to find new ways to make their music known.

Today in hip-hop new technologies and social media have become crucial (Clark 2018). In the past ten years, Spaza hip-hop artists have moved away from giving their music via Bluetooth or using CDs that were exchanged from one artist to the next and then, ultimately would reach the audience for free. Internet is a platform for hip-hop artists as they upload their videos, songs, lyrics and write blogs by themselves. Other platforms like iTunes, Spotify, Pandora, Reverb Nations, SoundCloud, Vimeo, and YouTube are also used by artists (Clark 2018). It could be argued that jam sessions were important in the first moment of the Spaza project, when artists were looking for social recognition; at that time, the message carried by the music was the most important goal for musicians. Today, as generations have grown older, other needs have emerged and more mature artists look for a different kind of recognition. In this regard, new technologies and social media are perhaps offering new possibilities and new avenues in which making music is more profit-oriented.

My first experience of a park jam session happened on a Sunday at the beginning of March in 2018. The poster announcing the event was all over Facebook and WhatsApp. I travelled to Site C Kwa-Msiya in Khayelitsha; when I got there Mr. Gee was already waiting for me. We walked through the streets of Site C until we reached *Embhacwini* (wetlands). We entered a small shack which had only a bed and the musical equipment. This was OD's bedroom studio, where he makes beats for trappers.[50] We sat, and we listened to music for an hour. The artists smoked *okapyp* which was mixed with marijuana.[51] I started getting anxious as the session should have started at 12 pm and it was already an hour later. "*Suwara Siki abakazuqala* (Do not worry Siki, they are not going to start yet)" said Mr. Gee and continued smoking the *okapyp*. I later realized that time is not something which must be taken seriously for jam sessions: African time! All the events, sessions, and studio meetings I later attended never started on time—and I am not talking about an hour later, usually it would be three or

[50]All of the producers I interviewed have a bedroom studio, often located outside the family house. This is mainly because producers work until late and sleeping in their studio allows them to ensure that their equipment does not get lost.

[51] Oka Pyp is known as Hubby bubbly or Hookah.

four hours later. It was explained to me that the time is marked earlier so that people can arrive on time. Most of the audience and the artists would also deliberately come in late because of the lineup of the artists: new musicians start early, and the well-known ones perform later, usually more people start coming in at this time.

On our arrival to the park called *Ematayareni* near the soccer field in Site C, Empire—a well-known producer in Khayelitsha—and the organisers were preparing the equipment for the artists. Empire, a Tswana man who grew up in Khayelitsha, speaks isiXhosa fluently. There were four big speakers which played well known house music for everyone's enjoyment. As Kerr (2017) argues of playing music at underground hip-hop performances in Dar es Salaam, the playing of house music is a way of attracting the audience to the park session. When they were about to start, Samora who was the MC for the session requested the artists to write their names down, as a way of keeping track of all the performers.[52] Samora started reciting parts of a well-known track called *Rapper's Delight* by The Sugar Hill Gang and the audience joined in, rapping along:[53]

> Samora: I said a hip to the hip hip-hop you don't stop
> Audience: Hip to the hip hip-hop you don't stop
> Samora: Hippie to the hippie, The hip, hip a hop, and you don't stop
> Audience: Hippie to the hippie, The hip, hip a hop, and you don't stop
>
> I love starting with this track because it brings forth the culture of old school hip-hop to the modern-day hip-hop culture. The old school hip-hop being the one that started in America and is still appreciated today. The modern-day hip-hop being hip-hop that is being played today and the different genres that have

[52] A MC is a Mic Conductor, usually calls out the artists and makes jokes to entertain the audience.

[53] Rapper's Delight, seen as a party-starter was a song that independently summed up the spirit of hip-hop music. It was the first official hip-hop record to become a commercial hit. The Sugar Hill Gang came up with the track after they heard "Good Times" at a party and spontaneously freestyled and made a remix over it.

developed.[54]

The lineup started and if an artist was not around, Samora would call out the following one. Most of the artists were trap artists and they rapped in English and isiXhosa. You could distinguish the trap from the rap just by listening to the beats of the tracks, the mumbling, the dance moves which we all knew from watching DSTV and YouTube—dabbing, walking side by side with your shoulders following, and a large amount of jumping up and down. Samora had to ask artists to not jump too much as the microphones were disconnecting. Samora knew he was the only Spaza hip-hop artist in the session; he continuously rapped in isiXhosa, emphasizing the difference between his style and the one presented by the other artists. He also did not use any beat and the audience had to listen attentively to understand him. He was rapping about life in the township. Samora was wearing an African attire, a dashiki and a kufi hat; he explained to the audience how what he was wearing spoke to his music. The audience was mainly composed of artists and friends that were supporting them, children who were playing in the streets and only four young females.

Throughout the entire park session only one female performed: Nezz. She had a tomboy look and showed a lot of confidence; she was quiet most of the time. When she performed her track *Hay'khona sani* (No way bru) the other male artists who were part of her group went on stage to perform with her and rapped along. Mic Substance—a female rapper that I will present in Chapter 6—explains:

> The only reason why I was part of those spaces was because I was a tomboy. I grew up with a lot of females at home, so I liked being around guys and most of them were artists. I did not care what people said about me because I know myself. Yes, there were always rumours that groupies and some female artists have sex with producers to get what they want. But I knew that it was not me, so I did not care.[55]

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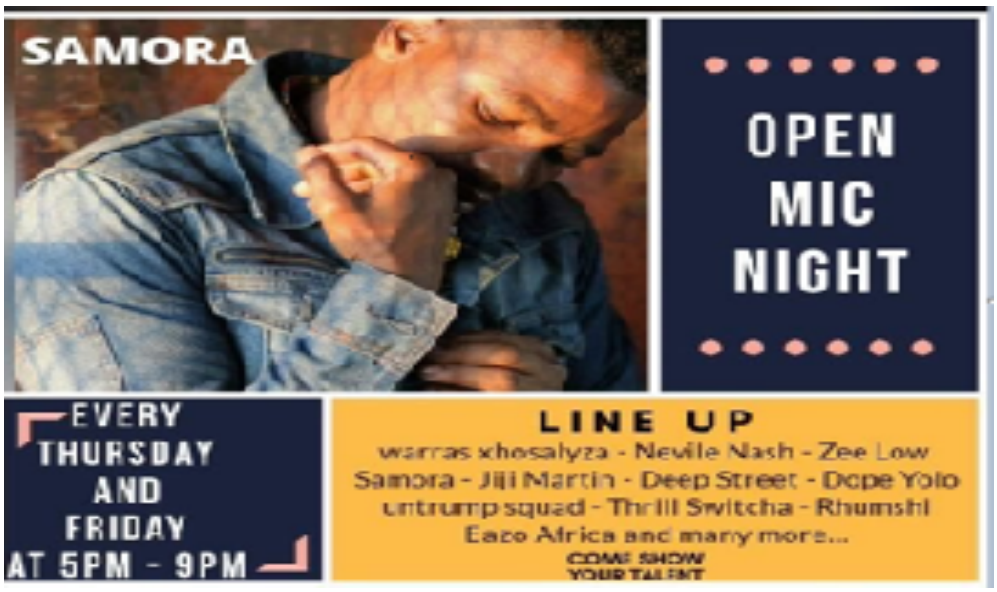
[54] Samora, interviewed in August 2018, Nyanga, New Cross.

[55] Mic Substance, interviewed in May 2018, Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT).

Most park sessions last until the late hours of the night. In most of the cases, I had to leave before they ended in fear of missing the transport to get home. I was worried about being robbed or raped; as a woman those spaces seemed unsafe for me. While males clearly enjoyed themselves in these jam sessions, as the evening progressed, I on the other hand started to get agitated as I was worried about how I would make it home. My experience in these sessions made me ponder and question the position of female artists and consumers of hip-hop. Conducting research on them became particularly relevant for me.

Open Mic/Open Mic Session

Open mic or open microphones are an old tradition within hip-hop (Dowsett 2017). As Perry (2004) argues open mic is part of hip-hop's "open discourse" and should be considered as a public forum that is "open to beginners and all levels." These are not elite or professionals-only forums; they enable any youngster who is confident enough to perform, to share stories with a group of peers and fans. One of the open mic sessions that I attended was at the Zolani center in Nyanga—where open mic sessions take place every Thursdays and Friday from 5pm until 9pm (see picture below). I attended most of the sessions on Fridays and again they never started on time. By 9 pm the security guards at Zolani center would be frustrated and sometimes they would switch off the sound system as a way to encourage people to go home.



Photograph 1: Samora on the cover of the Zolani Center open mic sessions

According to Samora:

> Open mic is basically a platform open for everyone to showcase their talent and it can be any talent. But most people rap or do poetry. *Into endiyithandayo nge' open mic* (what I like about open mic) is that it provides a platform for the artists and allows the fans to have free entertainment.[56]

During the open mic, artists would be asked to write down their names for the MC who would then later call up the artists. The MC is there to create order; he makes jokes, comments and asks the public to clap for the artists. In one of the performances, when the sound stopped working, one of the poets stood up and recited a poem in English. He then moved to the stage and continued. This is an example of how spontaneous open mic sessions can be. In an open mic, artists can ask to replay the back-track from the beginning if they make a mistake. I soon established that each rapper brings his/her own "personal" audience along, to ensure that they have an audience that cheers for them when then they perform. Most of the audience at the Zolani center was composed of trap artists and only a few of them were Spaza rappers.

