Saman Hamdi

Hip Hop's Organic Pedagogues

Teaching, Learning, and Organizing in Dakar and New York –
Between Non-Profits and Social Movements

Universitätsverlag Göttingen

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Göttingen Studies in Cultural
Anthropology/European Ethnology
Volume 19

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How to Navigate this Book: A Guide for Academics & Hip Hop Practitioners

Dear Hip Hop[1] fam, this book is for you. Dear academically interested readers, this book is for you, too. I know that I am writing for (at least) two quite different crowds and your interests in my research and the whole Hip Hop pedagogy and activism cosmos probably differ. Since it is quite a long read, allow me to explain how to navigate this book.

This text is based on my thesis research and is both a Hip Hop and an academic endeavor. Being a Hip Hop activist myself, I set out to investigate how Hip Hop practitioners, i.e. rappers, dancers, DJs, and style writers (aka graffiti artists) in Dakar and New York City use their cultural practices for activist projects. I spent over 7 months in the field visiting jams, concerts, and DJing-, rap- and dance workshops. I attended university seminars, sat in organizational offices, regularly dropped by neighborhood centers, took part in protest rallies, and visited Hip Hop conferences. I spent half of this time in Dakar, Senegal, where Hip Hop culture is highly political and where Hip Hop artists, and especially rappers have organized mass movements against authoritarian presidents. The other half of the field research, I spent in the culture's birthplace, New York City (and Washington DC) visiting Hip Hop organizations with a long history of non-profit organizing and ties to social movements.

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[1] I follow KRS-One (2009) in capitalizing Hip Hop out of sensitivity towards the practitioner perspective.

In both places, I talked to organizers, interviewed teaching artists, and danced and rhymed with them in improvisational cyphers[2] (the latter more than amateurishly). I exchanged with students and mentees, journalists, and Hip Hop scholars. All of these exchanges took place informally at jams, events and hang-outs, as well as more formally in semi-structured interviews and group discussions. I focused on the Hip Hop artists' social, educational, and political projects. In this book I retell the stories of how these people use their own learning experience in the culture to transform classrooms, build relationships, organizations and careers, organize the scene and communities of practice, and work towards social and political change.

Concerning this research, you my fellow Hip Hop teaching artists, event organizers, and political activists, might not care much for theoretical details and super differentiated analysis. You probably want to know about the actual methods of how other Hip Hop activists in New York City and Dakar teach, organize, make a living, and structure their organizations and even social movements. You might want to know about tools and tweaks for your own teaching, or organizing practice.

My fellow academics, I'm sure you want to understand the complications and contradictions of the field of Hip Hop activism and gain a realistic impression of the analyzed projects' transformative potential in a larger context of today's capitalist societies at a moment of crisis of neoliberal hegemony. You will probably want to know about my methodical and theoretical approach, as well as the contributions the analyzed projects bring towards pedagogical theory, sociology, and cultural studies. Let me break down for you what to expect from every chapter:

1. Generally speaking, I advise you to start by reading the introduction. You will get some context of this research, some working definitions of Hip Hop culture, and more directions.

2. Chapter 2 is more for academic readers, as you will learn about this thesis' specific research questions, the theories, and the methodological groundwork. If you fellow Hip Hop practitioner want to check out where I am coming from (and if I'm legit) you might want to read 2.3.1 about my personal background. You might also consider the literature review of Hip Hop studies (2.1). If not, you could skip this chapter.

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[2] The term cypher in Hip Hop culture is used to describe the circular format of practicing the elements of breaking and other dance forms, rapping and beatboxing. A cypher is composed of artistic practitioners only, who take turns of performing a dance, rap, or beatbox solo in it, to which the others then respond with a most often improvised performance of their own. The call and response mechanism, the democratic nature of communication, with no border between performers and crowd and many other aspects make this space one of the most important sites of Hip Hop cultural practice. The term cypher is derived from the Arabic word for 0 (i.e. a circle). It came to HH via the Five-Percenter Nation, a small religious sect highly influential on HHC, with a very eccentric reading of Islam (cf. Rappe & Stöger, 2017, p. 153f.).

3. In the third chapter, I give a brief overview of Senegalese Hip Hop's socio-economic, and cultural context, its history, and its political character. This chapter helps explain why Senegalese Hip Hop is so explicitly political and provides some context for later chapters.

4. The fourth chapter might be interesting for all of you, as it initiates the empirical analysis. Four different types of Hip Hop non-profit organizations are analyzed ranging from neighborhood centers to Hip Hop educational service providers. The reader learns how they became the institutions they are today. Activists looking for organizational models, the advantages, and typical problems of each type can take a closer look here. At the same time, an initial observation of the field, its forces, and incentives is given.