Open mic varies from space and time. You can have open mic backtracks—this can be a beat, or one combined with vocals playing in the background. You can also have open mic *acapella* which includes, spoken word and poetry on stage. Sometimes open mics are not so open after all, as Ta Slo—an organizer of The Barn events—explains. An open mic:

> Is where someone can just stand up and say whatever they want. One doesn't necessarily have to be talented. You can make use of it when you going to have events and you want people to know about it. The event organisers will decide if they will have an open mic or not. At our events we start with it because we trying to avoid having an extended event. Once people see others on stage, everyone wants to go on stage. But we can cut it at any point because we did

[56] Samora, interviewed in August 2018, Nyanga, New Cross.

> not book those people. Then you start your event and now everyone already has been focusing on the stage, then now you can start with your line up. Or you can have a DJ to melt it down and then the line-up starts. Open mic sessions can happen at events, park sessions or any other session. There are sessions where the whole event is an open mic session, and everyone can come and perform. In those ones they like artists they come with their own backtracks. Mostly open mic sessions are for artists, but they not limited to them. Even political people can come and push their agendas in an open mic. Like if you vote for Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF)[57] you get free Mielie-meals.[58]

Surprisingly, my research on Spaza hip-hop took me back to The University of the Western Cape, specifically The Barn—a pub on campus. For Ta Slo who is part of the Gumba Society,[59] a Spaza hip-hop fan and the organiser of The Barn Sessions at the UWC, an open mic is for more than just talent. It provides opportunities for people to advertise whatever they want. What better place to promote events than an open mic session where the public is composed of youngsters? Open mic sessions can also be used for political agendas. This is not new as politicians like former President Jacob Zuma dabbed as a way to appeal to the youth,[60] and EFF spokesperson Dr. Mbuyiseni Ndlozi made a speech in parliament in 2016 where he recited Rick Ross' songs.[61]

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[57] Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) is a South African far-left political party. It was started by expelled former African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) President Julius Malema, and his allies, in 2013.

[58] Ta Slo, interviewed in August 2018, University of the Western Cape.

[59] The Gumba society is a communal platform for young aspiring performers, athletes and entrepreneurs to showcase their craft and gain exposure through the audience. The Barn sessions were started by the Gumba society in 2017.

[60] https://www.enca.com/life/watch-president-zuma-hits-the-dab, accessed August 2018.

[61] Blowin money fast; We are self-made; He just bought it affiliated. We built it group up, and you got it renovated and still killed it.

> Whatever the person says in the open mic you cannot hold them accountable because they did not come with scripts of what they will say. But with a line up, you can hold the person accountable because they need to stick with the theme.[62]

Most of the Spaza hip-hop artists that I had interviewed went to The Barn sessions which took place on Thursdays. Open mics are not just for artists, but for everyone. If a poster has a lineup, it is no longer an open mic session, for him it will then just be called a "session." These events are all similar in many aspects, they display an almost identical structure and share similarities with other genres such as political rallies and church services. But generally speaking, an event is supposed to be more structured than an open mic session.

I only attended two The Barn sessions because the sound was terrible, and it seemed to be much more disorganised than the other sessions that I had attended. People from PASMA and SASCO joined these evenings taking over the space, showing off, buying drinks for students.[63] One of the performers was disappointed by how uninterested the people at The Barn were. The audience seemed to be annoyed and could not wait for the session to finish so that they would listen to their well-known Gqom songs and dance along.[64] This experience at The Barn was different from a session I attended in Delft. The session started at 4 pm—when we were told to be there by 3:30pm—and the venue was beautiful. They used a place called the Rent Office; it looks like a hall where events are held. Outside, it is secured by a long fence surrounding the building. Inside there were seats and it looked like a theatre. It was the best-looking stage I had seen thus far. The lighting was perfect. If you wanted to take a picture or video—which is allowed at the sessions—you could do that with ease. A MC introduced everyone who was performing. There were people from various townships including, Khayelitsha, Delft, Langa, Gugulethu, and Philippi and Kraaifontein. There was

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[62] Ta Slo, interviewed in August 2018 at The University of the Western Cape.

[63] Pan Africanist Student Movement of Azania (PASMA) and South African Students Congress (SASCO) are political student movements at The University of the Western Cape.

[64] Gqom music draws on the darker side of electronic music, hip hop, sound system culture, kwaito, UK funky and deep tribal African vibrations. Known as music that comes from Durban, Gqom is what is hip and happening today.

poetry, Spaza hip-hop and hip-hop. The session was conducted in English to accommodate everyone.

Independent Records

Pipeline Music is an independent record company which was founded in 2014 by DJ Lubz. An independent record company is one that has no outside sponsors and has to make its own funds (Dowsett 2017). Their roster comprises of artists like: Joe Average, Rah Rattex, Nela, G Star, Lady P.S., Ziggy, Breezo and El De Mrapper. The in-house producers are DJ Lubz and Boomboxx.

Photograph 2: Cover of Hip hop Escapade 3 mixtape and Dj Lubz's bedroom studio

This company has just recently released a mixtape called “Hip hop Escapade 3, The Final Chapter.” It has Spaza hip-hop artists like DAN1 from Driemanskap, Rah Rattex, Ndlulamthi, Reptile, Nela and Phoenix from the Backyard Crew. The mixtape is not seen as radio friendly because of its hard-core material and brutal sound. The artists rap about issues that they are affected by.

Open Letter

> The white men came in our land with rifles
>
> Religion and confusion, they wrote the bibles

They killed our people and blamed it on survival […]

I've seen my people dying

They bribe to keep us quiet by luxury cars, so we forget about the course of getting our land back.

Writing our own laws, the diamonds we need that, we never go press pause […]

Its time to equal scores, I know they don't like that

Repatriation, then we build a nation, where blacks can own their own farms and money, truly this ain't funny my people living in shacks, they burn and die slow, tell me is that fair though?

Even the education that they giving us is weak

One of the reasons my brothers are chilling on the streets

One of the reasons *thina sakhetha ukiller ezi* beats so we can speak about our struggles with no edits

One of the reasons we chose to kill these beats so we can speak about our struggles with no edits

Singekamfuman umhlaba the poverty ain't ending

The poverty ain't ending until we get the land

The single *Open Letter* by Nela and Ndlulamthi addresses land issues, the government selling people out, and reflects on the hardship of black people. It also makes reference to black people having a life isolated from white people like in Wakanda in the movie *Black Panther*.

After *ndibone levideo nam*, I am not racist, uBlack Panther makes me appreciate my white hatred list.

After I saw the video, I am not racist but Black Panther makes me appreciate my white hatred list.

Andinamqweno for another race not to exist but my history *ayina platform apha* […]

I do not wish for another race not to exist, but my history does not have a platform here […]

Abantakwethu ngabazalwane	Our brothers are believers
Osister bethu zii feminists	Our sisters are feminists
*Ukuba mnyama yi*Criminal Record […]	Being black is a criminal record […]
Am not *gaga ngowa kwe statue sika* Cecil John Rhodes.	Am not gaga overthe falling of the Cecil John Rhodes statue.
Because to get the land back it will take seven folds of irevolution, store that shit on your thoughts.	Because to get the land back it will take seven folds of a revolution, store that shit on your thoughts.

This mixtape is the third volume in a series. Like The Prophets of Da City, who started hip-hop in Cape Town, these artists are willing to break boundaries and are prepared to not be liked by radio stations, yet they want to get their message across. In an Interview with DJ Lubz, he said: "Fuck radio. Radio has done nothing for us, why the music we make must be music that is radio friendly? These people just do not want us to speak the truth."[65] DJ Lubz who is a hip-hop producer has uploaded the mix tape only on SoundCloud as he wants to see how many people are supporting their music. He also wanted the freedom to remove it off SoundCloud if he wanted to. In an interview he told me how he had to buy all his producing equipment by himself one by one. AxoUphambene who was part of the Backyard Crew also has an independent company called IWorks Music; he also complained on how expensive producing equipment is:

> So, after the split with Backyard, I was tired of paying for recording. With Masho, we were working together, but he had a studio and I had to pay, it was cheap at that time it costed R150 for a beat and R150 for a recording. So, the whole songs would cost roughly R200 or R300. So, when the split happened, I then had to look at another place where I can record. It got tiring so I decided not to box myself and to be honest I can do everything; I can even sing. I am creative, and my creativity comes out when I am in my own space, *xandihlale*

[65] Dj Lubz, interviewed in July 2018, Khayelitsha, Makhaza.

apha endlini yam (when I am sitting here at home). When you go to a different recording place, you must go with your song finished and you must be certain that it is the final product. The people have other clients, so I got annoyed and I decided to learn how for myself. That is when I started saving up for my own equipment. It was not easy; the first set up cost me 15/20k. It was not much because music equipment is very expensive. I leant most of the mixing and mastering I know from YouTube. That time I was still working. I would go to the Internet cafe, download videos of YouTube on how to do all this. After I did that, I realised that I am passionate about this thing. I was scared that I am more passionate about audio engineering than making the music. But *okwangoku* (for now), I do not think, well I engineer all the time but when I do *ingoma* (a song), the feeling that I get surpasses the one I get from engineering. So, the love is still being an artist. But *lena'iweyi* (this thing), I am really into it, I love it and will never stop doing it. When you 40 you might stop being an artist but even if you are old you can engineer.[66]

All the producers, including Pzho and Mashonisa, learned by themselves how to make beats. They were privileged to an extent as their mothers were able to buy them computers. They then learnt about Fruity Loops and learnt how to make their first beats (Dowsett 2017). Since most of the producers are self-taught, most of the early Spaza hip-hop music was of bad quality. However, from interviews with the audience, those bad beats stood for township life and its hardship. With the exposure to new mediums the producers started making better beats. Groups like Driemanskap were sponsored by record companies and their beats changed. Because of this the audiences feel that Spaza hip-hop is not the same anymore.