5. & 6. The fifth and sixth chapters look at classroom-based Hip Hop teaching and learning. The fifth chapter focuses on the practices, spaces, and relationships of Hip Hop classrooms. It describes how teaching artists use Hip Hop cultural practice to transform these spaces, how they teach Hip Hop crafts and their different models of mentoring. The sixth chapter focuses more on the norms and content of classroom-based HHC. This includes the mastering of artistic and political foundations, different types of curricula, social justice content, and a final artistic performance. Both chapters look at how teaching artists transform classrooms into "funky" Hip Hop spaces and look at difficulties of such practices.

7. Chapter Seven zooms in on the scene(s) and their specific practices of Hip Hop learning and community organizing. The focus is more on Senegalese projects because here non-profits and cultural centers are more oriented towards informal scene types of learning. The chapter analyzes different Hip Hop events, teaching relationships in the scene, and the educational and organizing efforts to professionalize Hip Hop artists.

8. Chapter Eight primarily looks at the "Y'en a Marre" movement – a unique case in the world. This movement founded by some of Senegal's most popular rappers could mobilize for mass protests and organize more committed members. This analysis is quite technical, but it allows more general insights into HHC's political organizing, its potential, and its difficulties, especially when working under authoritarian governments and via non-profits with international funding.

9. In the discussion, i.e. Chapter Nine, I give a broad overview of the findings and answer the research questions as far as the empirical and theoretical insights allow. I discuss the accomplishments of the activists, as well as the structural setup of the non-profit field and the financing issues of Hip Hop's institutionalization. I also explain the title of this book and introduce a theoretical distinction between the roles of what Gramsci calls "organic intellectuals" and what I call Hip Hop's "organic pedagogues".

I hope that this little manual helps to navigate what has become neither an exclusive manual of how to use Hip Hop culture for social, educational, and political projects, nor simply an abstract theoretical discussion of the field. I am hopeful the work will

benefit my fellow Hip Hop practitioners, question some of our assumptions and securities about the impact of Hip Hop activism, as well as inspire us to reflect and recalibrate our work. At the same time, I hope that the academically interested reader will also draw some insight from my research, to be able to add to the theoretical and methodical canon, and further question, critique, and build on my work. After all, this is what Hip Hop culture and academia share: a striving for the growth of our collective knowledge and community.

1 Introduction: "Where We're at!"

"Back in the day […] Chuck D called Hip Hop the 'Black people's CNN.' Well now, Hip-Hop is more like Fox News. It's biased, and highly suspect. Hip Hop is still cool at a party. But to me, Hip Hop has never been strictly a party; it is also there to elevate consciousness."[3]

Rapper/poet Saul Williams in CNN interview (Williams & CNN, 2005)

50 years after its creation, Hip Hop culture (HHC) and its four original art forms of breaking (commercially known as breakdancing), style writing (aka graffiti/aerosol art), DJing, and rap music are everywhere.[4] They emerged during the early 1970s in some of the poorest parts of the wealthiest country in the world, in the Black neighborhoods of the ethnically and culturally heterogeneous Bronx, in deindustrialized New York City. Hip Hop has now gone global, with rap music topping the charts and streaming lists in almost every country. Style writing is part of advertisements, inspires large fashion brands, and is marketed as "street art" in expensive galleries.

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[3] While Wiliams' is critical of CNN as well, his point is about the topical shift in Rap music since the late 80s.

[4] Practitioners often reject the terms "graffiti" and "breakdancing," since they stand emblematically for the naming and exploitation of the artistic practices by cultural outsiders, such as journalists and media corporations, in disregard of Hip Hop's own aesthetic traditions and terminology (cf. Rappe & Stöger, 2014; Schloss, 2009).

The original Hip Hop dance of breaking is now an Olympic discipline, Hip Hop DJs perform at huge commercial venues, and rappers act in Hollywood movies, on Broadway and perform at the White House or during the Super Bowl half-time show. Beyond these spheres of great fame, big money, and large-scale industrial marketing, Hip Hop can be found around the globe in very different cultural and sometimes less commodified manifestations. Be it at DJ competitions in Japan, in Brazil's political style writing scene, at freestyle rap events in Berlin, breaking battles in Ukraine, or in French theaters, the values and face-to-face practices of the culture are used for very different purposes all over the globe. In addition to goals of entertainment and enjoyment, the culture's modes of learning and pedagogy are used in social projects in South Africa, the Philippines, and Palestine, American high school classrooms, seminars at Ivy League colleges, as well as German special needs schools. Coming from New York's rugged streets and block parties of the 1970s, HHC, with all its contradictions, is now – 50 years later – also in the process of entering various institutions: from college campuses, public and private schools, museums, theaters, the culture and entertainment industries, to mental health counseling and cultural programs in prisons. In 2018, Kendrick Lamar was the first rapper awarded a Pulitzer Prize, which shows how Hip Hop simultaneously takes place in spheres of so-called "high culture" and "lowbrow culture", in informal face-to-face settings, and the various popular culture industries and their products.

Hip Hop also carries political weight, with rappers in Senegal and Burkina Faso being credited with preventing authoritarian developments in their countries through rap-based social movements (cf. Prause & Wienkoop, 2017). Senegalese rappers have been invited to the presidential palace to discuss the state of the nation and have written diss tracks against their presidents. At the same time, US state intelligence has sponsored opposition rappers in Cuba through USAid, while the Cuban state also sponsors its own MCs[5] with socialist lyrics (cf. Baker, 2012; Resnikoff, 2014; Weaver, 2014). Rapper El General is ascribed a key role in providing a soundtrack to the Arab Spring by crystalizing frustrations with former dictator Ben Ali and fueling the Tunisian revolution before turning Islamist himself (cf. Gana, 2012), and liberal US rappers mobilize for voter registration and often campaign for Democratic Party candidates (cf. Forman, 2010). Kanye West has gone from criticizing how *"George Bush doesn't care about Black people"* in 2005 in the wake of Hurricane Katrina to supporting authoritarian, right-wing demagogue president Trump and meeting with neo-Nazis and fascists to agree on anti-Semitic agendas. However, not only the explicitly political or "conscious" rap genres and right-wing rappers are political: Western mainstream rap music, with its often misogynist, violent "gangsta" and neoliberal lyrics, is used not only by rappers become billionaire business moguls to spread the myth of the American dream. It is also evoked by conservative pundits in the US to argue for a better-funded police force and prisons and to legitimize a strict law-and-order logic (cf. Kitwana, 2016; Rose, 2008). In

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[5] MC is the Hip Hop term for a rapper and the acronym originally stands for master of ceremony.

courtrooms, the same lyrics serve as evidence to incriminate Black and Brown youth in the larger context of the US-American prison-industrial complex (cf. Nielson & Dennis, 2019). In Germany, even Nazi rap has emerged and is banned from and re-uploaded to YouTube. At the same time, there are leftist and Marxist, queer-feminist, and anti-imperialist rappers who represent quite different ideological projects. They organize reading circles, antiracist protest rallies, use rap as a means to politically educate, host dance events with decolonial educational content and work with youth in and outside of prisons to open up perspectives of social justice and community.

Simultaneously to Hip Hop's more explicit politics, it functions on a more interpersonal level as well. Practitioners all around the globe live and breathe the culture, bob their heads in unison, fill cyphers, and dedicate their lives to a pursuit of style and collective practice. Hip Hop's art forms move kids and adults alike, bring people together, forge friendships, and build communities. People all over the world engage in Hip Hop culture's practices, which bear similarities to indigenous cultures of humanity's past of communal dancing, singing and painting, which modern Western humans have been estranged from through waves of modernization and imperial control of cultural practice (cf. Sakolsky & Ho, 1996).

Hip Hop culture carries great meaning for its practitioners. This becomes clear when looking at how MC and teaching artist Y? describes his first time in a rap cypher: *"I don't know what I said or did, but I shut down the cypher. They're like 'Aaaaaah' And I was like 'holy shit', and it was one of the greatest feelings in my life […] It was a high that came from unity. And then that was so beautiful to me."* (cf. 5.3.1 for the full story). In summary, Hip Hop bears a lot potential for fulfilling and empowering its practitioners and means a lot to them. It has its origins in the lifeworld of some of the most oppressed people in the center of global capitalism, which bears many contradictions. As a result, HHC is equally full of contradictions. It is also full of different, ideological, political, personal, and collective projects.

Only some of these make up this thesis' research focus – namely Hip Hop's social, educational, and political projects of social justice and transformation in New York City and Dakar. The research addresses their teaching and learning practices, the relationships, the types of organizations and events, the classrooms and the scene settings, as well as the larger field of these projects between NGOization and social movements. To grasp my choice of the cultural and face to face projects and why I do not write much on the more commercialized spheres, a few basic definitions and clarifications are in order.