When artists want to make a song, they approach beat makers who also play the role of being producers. For instance, Pzho advertises his beats through different social media platforms where he plays the samples of the beats. Most producers do the mixing but not the mastering of beats. For instance, Axo does not make beats, but he does the mixing and the mastering of

[66] AxoUphambene, interviewed in September 2018, Khayelitsha, Site C.

the beats. In an interview with him he contends that even though he is still new in the game, he knows that he is good:

> There are people that were recording long before I came in the game like Mashonisa and Pzho and others and I feel like that I am better than them because the problem is that they still don't know the theory side of producing like what is compression, what is required for you to do certain things. I know the academics of it. I will not lie what helped me as well is enrolling within a University and learning about critical thinking. The proof is in the pudding. Pzho comes in regularly to find out things from me. They are on the practical and I am theory. Most people assume that a producer is a beat maker especially in the hip-hop industry. I produce music.[67]

A person who wants to have an independent record company needs to get it registered with the South African Music Rights Organization (SAMBRO). This also applies to artists who want to register their tracks. This will allow them to receive money for every time their music gets played on radio. However, most of the artists that I interviewed said that they cannot afford this, and they use social media to distribute their music everywhere hoping that someone will find them. Sabelo—a former Headwarmerz worker at Bush Radio 85.5FM,[68] who now works with OkayAfrica and has written articles on Spaza hip-hop— explains how the Cape Town music industry is not doing enough to support artists in townships:

> Firstly, I don't think there's a music "industry" in Cape Town. I don't think there's enough support for artists in townships. But I feel like there's no support for local artists anywhere. Artists have no one but themselves. I also feel like we blame the "industry" for a lot of musicians' failures. But we must always keep in mind that the industry isn't really there to "support" artists but to profit off of them when they become desirable, and I'm not even blaming

[67] Axo uphambene, interviewed in September 2018, Khayelitsha, Site C.

[68] Headwarmerz is a Cape Town hip-hop show which broadcasts from 22h00 till 01h00every Fridays on Bush Radio 85.5FM.

> them for that. To the industry, music is a commodity, that's it. Cape Town doesn't have enough media outlets that cater to black audiences, simply because there are a few black people [as consumers] in Cape Town. So, as a result, Spaza doesn't play much (if at all) on the mainstream platforms.[69]

Sabelo also claims that it is not only the Cape Town music industry that is to be blamed. He argues that Spaza hip-hop artists are not doing enough:

> But I feel Spaza could prosper if artists were realizing that platforms like radio and TV are dying mediums anyway, or at least don't hold the monopoly like they used to say, about 10 years ago. In other provinces, such as Gauteng, young artists are using the Internet to push their music, and the industry comes to them instead of the other way around—so, the labels are after them instead of them sending their music to labels, this is because they create a demand online that makes them hard to ignore.[70]

Artists and producers are finding new ways of making their music known. This has brought opportunities and challenges. Even if the digital world is expanding, media platforms as ways to make money and gain important exposure, are still not accessible to everyone in the same way. The technologies are changing the consumption of music and the ways in which local artists can become visible and part of the industry. However, artists in the township struggle to gain access to these opportunities that the Internet offers.

Events

Events are well-planned social and public gatherings. The poster can be distributed a month before the event on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and WhatsApp. For artists, social media is vital as they allow fans to know when a track or album is coming out or know about an upcoming event or session. For the producers, social media is a means

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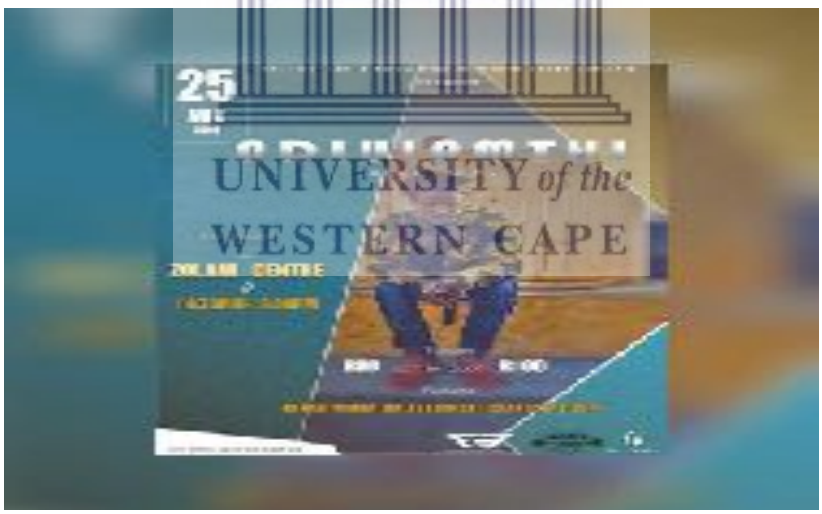
[69] Sabelo Mkhabela, Interviewed August 2018, Phone call.

[70] Sabelo Mkhabela interviewed in August 2018.

through which they can promote their music by playing samples of their beats and advertise prices and promotions on the mixing and mastering of songs. DJ Lubz explains what needs to be done before a poster is created:

> First the organising team must have a vision and then a mission. From there onwards we must decide if we want to have a themed event or just a normal event. Check venues that are available and then once you have a venue; the artists must know about it and they will help with the marketing. There are now equipment's and infrastructures needed. Sometimes there are agreements that are not confirmed. Once everything is organised then artists must be made aware, so that the poster can be made.[71]

The pre-launch of Ndlulamthi's album *Hard Livings* is a good example to understand how events are organized.



Photograph 3: Ndlulamthi's pre-launch poster

The pre-launch event took places on the 25th of August 2018 at the Zolani Center. You could get in for R80 if you had bought the ticket in advance, for R100 if you were buying the ticket at the door. FiveSix, Ndlulamthi's producer, explained to me why they had decided to have a pre-launch:

[71] Dj Lubz interviewed July 2018, Khayelitsha, Makhaza.

> The album called *Hard Livings* by Ndlulamthi was supposed to be a double CD which consists of two themes with the one concept of *Hard Livings*. Because of time we ended up only recording one of the themes of the concepts. We are planning on releasing the second one as a following, as a second episode of *Hard Livings*. The pre-launch is going to be a lesson session where Ndlulamthi is going to do more talking than performing on that day, where he will be elaborating about the concepts and how they came about and what inspired him to write about a certain concept and what kind of space he was in when he was recording or writing those songs. There will be artists performing alongside him. This pre-launch is to also allow the audience to know what kind of tracks will be in the album.[72]

Throughout July and August 2018, FiveSix posted videos and posters on his WhatsApp status. He moved around in the taxi rank using a small bike with friends, trying to sell the tickets.

> We use only social media, no radio or TV because we wanted to be sure that the people we connect to the people that listen and love Ndlulamthi's music. We really do not need to write an article on a certain magazine or a paper for Ndlulamthi's music in order to reach the audience. We decided that we will not do any interview until we are done with the tape and the pre-launch. It is only then that we can have some tracks played on radio. What we are trying to establish is trying to show that as an individual you are in control of whatever you are trying to pursue.[73]

Most Spaza hip-hop artists do not like radio stations especially the local ones like Radio Khaltsha and Bush Radio. With tension of who gets played and how the radio decided, Phoenix expressed how local radios used to play their music but now sadly they do not love

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[72] FiveSix, interviewed July 2018, Nyanga, New Cross.

[73] FiveSix, interviewed in July 2018, Nyanga New Cross.

them anymore. For other artists their music was never even played on local radio, nor did they travel abroad like the Backyard Crew, Rah Rattex, Kanyi, Mic Substance and Driemanskap. The main reasons for this is the vulgar content that comes with some tracks, the bad quality of beats, and some tracks are considered too political to be played on radio.