1.1 What is Hip Hop? Definitions, Controversies and the Central Research Question

Ethnomusicologist Schloss (2009, p. 4 ff.) attributes many controversies and disputes surrounding Hip Hop to semantic motives. For example, US critics of sexism,

consumerism, and violence in Hip Hop speak of a different phenomenon than a Hip Hop activist[6] explaining the culture's pedagogy to her students. Schloss roughly distinguishes three different meanings of the term Hip Hop: In the first variant, which is synonymous with Hip Hop culture, the term Hip Hop *"refers collectively to a group of related art forms in different media (visual, sound, movement) that were practiced in Afro-Caribbean, African American, and Latino neighborhoods in New York City in the 1970s."* This definition includes the people who practice these art forms, the events where they are practiced. This definition also includes the various *"contemporary activities that maintain those traditions"* (Schloss, 2009, p. 4). One of the most central aspects here is that HHC functions in face-to-face interactions. Since it happens among practitioners, there is usually no final product to be sold and no pure profit motive can be identified as the main driving force behind the practice[7]. Thus, HHC is done and experienced in the moment and not primarily produced, bought, and sold according to market mechanisms.

The second definition understands Hip Hop as "a form of popular music that developed, or was developed, out of hip-hop culture. This hip-hop, also known as 'rap music,' resulted from the interaction between hip-hop culture and the preexisting music industry" (Schloss, 2009, p. 5). This Hip Hop does have a product to sell, namely rap records to be streamed or bought, and its most famous proponents enter highly profitable advertisement and sponsorship agreements, Hollywood contracts, and product placement deals in music videos and on social media. This commodification and interaction between the culture and entertainment/mass media industries was initiated at the end of the 1970s[8]. This industrial branch of mostly rap music has grown extensively during the ensuing decades, with media monopolies and large corporations gaining more influence over the initially decentralized independent label and radio structures (Chang, 2006; cf. Hart, 2010; Rose, 2008). This second definition mainly encompasses the Hip Hop art form of rapping in its commodified and industrial manifestations. The same distinction could be made, however, for the commodification of Hip Hop's other art forms.

The third understanding refers to the "Hip Hop generation" and is "increasingly used as a kind of loose demographic designation for contemporary African American youth, regardless of whether or not they have any overt connection to rap music or to other hip-hop arts" (Schloss, 2009, p. 5). On the one hand, conservative critics employ this term to evade openly racist tones and still refer to mainly African American men in a demeaning and more subtly racist way. On the other hand, it is used

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[6] I leave "Hip Hop activism" undefined to encompass the various projects carried out under this umbrella term.

[7] This does not mean practitioners take an anticommercial stance. There are other things to be gained, such as prestige, skills, connections, etc. via which one can make money. This process is explored throughout the book.

[8] Thus, for almost a decade, HHC could consolidate its practices, aesthetics, and values in and around the microcosm of the New York Bronx, somewhat independently of the culture industries' profit and incentive structures (Chang, 2006a, p. 7 ff.).

by more benevolent analysts and members of this generation themselves to analyze the various intersections of culture, economics, education, and the political system (cf. e.g. Cook, 2004; Emdin, 2010a; Kitwana, 2002, 2016). Kitwana (2002) argues that the Hip Hop generation's cultural upheaval is a direct reaction to the criminalization, murder, and oppression of the previous generation's political struggles. The leaders and organizers of the civil rights and Black Power movements of the 1950s and 1960s had been either murdered, jailed, or forced into exile by the FBI's counter-intelligence program, and the movements and their organizations were undermined and destroyed (cf. Taylor, 2016). Lacking a collective political project, movements, and leaders, the next generation of impoverished African Americans turned to the cultural outlet of Hip Hop for self-expression and assertion. One might assume that this cultural and symbolic rebellion mirrors what Hall et al. (1991, p. 189) called the sub-cultural attempt of "a 'magical resolution' of class contradictions," which remains "magical" because it fails "to pose an alternative, potentially counter-hegemonic solution". But whether Hip Hop rebellion really remains an individualized and symbolic endeavor, or whether it can contribute to projects and movements with a social justice agenda is a central theme of this book.

Jeff Chang (2006) uses the term "Hip Hop generation" differently from Kitwana to refer primarily to practitioners themselves. He tells the story from its early beginnings of face-to-face practice to the economic exploitation of the cultural practices by rap moguls, major labels, and media corporations. As some of the practitioner circles are more ethnically integrated today, Chang reads HH as an originally Black art form, which has become more ethnically diverse by inviting other people into the practice and others appropriating it.[9]

This dissertation focuses mainly on the first definition of Hip Hop as a culture with its face-to-face qualities. This "canonized" version of the Hip Hop culture includes five elements in its original and most widespread interpretation[10], four of which are the culture's original art forms: breaking, MCing/rapping, style writing, and DJing. The fifth element, "knowledge of self", includes reflection about the self, community, and society for self-emancipation (Chang, 2006, p. 89f.; Love, 2016, p. 415ff.). It is this definition of HHC which guides my main research question: How do practitioners use Hip Hop culture (HHC) and its artistic practices, pedagogies, spaces, events, and relationships in social, educational, and political projects? The second and third definitions of Hip Hop as industry and generation serve to analyze these projects in the context of mediatized popular culture, its ideologies, and economic and socio-historic conditions. I spell out my more detailed research questions in Chapter Two. Let us now turn to the three main interests of my research.

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[9] The ethnic dimension of the originally Black American culture is discussed in more detail in chapter 2 and 8.
[10] KRS-One (2009) adds beatboxing, street-fashion, -language, -knowledge, and -entrepreneurialism.

1.2 Research Interests

1.2.1 HHC's Pedagogical Practices, Spaces, and Relationships

Initially, the motivation for this thesis was practical and a little selfish: I have been dancing Breaking for over 26 years and listening to rap music for almost three decades. For the last ten years, I have organized Hip Hop cultural, social, and educational projects with a political impetus[11]. My motivation for writing the thesis was twofold: On the one hand, I wanted to gain institutional legitimacy for the projects I was organizing. On the other hand, I followed the "normal" learning route within Hip Hop culture: I wanted to gain knowledge directly from far more experienced Hip Hop practitioners doing what I was doing. In some ways, I was looking for "a manual" on how Hip Hop can be used to transform society, its individuals, and collectives (which this thesis has not fully turned out to be). To this end, I chose to focus on two geographical settings: first, that of the culture's birthplace, New York City, because of its long tradition of such projects both informally through Hip Hop culture and in the realm of Hip Hop non-profit organizations. The latter were established in the wake of austerity cuts to public schools' music and arts programs as a privatized and outsourced replacement. The second geographical context I wanted to study was that of the Senegalese capital, Dakar, and its impoverished suburbs/Banlieues. Here, such projects equally abound in the form of small and large non-profit organizations. While the US context was an easy choice for me due to the organizers' long-lasting experience with institutionalizing such social and educational Hip Hop projects, I chose the second context because of Senegalese Hip Hop's globally exceptional political character. This political approach found its internationally famous climax in 2011–2012 with "Y'en a Marre" – a social movement founded by some of the country's most popular rappers and journalists. In alliance with other opposition forces, they prevented a constitutional coup in 2012 via rap music, mass protests, and organizing of a grassroots council network (cf. Chapter 8, and Nelson, 2014; Prause, 2013; Savané & Sarr, 2012).

During my four field trips, I spent almost four months at each location and collected a lot of data via methods of ethnographic fieldwork – namely participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and group discussions, as well as more informal conversations. I analyzed my material, consisting of field notes/diaries and interview transcripts, via a very open form of qualitative content analysis. I coded and categorized the texts and inductively developed this book's structure from them. My research's focus on pedagogical practices, spaces and relationships is ordered according to three larger contexts: classrooms, scenes, and social movements. Chapters 5 and 6 treat the spaces and relationships, which Hip Hop teaching artists

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[11] Mainly breaking workshops with refugee children and fighting their families' deportations but also leftist formats of Hip Hop-based education at German high schools and university seminars, HH film festivals and jams.

create inside classrooms, as well as the content of their teaching. Chapter 7 focuses on the spaces, relationships, values and practices of teaching and learning in Hip Hop scenes. The last empirical chapter (8) treats the ways the Y'en a Marre movement uses rap and other Hip Hop practices for their public pedagogy in the context of a social movement. It also contains a short section on rapped news reporting. These four empirical chapters constitute the analysis of the more applied pedagogical practices. They can – in parts - be read as part of the manual which I initially set out to collect.

However, while it was my initial goal, I did not only find the *manual* I had been looking for. In addition to the experienced Hip Hop pedagogues, artists, activists, and their students, I also found a field of Hip Hop non-profits[12] full of competition, funding-focused self-advertisements, as well as various social and educational setups and contexts. Due to these early findings and my supervisors' guidance this book has become a manual only in minor parts, which leads me to my second research interest.

1.2.2 Organizational Types of HH Non-profits, the Field & its Forces

More than a manual, this book has become more of a sociocultural anthropology of the field of Hip Hop non-profits. In addition to the practice focus on its educators, students, practitioners, organizers, and political activists, the book zooms in on the field's contradictions and conflicts and its (emergent) institutional structures. Accordingly, this second research interest lies at the meso-level, i.e., the organizational/field level and the birds-eye view of HHC's institutionalization via non-profit projects.

Hip Hop's history of institutionalization in cultural industries has been thoroughly analyzed (cf. Chang, 2006; Rose, 2008; Scharenberg, 2001), as well as its employment in educational institutions, such as high schools and universities (cf. Emdin & Adjapong, 2018; M. Hall, 2011; M. L. Hill & Petchauer, 2015; Seidel, 2011, 2022). However, Hip Hop's "NGOization" has not been investigated more comprehensively yet.[13] This thesis intends to fill this gap in the literature and look at this form of institutionalization of the five-decade-old cultural practices. I look particularly at institutional setups and how they influence the analyzed practices. An overview of different Hip Hop non-profits is given in Chapter 4. I present four different (ideal-typical) organizational types to analyze how they and the larger field influence the project practice. For each organizational type, I give a few empirical examples to show how the organizations have grown and talk about their most common

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[12] Similar to most actors in the field, I use the term non-profit as synonymous with non-profit organization.