> Bush Radio, just like all South African radio stations, has quotas to adhere to. Just like with all stations, it has a music compiler who listens to songs that are submitted and considers them for playlisting, based on quality, relevance, etc. For shows like Headwarmerz, which I hosted from 2013 to 2017, the presenters and producers (who are usually the same person) make their own playlists. We used to listen to submissions and play what we thought was great. Some songs, we sourced online.[74]

Ndlulamthi has made a plan to make money out of his music:

> I remember when Ndlulamthi told me how he wanted to sell his music. When he told me about this, I was very skeptical because it is something that was never done. Also, for the kind of market that we are targeting it is rare that you will find fans that are willing to compensate in anyway. The plan was that he will sell the song direct to a fan. By that I mean if ever you want a song then you are going pay R10 on his account, the whole mixtape is R100. To be honest on the first week we did this, it was difficult because of the mixed communication. But through all that, with what Ndlulamthi wanted to achieve we did not compromise on the standards and value of this whole thing. So now the artists are getting his song and we stuck with that plan and it did work. People are still asking today if with regards to the Hard Living's mixtape, if a person can get a song from the album and just pay the R10. This for me gives value to the artists because the fan must be trusted with the song that they will not send it to their friends via WhatsApp or Bluetooth or whatever platforms that you may use to bootleg the song. They will never do that because they

[74] Sabelo Mkhabela interviewed August 2018.

> know they have spent for that song. I say this because mostly the fan has to use more than the R10, maybe having to take a taxi to get a song from me or paying the money via the bank, they have to pay more because of the charges.[75]

Artists like Ndlulamthi have to trust their fans, hoping that they will not distribute their music for free. Ndlulamthi is a well-known "Spaza hip-hop artist", everyone was certain that the turn up for the pre-launch would be good. Many of his old Rastafarian friends and fans were there to support him, regardless of the rainy weather. More than 80 people came to the event and among them there were only eight women present—artists girlfriends, Ndlumathi's wife, me, Artsailey, FiveSix's sister and the woman who hosted part of the event when Ndlulamthi was giving a talk. The event started off with FiveSix thanking everyone for coming and acknowledging how they felt privileged to be supported by the people who came. The line-up of artists was: LSP, Dalisto, Ceaz, Ikanyamba and Poetitian who played tracks which most of the audience seemed to know. We listened and clapped along to the songs that touched our hearts. Even though their music sounded different, they had one common agenda: their dislike for trap artists. They openly spoke about how trap artists are basically just singing about having fun, and contrary to them, they are only interested in making money. Trap artists are considered "sell outs" because they are not doing music for love, they just want money. One artist even went on saying that people that speak the truth are found in trains and in corners. He would not care if only thirty people showed up to the event because he knew that it was those thirty people who wanted to know the truth.

> For this album I used different ways of distributing songs apart from having to email them to get money. We found a distributor that makes music available on Dizzar, iTunes and Spotify. So, this mixtape will be available on these different online platforms, so that people can purchase it there as well. This will help Ndlulamthi to have money and be motivated to do the second episode of the mixtape of Hard Livings and also take part in more shows. We want to show people that if they buy our songs, we can have more shows that they can enjoy. We never plan to do one show a year and then spend the money on alcohol,

[75] FiveSix interviewed in July 2018, Nyanga, New Cross.

> smoking, and on clothes. We invest it so that we can do more with the music and the fans can get more songs and more shows. Also, we are trying to involve corporates to see what we are doing so that they can see we started from the bottom, but we are working hard. So, with our music you can get it direct from us via email or get it from Spotify or Dizzar.[76]

At 6:30 pm Ndlulamthi came in and everyone applauded. He started rapping about his disapproval of those Cape Town artists who assume that moving to Johannesburg will help them get recognition—most Trap artists aspire to move to Jozi. He then ended up by rapping about himself, and his journey on being a Cape Town artist, what he refers to as the mother of the rap elite. A place that even if people come and go, it will always be the best.

I will never get these papers attention *ndihlala* eCape Town	I will never get these papers attention while I stay in Cape Town
Between you and I listen, do you own shit, no-one is gonna help you with it	
Dude I am not kidding shit is real, if you have a vision of you making it into Jozi, you on some suicide mission.	
Jozi ain't good, uMaBrrrr ain't breathing	
Hopefully you won't suffer the same fate if you are leaving	
I am even willing *ukukuboleka isports* bag	I am even willing to borrow you a sport bag
GO!	
Take your sorry ass of an emcee to Jo'burg	
Reality is, check the spec and see if you will even make it on the front page of HYPE magazine	Reality is, check the spec and see if you will even make it on the front page of HYPE magazine

[76] FiveSix interviewed in July 2018, Nyanga New Cross.

Cause there in Jozi ihamba ukuthi ungubani	cause there in Jozi it is all about who you are
Jonga abanye oomekhi, ndakuxelela inyani	look at other artists, I will tell you the truth

Photograph 4: Ndlulamthi's pre-launch event.

Interestingly in this pre-launch the MC for Ndlulamthi was a woman. She ensured that women who asked questions were attended to first. This was for her a way to celebrate women's month, August. She expressed gratitude of being chosen to be the MC for Ndlulamthi and the event. Even if most women in the audience, including myself, felt shy and did not ask questions, this was a great initiative which for once got women involved while in the field.

This chapter has addressed how Spaza hip-hop music is produced and consumed today. It fleshed out the differences between rappers and trappers and how there are ongoing debates and disagreements on what is relevant today, in terms of music and values. Where trappers promote an idea of music that is associated with fun and money making, Spaza artists promote themselves as being committed to the communities that they belong to. Their work keeps addressing issues that are important in townships. Interestingly, though Spaza artists

criticize the agenda of trappers for wanting to make money, they too are wanting to do the same.

Even if hip-hop is undergoing many transformations, and the ways in which music is produced and consumed are shaped by new technologies, live music is still crucial for artists and audiences. Only a small number of women are taking part in the Spaza hip-hop space. In the next chapter I question the silencing of female Spaza hip-hop artists. I will discuss how female artists are perceived and how they are able to overcome this patriarchal, male-dominated space, making their voices and their desire for self-determination heard.

CHAPTER 5

Queens of any Circumstance: Performing Gender in Hip-Hop

In this final chapter I focus on female hip-hop artists. The spaces in which hip-hop is performed across the world are mainly male-dominated. There are specific gender politics that are embedded in the hip-hop scene and that are constantly challenged by female artists. With a brief theoretical introduction on how hip-hop female artists have been perceived and represented in hip-hop, this chapter illustrates how women negotiate their presence within the township hip-hop scene, how they carve their own space, and how they are able to impose their presence and present their work. While operating within many constraints, many female artists have found in hip-hop a space in which they can break free from the normative gender roles of society and find new ways to express themselves. Through the representation of two short biographies of female artists, and the critical analysis of their music and songs, I attempt to provoke a discussion on music, gender and sexuality.

Gender in hip-hop has proven to be a complicated battle, filled with pitfalls that are constantly being challenged. Since its inception, hip-hop has been an art form historically dominated by males (Clark 2018; Ntarangwi 2010; Forman and Neal 2004). Perry (2004), even goes further by saying that hip-hop is a form of "masculine music." This completely overlooks and sidelines the women that have been expressing themselves through this musical genre and that have been performing on the hip-hop scene for more than two decades now on the African continent (Clark 2018). One however cannot deny that even though women have been involved in the growth of hip-hop, they only began performing much later than their male counterparts. How women's stories are told and who tells them depends on those who have the power, and in hip-hop it is men. "These unequal power distributions impact women's control over their own bodies, as well as access to economic resources, power structures and the public space" (Clark 2014:145). Women seem to be given spaces only when it is to serve the pleasures of men (Clark 2014). Hip-hop culture and rap music have been widely criticized for misogynist lyrics and sexist representations of women (Perry 2004; Forman and Neal 2004).

"Too often, hip-hop portrays women as gold diggers seeking only to take advantage of men, as disease carriers and self-hater, hyper-sexualised animals who shake their stuff on camera, and as a symbol of capitalist acquisition" (Perry 2004:128). This distorted way in which women are portrayed is being consumed globally (Williams 2017; Hopper and Mbure 2011; Richardson 2007). Interestingly, hip-hop music and culture have proven to play a significant role on political engagements, inserting the voices of often marginalised groups into national and global conversations around power and its unequal distribution (Clark 2012; Haupt 2008). Yet, we see that the same hip-hop culture is still promoting patriarchal values on the expense of female emcees. This is even seen in the ways in which sexuality in hip-hop is consumed. Sex and sexuality sell in every culture, and hip-hop has been involved in consuming and normalising this, especially through the media (Ntarangwi 2010). In videos, the nudity of women is a marketing device. Women's participation is limited to being objects that men possess and control (Clark 2018; Clark 2014; Perry 2004). Female artists are often encouraged to emphasize their sexuality as a key to a successful career (Clark 2018). Female hip-hop artists in urban Africa, like their counterparts in the West, have to operate within environments that seek to police women's sexualities while stressing their need to market sexuality (Clark 2018).

By nature, hip-hop music does not allow for passivity and by nature it is often aggressive (Clark 2014; Williams 2017). The entry of women in hip-hop is a statement in itself; they challenge gendered representations of hip-hop and the dominant patriarchal structures that govern it (Clark 2014). It will perhaps help male artists get through what Dyson (2006) calls "femiphobia," the cruel attack on women that grows in the ghetto and beyond.

Public spaces and gender politics

This section focuses on space and gendered identities; it raises questions of access and discusses how womanhood and appropriateness—the supposed women's roles, actions and behaviours—are perceived and practiced. There is no doubt that hip-hop spaces in townships are considered gendered; female audiences struggle to attend hip-hop sessions in the townships, as access and the experience of mobility are limited. Performances are generally attended by men who can be mobile in the township at night freely. Access to performances

in the townships illustrates well the marginal positions that women occupy in the hip-hop scene, as artists but also as audiences.

Sinazo is a third year student at The University of the Western Cape (UWC). I came into contact with her when I was presenting a part of my research to the third year Popular Culture class. She was fascinated by my research and wanted to speak about her own experience and love for Spaza. Sinazo's story is important as it shows the trials a woman has to go through in order to be able to attend hip-hop events and performances. Sinazo, grew up in Khayelitsha Site C with her family. She always loved listening to music. When she heard Spaza hip-hop for the first time in the early 2000s she was amazed and wanted to know more about it. In her first attempt to go to a session at the Sport Complex in Gugulethu, her mother refused to let her go because it was happening later in the day. She also could not afford to travel there as she had no money to pay for transport and there was no time for her to go as she was supposed to cook that night. Sinazo tried everything, she cooked in advance and begged for permission. She then decided that she would go without permission and deal with the consequences of her actions later, once back at home.

Sinazo explained to me that, all the cool Spaza Cats would sit at the back. Sometimes there would be females sitting with them but most of the time they are sitting by themselves. Usually there would be one or two females getting up to perform, and when a female artist went up to rap the males at the back start laughing. She feels that those who get up have courage whereas the others are intimidated by the male artists.

> I do not understand what is funny when a female artist wants to rap like the guys, as if she is not trusted. Yet if a female goes up to sing or do poetry they clap hands for her. I feel like the only role they see for females really is being an MC, poet and a singer. That is why I feel like many females do not rap. I was on this one session where a female rapper was undermined by a male rapper. He said he would not have a battle with a female because females are weak, and this was said prior to them battling. But the female continued, and she won the battle. She had the best bars and the guy was whacked. Males are

> so rude *kwezi* (in these) events so for you to continue rapping as a chick you need to develop a very thick skin.[77]

According to Sinazo, most of the female rappers are not performing because of the way in which they are treated by the male artists and audience. In the open mic spaces, female artists are only accepted to perform certain things and rapping is not one of them. Women are also ill-treated when they are in the audience as well. Sinazo and Lifa explain this well:

> The audience is made up by the majority of guys *kaloku*. There's always few of us. *Kuthwa siyaphapha*[78] (We are told that we like things and we are nosy) for going to these sessions and events. Some guys told us *hambanocula ecaweni* (go sing at church).[79]

> In sessions and events, it's always 95% males and the rest are females. For us guys we were now having this stereotype that all females that goes to a show *uyaphapha.*[80] [They] do not even know if that [girl] is someone's sister trying to support her brothers perform. We were told that females that love hip-hop *bayaphapha* (they like things).[81]

Sessions have always been dominated by males both as artists and in the audience. Women who attend the sessions are seen as females *eziphaphayo*—females that are intervening and

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[77] Sinazo, interviewed in September 2018, at The University of the Western Cape.

[78] *Ukuphapha* is a Xhosa phrase, it is important to note that it can be understood differently for different situations.

[79] Sinazo, interviewed in September 2018 at The University of the Western Cape. *hambanocula ecaweni* (go sing at church) is an indication that females belong to the church space, and should be using their voices for church choirs and not to perform in hip-hop sessions.

[80] *Ukuphapha* is understood as a person showing curiosity about affairs that do not concern him. Women are perceived as nosy and sticking their nose in another people's business. This then means that the females in the audience and the female artists are intervening in things that are none of their business, this being rapping and being in "male spaces."

[81] Lifa, interviewed in July 2018 in Bellville.

meddling in things that do not concern them and who are nosy. Lifa, being a man, realised his own mistake in stereotyping and classifying the female audience, yet he still expressed a negative understanding of women who attended the sessions. When she broke the rules by going to the night sessions—women are not supposed to be out late—Sinazo was reminded by her family to behave like a "proper woman."[82] The minute she entered a session, men reminded her and her friends that women are supposed to be at church, singing. Women who are part of the audience are often seen in a negative light, but also Spaza music at times can be vulgar and disrespectful. According to Pzho this is the principal reason why women do not want to associate themselves with Spaza. Lifa explained what Pzho said more:

> The first females I heard was Kanyi and Mic Substance,[83] very few of them. Some others we heard about later but more vocalists than rappers. But at the same time, I saw females being disrespected in the Spaza space. Those who were brave would go every Saturday and every Friday when Pzho was around. But we called them names.[84]

The ways in which Sinazo, Pzho and Lifa spoke about female presence in the male-dominated space of hip hop in Khayelitsha and the fact that there are only few female hip-hop artists in the townships, shows the embracement of "patriarchal privilege" (Forman and Neil 2004) and the marginalisation of women among hip-hop artists.

> First of all, hip-hop is a male dominated genre. If females are good they are good. Kanyi dominates iSpaza, *amadoda* (men) tremble when they hear she

[82] Ebila (2015) in Wangari Maathai's autobiography *Unbowed* speaks on the silencing of the voices of women by telling us how a "proper woman" is supposed to act. A "proper woman" in the African tradition belongs to the family, she is uneducated, non-opinionated, and must be a wife and a mother; she must be malleable and never question male authority. For Ebila (2015) these unjust characteristics are not only the creation of colonialism but have been also institutionalised within the African traditions.

[83] Kanyi is an artist from Gugulethu and is known as one of the key names in Spaza. She has performed in festivals in Sweden, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

[84] Lifa, interviewed in July 2018, Bellville.

will be performing. One problem I have with females that do hip-hop especially here in Cape Town, is that they like sleeping with the guys, artists. They do this, and guys think it's because *bayaniphaphela* (they are nosy or they like things). But they sleep with them because they are good, and they think the only way to make it is if they sleep with the male artists hoping that they will be featured in their songs. But they will sleep with this guy, sleep with that guy and they will be called a groupie and they will not be taken seriously. There are only two females that I know that are doing well in iSpaza, there could have been more, but they got fucked.[85]

When it comes to females, well let me start by saying hip-hop is a universal language but *abantu abangosisi* (females), they hold themselves because of themselves. They always want to blame us, but they hold themselves *ngokwabo* (because of themselves). For example Siki, when you look at yourself in the mirror rapping and you like it, fuck I can rap, then Nela comes to visit you and he says fuck you can rap, why do you not meet up with Rah with your tracks instead of having an attitude saying "uRah, uRah, I cannot meet up with that guy, I'd rather not do this hip-hop thing." You guys already have your assumptions before you have even met us. There are a lot of women that are good and can rap better than Rah, better than Khuli Chana, but are holding themselves back, busy saying "I am fragile, really, it's all on you guys, it's not us." I have heard pathetic female artists, but they are big because they are not scared to go out there to male artists, to go get what they want. Hip-hop is hip-hop, there is no female or male there. Another example, we will be sitting here myself and Roger, and DJ Lubz will come and tell us that there is a female that is coming for a studio session, once she gets here and sees all males she will then say to DJ Lubz can we rain check, just because she sees males. She now thinks that she is weak and cannot do this with males around. You guys are always making us wrong, but it is you females that are wrong. We need to stop this male and female thing; a person is a person. Just do your thing. Gender does not work in hip-hop. Obviously as much as we are people,

[85] Samora, interviewed in March 2018, Nyanga, New Cross.

> females have their own struggles and we have our own struggles too. Maybe your guys struggles is us and our struggles are females. But at the end of the day we are all humans.[86]

Samora knowing very well that hip-hop is a male dominated space, and yet he still believes that most of the female emcees in the townships use their bodies in the quest for a musical career, a video clip or the production of their music. Hip-hop has been called misogynist music yet for numerous reasons, many lovers of hip-hop resist this (Perry 2004). As Perry (2004) suggests female artists have been seen to only to take advantage of men for capital investment. Rah Rattex argued that we should not romanticize the hip-hop space, and see the men as being the problem, rather he accused female themselves as the motivation behind their feelings of inferiority.