[13] Hip Hop education pioneer and activist Martha Diaz and her think-tank Hip Hop education center have provided brief overviews of some of the different Hip Hop non-profits, their sizes, and missions (cf. Diaz, n.d., 2011, 2020). However, there is no larger sociological analysis of these different projects yet.

practices, spaces, event-types, as well as their most common problems. In addition to these types of non-profit organizations, the field's forces are identified, including social movements on the one hand and large private and public funders with particular agendas on the other.

1.2.3 HHC's Potential for Transforming Society, Collectives, and Selves

This third research interest requires situating the analysis of the different practices and organizations in the bigger historical and systemic picture. In the empirical chapters, I look at the projects' potential for the emancipation of individuals, collectives, and even society (Chapter 8), while also analyzing their reactionary elements to assess their impacts in a differentiated manner. In the discussion, I identify possible intervention points in the current culture of neoliberal capitalism via HHC's projects. A specific focus concerning this question lies on the culture's potential and limits for social movement organizing and mobilizing. The thesis aims to answer the larger questions only after looking into the prior ones, collecting arguments, and bringing the empirical findings into dialogue with theory and academic research in a second step. This order and thought process also mirrors the structure of this book.

As mentioned in the preface, Chapters 1 and 2 focus on the theoretical and methodical set up. Chapter 3 provides some context for Senegal. Chapter 4 through 8 represent the empirical foundation of the work starting with the field and the organizational level (4), as well as classrooms (5 & 6). Chapter 7 then focuses on learning and organizing in scene(s) and Chapter 8 zooms in on social movement practice of Y'en a Marre's public pedagogy and aspects of Ngoization. Chapter 9 closes the loop by discussing the findings and placing them in theoretical context and linking them to the various disciplines affected.

On a final note, I want to express my sincere gratitude to my many informants, interviewees, fellow Hip Hop practitioners, and organizers to whom I owe the insights in this book and who helped me come full circle with its 360 pages (unplanned). Even though I tried to be as factually correct as possible, this work - as any academic, and in fact any human project - is sure to contain some errors, for which I want to take full responsibility. Being a Bboy (dancer), I see errors as possibilities for innovation, since many foundational breaking moves were born from "mistakes" later perfected and formed into new basics. Here, the chance of these errors is for you dear reader to find and correct them in our collective research endeavor of Hip Hop studies and Hip Hop activism. Please reach out to me and share. Each One Teach One!

2 Points of Departure: Theory, Research Questions & Reflections on my Travels

"I kick a hole in the speaker, pull the plug then I jet, **back to the lab** *without a mic to grab. So then I add all the rhymes I had. One after the other one, then I make another one"*
(**Rakim**. *"Microphone Fiend". Follow the Leader.* UNI, MCA Records. 1988)

In these verses, lyrically pioneering MC Rakim recounts how after being told as a kid he was too small to be on the mic, he jetted "back to the lab" to work on his rhymes. For Hip Hop practitioners, "taking it back to the lab" means taking one's style (be it dance, style writing, lyrical, or DJ skills) back to the training grounds to rework and refine it. The lab period is one of reflection, of studying the history, artistic foundations, and the masters of one's discipline as well as what makes them great, to rethink and reshape one's approach. New skills are trained, stylistic experiments are conducted, and training and learning methods are researched and exchanged if one has a mentor, a crew, or a circle of fellow practitioners. Metaphorically speaking, "taking it back to the lab" in terms of academic Hip Hop research thus means looking at the broader field, relevant literature, and bodies of theory to know where to situate one's work.

Therefore, I will start this chapter with the first of my four points of departure, i.e., the literature review, by looking at the field of Hip Hop studies more generally (2.1.1) and the main lines of argument. Under 2.1.2, I will then focus on the subfield

of Hip-Hop-based education studies, which investigates how HHC's elements, practices, worldviews, and values can be employed for educational purposes.