Public and private spaces are male-dominated, yet not all the artists see this as a negative factor. In an interview with Mic Substance and Artsailey, they stated that hip-hop has been a safe space of freedom for them. It allowed them to move away from what was expected from them as young women at home and to do what they loved, to make music. In an interview Kanyi explained that she never internalised Spaza hip-hop as being a masculine space, it was only when people kept asking her about it that she thought of it that way. The masculine space of hip-hop never made her feel less, because she always regarded herself as one of the best.[87] Kanyi did not feel intimidated by male or female artists. “When I get into a Cipher I don't worry, I know that guys won't be on some, ‘don't let her in because she is a girl’ because they know that I will do what I need to do. Up until now, now more South African girls are coming in. Now it feels like something to acknowledge because the younger ones need direction. I don't really like leaning to the ‘I am a girl’ situation because that is not supposed to hold you back.”[88]

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[86] Rah Rattex, interviewed in May 2018 in Khayelitsha, Site C.

[87] https://hiphopafrican.com/2017/10/01/hhap-episode-15-kanyi-mavi-on-hip-hop-xhosa-rap-culture-in-south-africa/

[88]https://hiphopafrican.com/2017/10/01/hhap-episode-15-kanyi-mavi-on-hip-hop-xhosa-rap-culture-in-south-africa/

Women and Artists

I have opened this chapter focusing on how female hip-hop artists have been theorised both in the US and in Africa, illustrating ethnographically the gender politics that are embedded in hip-hop spaces in Cape Town townships. I now move to the analysis of two biographies of female Spaza hip-hop artists that I have met. Biographies are a bridge between individual and social realities that capture personal experience, they are the lens through which we can flash out what the study of lyrical content cannot do. The stories of these two women and their music "challenge constructions of femininity and womanhood, or the policing of women's sexuality" (Clark 2018:4). This disturbs the "masculine space" of hip-hop and the ways in which it is perceived by men. I attempt to engage with the ways in which women have been represented in hip-hop in the townships. Their stories not only tell us about where the female artists are from, their families, their occupations or schooling, they also give us an entry point into what made them become artists. Drawing on their past experiences and speaking to their present realities creates this blurred narrative between the past and the present. Their biographies show that female inclusion in hip-hop disrupts the gender regimes and masculine normative hegemony (Connell 2002). However, this does not necessarily change the domination of male artists. What was also evident was that the "tomboy" notion made the two artists assimilate masculine norms and values and distance themselves from models of femininity (Kvande 1999).

Mic Substance

Mic Substance is a 26-year-old woman. She grew up in Khayelitsha, Site C, surrounded by male siblings and this is why she became known as a "tomboy" in her township.[89] Somehow, she felt that she could not relate with the other girls:

[89]A tomboy is a girl who exhibits characteristics or behaviors considered as typically being that of a boy, including wearing masculine clothing and engaging in games and activities that are physical in nature and are considered in many cultures to be unfeminine or the domain of boys.

> I grew up with boys, so I grew up as a tomboy, I did not relate with females. Myself, females, I used to hate them, they used to just annoy me, females are just too much complicated for no reason, always whining, cats.

It is because she was a tomboy that Mic Substance felt comfortable within the Spaza hip-hop scene where she moved with ease. This was mainly because of how she dressed and the confidence that she showed. She did not care about what people thought of her. Mic Substance heard a track called *Ulife* by the Lampito Clan and she was touched by it. The track spoke to her; it was about a life that she was able to relate to. She made it her mission to follow the group. Pzho, who was then the producer and a member of the Lampito Clan, took her in. Pzho became Mic Substance's producer and "her older brother." During this time with Pzho, Mic Substance was collaborating with artists like ProX and this allowed her to establish herself as an artist.

Mic substance was both a singer and a rapper. When she was in grade nine, she came up with the name Mic Substance. She remembers being fascinated with chemical elements, compound elements and the periodic table in the natural science class. In her understanding, when those elements are put together, they become a substance that comes into life. This is why she chose that word. She was a microphone substance. She remarked that: "when I sing or when I rap or when I speak on the mic then people get healed, emotionally or whatever." For Mic Substance being an artist is a beautiful experience thanks to it she was able to meet different people who were in the same industry:

> Amsterdam, Sweden and Denmark, three different places but the same place when it comes to hip-hop. Netherlands, those places you meet people that do hip hop but the way they see things and the genre they do does not sound the same, but it is hip-hop, so it opens up your eyes that is hip-hop that it has certain sounds or kind of beats. Here we have different names we have like Spaza hip hop and what is this new thing... Trap.

Mic Substance dated two male artists. First was Zanzolo in 2010 from Uzwi Kantu for two months. "I wanted to try this thing and it was nice, but it ended fast". Not long after, she

dated Mashonisa who was part of Backyard Crew. When the relationship started there were talks on how "*Zanzolo ushiyiwe nguMashonisa*."[90] This did not affect her. "For me I was just like whatever, it really boosted my ego. How I was feeling was like, this is nice." At the time when Mic Substance started dating Mashonisa Backyard Crew was doing very well. One of their songs even played on Channel O.[91] With the development of her relationship with Mashonisa, Mic Substance joined Backyard Crew and he became her new producer. This created controversy.

> People were like "ohhh! You are sleeping your way to the top." I hated it because I only joined Backyard later on, but they kept on saying the same thing. It really got me and it did upset me, but I got over it. You know, I told you, I am tomboyish so unlike other girls, those things, I do not keep because I was like "whatever." People were like "She will not last," but I was there for a month and then in 2011 and 2012.

People expected their relationship to end within a month. However, they carried on for a couple of years. "He was the producer for my albums, also my boyfriend, so now people were saying that we are relationship goals." The albums Mic Substance made during this time, her strong lyrical rhythm and her voice granted her the opportunity to be a part of KWAAI, a Swedish and South African Exchange which included more famous artists like Driemanskap and Kanyi.[92] Travelling broadened her knowledge and her music. She was able to bring new fresh thoughts into her own country. During her travels she found out that in

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[90] Zanzolo was mocked by people for having being left by Mic Substance for Mashonisa. Even though the relationships were not one after the other, people had their own ideas on how it all happened.

[91] Channel O is a South African based music channel which first started transmission in the early 1990s. Its main concept is African music in Africa and the diaspora.

[92] KWAAI is a global Hip Hop Crew that started as an exchange between Sweden and South Africa in 2012. Eight of Sweden's most interesting urban artists came to SA to record with artists like Driemanskap, Kanyi, JR, Jack Parow, Zeusand many more. When the artists met, a creative explosion followed, resulting in the album "Worldwide" http://jamthatsession.tumblr.com/post/129058712120/kwaai-is-a-global-hip-hop-crew-that-started-as-an

Sweden people do not believe in God was a shock for Mic Substance. Due to her religious background and also her "female nature to care for people," she decided to go back to preach; "I am not a hip-hop artist, I am a worship leader in church, I do not perform I am a worshipper." In 2015, she pre-released an EP in Zambia during her tour with KWAAI.[93] However, she never released it in South Africa because God told her that the rapping chapter of her life was closed then. She kept the CDs for a while and eventually gave them away to her fans in Cape Town.

Arstailey

"I love music, I live music. Music saved me; art saved me." Artsailey grew up in Gugulethu with her mother, grandmother and two brothers; she is the middle child. She is currently on her second year of study at the University of South Africa (UNISA), and she teaches Life Orientation and History at the Global Teacher Institute (GTI). Being the only girl at home made her feel more at ease with boys. She explains how she used to play marbles, go swimming half naked, doing everything that boys did. The name Artsailey came when she was in grade six and her cousin who is a DJ in Langa decided to give her the name Usay as she was always around artists. In high school she met a girl called Hailey—she had a crush on her and admired her from a distance. At that time, she liked the TV programme *High School Musical* and especially the two characters in love with each other, Troy and Gabriella. She then decided to use Hailey's name and she created Artsailey.

The first time she heard a rap song was when she was in primary school and her grandmother had bought a radio because their TV was broken. Her mother bought her different CDs and then she heard the track by JLO and Fat Joe titled "Hold me Down." "I heard this song and then I heard Fat Joe rap and I like was woooow, and I kept on replaying the song, I was like 'what! Woaw! I can do that!'" Mesmerised by the rapping of Fat Joe, Artsailey took a pen and paper and tried to write her own rap, but she failed. In the evening she heard her uncle play Umhlobo Wenene, a Xhosa radio station, and that is where she heard Spaza hip-hop for the first time. She used to stay up at night with her uncle and listen to Rattex, Vegita and

[93] EP is an extended play record. It is usually more than a single but not enough to be called an album.

Driemanskap. She found out that Driemanskap were from Gugulethu and she made it her mission to meet them.

> I love these guys, so I went to a section in Gugulethu called Luzuko and met this guy, Luvuyo. Luvuyo used to bang a table and then rap Driemanskaap tracks and I was like "yhooo!" and then I joined him. My two best friends are guys. I grew up with them. Then I met this guy at school and he liked to rap as well. So, I joined him and we used to bang tables and rap. The teachers used to come in and asked who is making that noise and they would know it's me and my friend and we used to get punished. Even the next day, we would get punished for the same thing.[94]

From grade nine to grade twelve, she attended a different school that focused on choir, drama and gumboots dance. There was no rap, and there were only a few artists that used to rap in talent shows at her school. She wanted to be like those rappers and she started writing poetry. She used to read the dictionary to get bombastic words, which she started using in her school essays.