Academia's originality principle of generating new and original knowledge to add to the existing body of empirical research and draw theoretical conclusions is also shared by HHC. In Hip Hop, you also have and stand out among the different aesthetic schools, find your niche, and define your style recognizably while showing playful mastery of the basics and foundations of your craft. Thus, after laying out the main lines of argument of some of Hip Hop studies works relevant to my research and identifying a gap in the research, I will in turn explain where and how my thesis comes into play (2.1.3). As a second point of departure (2.2), I will lay out the ethnographic methods I have used to access the fields of Hip-Hop-based educational projects and activism in Dakar and New York City and my method of data analysis. I will explain the trials and tribulations of having acquired my data through fieldwork with a heavy focus on interviews and what this implies for validity claims and my analysis. As a third point of departure (2.3), I will reflect upon my research, my assumptions, my reading of the data, and my biases. Finally, as the last point of departure (2.4), I will briefly introduce five theoretical frames, through which I will view HHC and its non-profit projects.

2.1 First Point of Departure: Literature Review, Hip Hop Scholarship, and Education

2.1.1 Hip Hop Studies (HHS)

Hip Hop culture and particularly rap music have been studied inside and outside of academia since the late 1980s and early 1990s. Following the first Hip Hop studies (HHS) conference at Howard University in 1991, there are now Hip Hop studies conferences in Cambridge and Harvard, Hip Hop seminars at Ivy League colleges, and Hip Hop scholarship exists – as its objects and subjects of study – in almost every country in the world.[14] However, HHS does not have a shared scientific base or understanding since it is not a discipline in itself. It is rather an area of study where different disciplines intersect, such as the social sciences and cultural studies, linguistics, literature, musicology, dance studies, cultural anthropology, education

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[14] Further examples are the #HipHopEd conference at Columbia Teachers College, UCLA Riverside's Hip Hop Conference, and the European Hip Hop Studies Network. Hip Hop's academic institutionalization is going full force. Hip Hop archives exist at Cornell and Harvard University, and Hip Hop museums are being established, such as a large Hip Hop section in Washington DC's prestigious African American history museum, the Hip Hop Museum in the Bronx, or Berlin's style writing museum Urban Nation. These projects are usually very contested in the scene and are especially critiqued by those practitioners who are not involved by the institutions. They criticize the institutionalization of their artistic craft along the diverse lines of legitimacy within Hip Hop (cf. 7.5.4). This is also due to the fact that such paid positions are rather rare.

sciences, psychology, and pedagogy. These writings on HHC are too numerous to recapitulate here. I will thus just summarize some of the main arguments of HHS' most seminal works first and secondly focus on some of the main arguments of Hip-Hop-based education studies (HHBES). This allows me to situate my own research and identify the gaps that this thesis intends to fill.

Some of the earliest accounts of HHS were written from a journalistic angle (cf. e.g. Dufresne, 1992; George, 1994; Toop, 1994) and treated HHC's early face to face cultural practice in the Bronx only shortly in passing. Similar to later academic works, they focused on understanding Hip Hop as rap music (and the Hip Hop movies of the 1980s) in popular culture industries. This focus is due to the genre's mainstream relevance and the general tendency of cultural studies and humanities towards textual analysis. Linguists and literary scholars, of course, analyze text and language first and neglect bodily, emotive, motoric, sensual, and image-based analyses. In addition, it is always easier to analyze rap lyrics and media discourses than to go out into the field, participate in the practices, and interact with the practitioners. Early seminal works include journalist Toop's (1994) classic "Rap Attack" (and its updated reissues), where he gives one of the earliest accounts of rap history from a ghetto phenomenon to a component of the culture industry. In his non-academic piece, Toop links America's racist realities to rap's different subgenres ranging from Black-nationalist political branches to porn and party rap. He points out generational links between the civil rights, the Black Power movement, and Hip Hop. In his anthology "Yo! Rap Revolution," Dufresne (1992) similarly analyzes the historical links between the transatlantic slave trade, rap's political forefathers (Gil Scott Heron/The Last Poets), and Afrocentrist rap of the 1980s.

Rose's extraordinary "Black Noise" (1994) in American Studies discusses the politics and US contexts of rap and Black culture and points out how criticism and appropriation of rap music by the white American mainstream follows historical examples of other Black musical formats. She argues that the way Eurocentric academics and journalists do not recognize rap as music shows the racist perceptions of Afrodiasporic practices. Instead of fulfilling Western standards of harmony/melody, rap music innovates polyrhythmic layering, written and oral cultural versioning, and technological manipulation. Rose (1994, p. 21 ff.) also explains how Hip Hop culture's economic context of deindustrialization and neoliberal austerity in the South Bronx influenced its aesthetic qualities of *"flow, layering, and rupture."* She points out the message of more political rap artists, the politics of rap's machismo, and Black female responses in the art form between ethnic alliances, class-based views on gender, and feminist critique.