> Music saved me, art saved me because there was a point in my life where I felt like I was drowning, you see. There is a certain point where in your life you feel like this is too much but music was there for me. Because as much as I am a talkative person, it was very hard for me to talk about my feelings. But once I write, once I listen to a beat, I am able to speak. I am still learning to open my mouth with a paper and pen, you see.

Growing up, she had always seen herself as boy and puberty caused distress in her life. She felt that she did not have anyone to talk to. Even though she was always comfortable talking to her boy-friends, she felt that the situation was changing. She spoke with her teachers at school, but it was still not enough. She later learnt that music was the only way through which she could communicate. Poetry was the only way she was able to communicate. When

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[94] Arstailey interviewed in August 2018, Khayelitsha, Site B.

she left high school and began her first year of university, she realised that high school had always protected them from life. Using a metaphor, she said that around the school there was a long wall that was painted white. There were no longer teachers to tell her to submit her work, it was now time to hustle. Poetry helped her with university life. She fell in love with the idea of learning and that everyone can learn in different ways. She saw a quote on Facebook that said that if you want to hide something from a black person, you need to hide it in a book. She wants black people to start opening books and that is why she feels privileged that she can teach black, primary school children. For her, education and art are the same thing because you learn constantly, and you never stop. On the sessions, emcees constantly learn from each other. A person can learn about stage presence and all sorts of different issues. When Artsailey was in high school, she was not scared to stand in front of her classmates but now that she is older, she has been struggling with crowds especially when she is supposed to perform.

Artsailey remembers her first performance at OneCom where she froze. “Samora gave me R10 and said, ‘that is your first performance and you fucked up.’” She had assumed that all her practicing would pay off, but she froze. One of the male artists that were up on the stage with her took over and it was only then that she got up and rapped. Even though this was her first performance, she knew how the crowd would receive her the next time she would perform, but she used this bad experience as motivation to do better in the future. After a few weeks she performed a track with a sampled beat by Miguel called “Adorn” and because the crowd knew the song, they responded positively. She then rapped, and the crowd was responding very well. She was scared like the previous time in OneCom and her mouth was dry, but she continued with her track. She was praised that day by the women in the audience because generally only male artists perform. That is when she said to herself “yes, I am a girl, but I can do this!” Throughout her whole journey, there were always men that helped her to become an artist. She used to feel safe at Coffee Studio and still feels safe at FiveSix Studio. The fact of being a female artist in this industry did not make her feel threatened. Male emcees always encouraged her to be better. When she was a child she used to swim, play marbles and skateboard with these guys, so if she was able to do all those things with boys, why should she be scared now to try hip-hop?

"The reason I am going up those stairs now is because of those kids." Artsailey attributes her ability to stand in front of a crowd to her primary school learners. In class, pupils gave her confidence, as she has to stand in front of them almost every day. Dealing with primary school learners also meant dealing with the parents and this boosted her ability to be on stage. Artsailey still sees herself as a bedroom artist, she feels comfortable rapping in her room, alone. But she is slowly going out of her bedroom door and this is where she currently is in her hip-hop journey.

Both Mic Substance and Artsailey were considered as tomboys and that is why it was relatively easy for them to enter male dominated hip-hop spaces. Strangely, both of them found this male dominated space as a place of refuge where they could subvert the gender roles inflicted on them at home and at school. For both of them being artists means being able to express oneself, be oneself in whatever form they want.

Intombi Zifikile[95]

This section discusses representation of femininity and womanhood through the analysis of lyrics of songs by female Spaza artists. Even if there are few women who occupy dominant positions in Spaza hip-hop, or in hip-hop in general—as women are mostly considered to be "backup singers"—they have paved the way for important critiques of how gender is constructed and performed. Female emcees have used their voices to "speak to gender oppression and bring feminist voices to African hip-hop" (Clark 2018:118). As Kanyi's song *Ungalibali* voices, women also want to be rappers!

Ungalibali[96]

Nantsika mamela	Hey you, listen!
Ndiqond'uba nam, uyabona	I understand that you see?

[95] The girls are here

[96] *Ungalibali* (Do not forget) by Kanyi.

Since, since ubone like, wonke umntu uyacula, uyaqonda?	Since, since like everyone is singing, you see?
Ndiqond'ba nam, andifun'ushiyeka	I also decided that I don't want to be left behind
Nam ndifuna uRapper.	I also want to rap

Clark argues that the mere presence of female artists, even if they do not explicitly challenge gender oppression in their lyrics, embodies a challenge to the hip-hop spaces (Clark 2018). As Kanyi assertively states, a woman in hip-hop needs to have confidence and not forget who she is. In their songs, female rappers speak of women empowerment, of women making their way into the hip-hop scene, of their own understandings of what a woman is. With their body, their "tomboyishness," and their songs they voice the plurality of gendered roles that women occupy in society, they discuss representations of femininity, and tells us about women's conditions in the townships.

In many of her songs, in addition to commentary about the government, society, and religion, Mic Substance promotes women empowerment. Her song *Imbokodo* (rock) discusses the power of women and their strength.

Imbokodo[97]

Ndim Imbokodo	I am a rock
Ndiyi ntombi, ndisiskhukukazi	I am female, I'm a hen
Ndim olu qobo, emanzi andonga imbelukazi	I am a kind of female that is pure, the real deal.
Ndilibhinqa, Ndizinkomo, kwintlali zikayihlo	I am a woman, I am cows in my father's kraal
Ndlibangel'uzidla	This makes me proud

[97] *Imbokodo* by Mic Substance.

This song reflects on the importance of women in society by using two fundamental references: the anti-apartheid struggle and Xhosa tradition.[98] It echoes the freedom song *Wathint' Abafazi*,[99] to remind us of the crucial role that women played in politics during the liberation struggle. It alludes to the fact that traditionally women were considered as a source of wealth, as through marriage they brought cattle to the paternal homestead through the payment of *lobola*.

By using the word *Isisikhukukazi*—which says that without a woman there is no home—and by employing rural imagery which reminds me of the cradle of Xhosa tradition, the Eastern Cape—a hen who nurtures, guides and takes care of the chicks—Mic substance turns the elements that are considered as signs of female vulnerability or powerlessness as source of women's strength. She dedicates the song to the women in her life, her late mother, her grandmother, aunt, and to female artists like Goddesa and Kanyi. This song calls to the strong women of her family, who, like most women in the townships had to raise children on their own. Ironically, women have been a powerful force in the life of most of the male Spaza artists. Most of them grew up without fathers and have composed songs celebrating *umama* —my mother— their love for their mothers and their respect for them. It is interesting to highlight how Mic Substance always saw herself as a tomboy, and how she has always rejected to take up and criticised more "appropriate" feminine gender roles. On the contrary in this song she claims a womanhood that is grounded on traditional Xhosa customs.

In her song *Ungalibali* (Do not forget) Kanyi brings up issues of sexualization and commodification of women's bodies. *Ungalibali* depicts a female artist that faces pressure to sex up her look. In the video, Kanyi is forced by the record executives to wear sexy clothing. Even if she's not happy about this, she first does what she is requested but later in the video

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[98] During the march to the Union Buildings in 1956, the women sang a freedom song: *Wathint' abafazi, Strijdom! wathint' abafazi,wathint' imbokodo,uza kufa!* [When] you strike the women, you.

[99] You strike a rock, you will be crushed [you will die]! The phrase *wathint' abafazi, wathint' imbokodo* has come to represent women's courage and strength in South Africa.

she changes into the clothing that she is comfortable with and performs. *Ungalibali* is about loving yourself, and not having to use your body to be heard. “Do not forget your point of view. Don’t forget yourself.” [100] Both the female artists I interviewed, but especially Mic Substance who is older, expressed that in their career it was important to dress in an appropriate way—a more masculine style, like baggy shorts, sneakers and tops that are not revealing. If the artists were wearing feminine clothing, it had to be “appropriate” looking clothing. For them, avoiding sexy clothing was essential to be considered seriously as artists whose value resides on their music rather than on their bodies. Kanyi in an interview expressed similar remarks:

> I meant I had to deal with that a lot. I did not want people to focus on my body. I would wear things that would not necessarily show off. I really wanted people to hear what I was saying and not look at what I was wearing. I feel I needed to be aware of what I was wearing at the time until I establish myself and then I could be able to wear whatever I wanted. But now I can wear whatever I want because I have a voice.[101]

Noss, a female trapper, said that her body and wearing provocative clothing is what helps her to sell her music. Some scholars have argued that in acting out the roles that are given to women, artists express the internalisation of their own oppression (Clark 2018). Others have argued that this expresses on the contrary women’s agency. For Noss this is her way of making money and making art. She contends that her body will be sexualised regardless of what she is wearing, so why not to use it to her advantage? Some female artists indeed choose to navigate and find agency within the same hip-hop culture that seeks to define them as whores, amoral women, source of entertainment (Richardson 2007). This shows us the multiple and at times contradictory ways in which female artists are asserting their presence in hip-hop.

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[100] (Clark 2018:142).

[101] https://hiphopafrican.com/2017/10/01/hhap-episode-15-kanyi-mavi-on-hip-hop-xhosa-rap-culture-in-south-africa/

In Spaza hip-hop, lyrics offer a social commentary on the life in the township. Kanyi, in her song *Ngqangqa,* speaks of the pressures and problems that females are experiencing living in the townships. *Ngqangqa* at home was called *Nomathamsanqa*, which means blessings and luck. *Nomathamsanqa* was an orphan and once her brother passed away, she was left to fend for herself. She chose the *blesser* route.[102] Young women choose to have a *blesser* so that they can live a luxurious lifestyle, but sometimes it is because it will allow them to support their families.

Ngqangqa[103]

Uphila Ghetto fabulous	Where is Ghetto fabulous
Uyaqonda mos Boss ungathi nqa	You know mos Boss, do not be shocked
Nguye iCherry epheth'iStyle Qha	She is the only babe with style
'Nwele zibomvu, iinzipho zinde	Her hair is red, her nails are long
Gaxe iGolide imhlophe Qhwa	She wears bright white gold
Akanaskhathi uNgQangQa	Ngqangqa does not care
Impama yakhe ilandelwa ngu-gQwagQwa	Her clap comes with bang-bang
UyarhuQwa!	She is being dragged!
Iinyembezi zakhe zonke wazikhama	She dries up all her tears
Mhla wayengcwaba unyana wakhe,	the day she buried her son
Owalala akaphakama	Who slept and never woke up
Bath' uyathwala wathengisa ngempil' omntana	People say that she sold the child's soul
Abahlali bayakhala	The community is crying
Ityala libhalwe emehlweni kaNgQangQa liyabonakala	The case is written in her eyes and it is evident
Ngubani ozakube eme noNgQangQa,	Who will stand with Ngqangqa

[102] *Blesser* is a term usually used in South Africa to describe rich males who give women money in exchange for sex or other pleasure they require.

[103] Ngangqa in Xhosa means sweetheart or darling.

Xa kusonakala? When everything goes wrong?

Ngangqa is living a lavish lifestyle: *Nwele zibomvu, iinzipho zinde*—Her hair is red, her nails are long. These are the metaphors for all the material possessions she gets from the *blesser*. However, there are some dark and dangerous elements in the life that she lives: the guns and the drugs. She is willing to face the consequence. She gets consumed by the lifestyle and she starts selling drugs using female domestic workers to sell them to their white employers. Being ruthless and heartless causes Ngqangqa to lose her baby boy. Because people in the township were seeing her succeeding, they blamed her for the child's death, saying that she killed the child to get the wealth. Witchcraft is indeed associated to wealth and jealousy.

This song also engages with a deeper critique of gender roles. Everything that *Ngqangqa* goes through is seen in a negative light. Usually when a woman has a *blesser* no one blames the man for taking advantage of her, but rather females are seen as people who throw themselves at men and as people who do not respect themselves.

In this chapter we see that songs mirror the prominent ways in which women are portrayed in society: mothers, good daughters, witches and whores. These are the stereotypical roles that female artists have to confront and challenge every day. In an interview with Hype It Up, after performing *Andizenzi* (I did not choose to be this way), Kanyi explained that the song was about herself and her journey as a hip-hop artist.[104] In the chorus she asks: *Uba ayizukwenzwa ndim izokwenza ngubani?* (If I do not do it, who is going to do it?) In this song Kanyi is referring to her hip-hop journey, asking if she does not do it, who will? She also explains that it is about her life in general and the question means different things for different people.

> It should happen naturally because I can only write as a woman, I do not know how it's like to be a guy, I have never rapped as a guy, I don't know how it feels like to be a guy or act like a guy. I just found it a weird question because it feels

[104] Hype It Up is a youth entertainment show about the entertainment world as well as music. Catch us on channel 263 Cape Town TV (CTV), every Thursday and Friday evening.

> natural because I have never been anything else. But of course, I feel that is a responsibility as an artist, but it's my responsibility not to just teach the girls but the guys too. Uhmm for instance I was in an interview asking about a group back home called Godessa and they asked what the influence of Godessa has to other women who listen and do hip-hop. I said well Godessa was an influence to hip-hop in general, to guys too. It feels like female artists must be appealing to females only. Girls are not the only people who you influence; you influence whoever listens to you.[105]

Self-definition is one tool that is essential to women's empowerment. Women should define who they are first, before allowing society to define who they are.

[105] Kanyi Mavi in an interview with https://hiphopafrican.com/2017/10/01/hhap-episode-15-kanyi-mavi-on-hip-hop-xhosa-rap-culture-in-south-africa/ with HHAP.

Conclusion

In the mid and late 2000s Spaza hip-hop was making its way outside the black townships of Cape Town (Dowset 2017). Everything seemed to be going well for artists and some of them had contracts with major record labels, where they were enjoying having studio sessions and were able to record quality music. Everyone wanted to be a Spaza artist. There was a positive change within the music genre and there was the feeling that nothing was going to stop Spaza hip-hop from progressing within the music industry. In 2018 much has changed when it comes to Spaza music. All the artists lost their deals with the major record labels and distribution companies, which led to the growth of independent labels which are owned by township-based producers and sound engineers. It is clear that the optimism of the new millennium has vanished as most of the Spaza artists were not able to move away from the township. Artists who are known to be Spaza artists are also wanting to move away from being boxed into the categories of Spaza hip-hop and are wanting a more flexible way for their music. This is turn is making artists move away from being called Spaza hip-hop artists.

The music itself underwent many changes, while once one could easily say what Spaza was about and distinguish it from other genres, the Spaza music that is produced today sounds like any other commercial hip-hop music. While Spaza artists move with the times, the nature of there music is changing: the beats are no longer simple and perceived as bad quality; as now even local sounds ingenues and the music is getting more sophisticated. Yet those "bad beats"—one of the main feature of Spaza—were a reminder that things are still not easy for people in post-apartheid South Africa and that a lot still needs to be done to improve some social aspects of life for them. It is quite clear that there are not enough media platforms for artists and producers without any financial backing. For those who have the financial means to get their music to the public via these media platforms for music distribution, there is still a struggle for the music to be listened. Local audience they too are struggling financially to be able to access these media platforms as they require subscription fees and most importantly Internet connection.

Spaza music still plays different roles for the audience, one of them being a form of a memory. The songs being sung create a memory to which the artists and audience are able to

relate to. The songs are usually about something that happened to them or someone they know. Most of the people in the township share the same problems, it is then easy for them to connect with the hard life of the township that is sung. These songs can also be about humour, everyday phrases that people in the township know about. Artists create memory also by using the old Xhosa traditional songs, making those that know them also remember a time when they used to listen to those song when they were growing up.

While Spaza is trying to find itself in this new digital space, trap artists seem to become more popular in the townships. Contrary to Spaza, trap artists mainly focus on beats rather than lyrics, more on music that on the message. Fans enjoy trap because it is trending right now and because fans are tired of being depressed by Spaza songs and would rather forget their problems and dance to great beats. Even for underground music, digital technologies have become crucial in the process of making and distributing tracks and albums, and this has resulted in a massive shift in how Spaza hip-hop music reaches its audiences. While some are still using park sessions, events and open mic session to get their music across, many use medias like Facebook, Spotify, SoundCloud, YouTube and many others to make their works heard. It is clear that the growth of the global village is providing more spaces for artists to distribute their music. However, many Spaza artists are still finding it hard to get money for and from their music. Very few of them are able to achieve increased levels of recognition, outside circles of the fans that already know them. Gatekeepers are still in control of who's music is relevant and it is quite clear that this doesn't apply to Spaza hip hop which is rarely broadcasted or radios or TV programmes.

Despite hip-hop being a voice of the voiceless, Spaza is overwhelmingly dominated by males. Though there has been and there are female artists and fans in the scene, they still occupy a marginal space. The lyrics of most of the songs that are written by men still misrepresent women and use videos to represent female sexuality in a negative light (Kerr 2014). Females are seen as objects for male pleasure. In videos women are only seen as useful if they are naked and dancing. There is also an increased need to police female bodies due to tradition, religion and other factors. This research seeks to contribute to the larger debates on female representations in hip-hop. My work shows the struggles women undergo when they attempt to participate into Spaza hip hop spaces, the ways in which many female fans and artists are stereotyped, and how men still deny access to them. Unless very famous

like in the case of Kanyi, female artists are ridiculed and made to feel small because they are doing a man's "thing," rapping. However, female artists still continue in these hard conditions, challenging conventional understanding of gender and claiming their right to be whoever they want. Spaza hip-hop female artists represent themselves and the other females in their songs, telling us about what women go through in the townships.

Even if it seems that Spaza hip-hop is on the verge is disappearing, or on the brink of a major evolution, what remains clear is that hip-hop in Khayelitsha will never die.

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