Relying on ten years of interviews, Chang (2006) succeeds in the ambitious project of telling the story of the Hip Hop generation (i.e., its practitioners) from its early cultural beginnings to the political phases in the late 1980s to the ongoing commercialization and media monopolization in the 1990s and 2000s. He provides the socio-political context for different periods of HHC's evolution and an empirical and non-theoretical critique of the culture industry when explaining how large

labels bought up the multitude of independent labels and points out the ideological effects. Following the 1996 Telecommunications Act, the end of ownership caps on radio stations and further deregulation led to a monopolization of the radio and media landscape. Nationally centralized playlists determined by large corporations now replaced the formerly local and community-driven programs. The effects he analyzes include rap's streamlining into watered-down apolitical versions to cater to primarily white audiences and a loss of female voices in the mainstream. From over 50 companies that divided up the markets of popular culture from music to video games and movies in the 1980s, the number narrowed down to ten monopoly players in the late 1990s. Chang (2006, p. 443) writes that *"at the beginning of the new millennium, five of these companies – Vivendi Universal, Sony, AOL Time Warner, Bertelsmann, and EMI – controlled 80% of the music industry. Another, Viacom, owned both MTV and BET"*. With this market centralization came a new wave of control of marketable products by culture industries, with leading rappers promoting not only a neoliberal version of the American dream but also their own clothing lines, branded products ranging from vodka to headphones, and other advertisements. Black culture was the new cool and it sold well.

George (1994), hooks (1992, 1994), and Scharenberg (2001) have addressed the ideological thrust of rap music via historical analyses of class, ethnicity, and gender relations and tensions in the US leading to a *"discursive rebellion of the Black underclasses [translation S.H.]"* (cf. Scharenberg, 2001). In response to deindustrialization, job destruction in the US, and racialized exclusion, Black men in urban ghettos were unable to fulfill the role of family providers. Under these material and historical circumstances, available masculine roles were more determined by phallocentric heterosexism. Thus, in racialized patriarchic capitalism, the male roles available to poor Black men with little employment perspective included mainly pimps, "players," and outlaws (cf. hooks, 1992). If the system does not allow for legal ways of "being a man" and attaining material status symbols, illegal and phallocentric ways are chosen and celebrated. This aligns with what George (1994, p. 95) calls *"ghettocentricity"* which *"means making the values and lifestyles of America's poverty-stricken urban homelands central to one's being,"* and rap *"has been proudly ghettocentric."* This *"ghettocentric"* rebellion against both white and Black middle-class values influenced the stereotypical identities in mainstream rap music. Their analysis explains the dominant identities of the "gangsta" and "Bling Bling" eras of the 1990s and early 2000s as a reaction to the ghetto's racialized, patriarchal class realities.

A counterpart to complete the picture can be seen in the analysis of the other side of the equation: i.e., the culture industries and the ideological needs of racialized capitalism. Rose (2008, p. 241) analyzes a *"gangsta-pimp-ho trinity"* in commercial rap music, which leads to a one-dimensional depiction of Black identities in popular culture. She describes how white-owned culture industries mainly marketed those depictions of Blackness which had previously been provided as legitimizations for slavery and discrimination by the ruling classes, namely hypersexualization and criminal activities. Similarly, Israel (cf. 2009, p. 24 ff.) compares mainstream gangsta

rap music's ideological functions and depictions of Blackness to those of minstrelsy. In a similar vein, and employing a modified version of Adorno and Horkheimer's thesis on the culture industry, Hart (2010) analyzes how the major labels used new market analyses and assumptions in the 1990s and the following decades. This led to them catering to an assumed majority-white, racist suburban consumer market. Thus, major record labels marketed rappers with more and more one-dimensional identities to serve racist consumers.

While there is a lot of macro-sociological critique and scholarship analyzing the rap industry and American/ Western mainstream racist discourses around it, there are, however, fewer empirical analyses of the recipient side, and the cultural studies question remains of how popular culture is decoded by its consumers and appropriators. Dimitriadis (2001, p. XVIIIf.) provides one of a few counterexamples and states that *"Hip Hop has emerged as a critical out-of-school curriculum for young people in the United States and around the world. While critical 'readings' of these texts are important, they cannot serve as a substitute for empirical engagement with the particulars of young people's lives."* He warns that researchers and educators might fall into the trap of inscribing their own agendas on young people. In the spirit of Stuart Hall's (2021) model of decoding and encoding, popular culture has to be analyzed according to how it is received, adopted and made sense of by the recipients. Dimitriadis himself spent four years of ethnographic research (including focus groups and interviews about rap music) with mostly poor Black young men at a youth center. He argues for a complex reading of how the youths make sense of their lives and identities via connecting popular cultural "texts" of movies, rap music, etc., in a way that goes far beyond the assumed nihilism of mainstream rap. However, a central conclusion of his is that the material and class-based realities of the young people's everyday lives were far more impactful on their lifeworlds than the music they listened to. Love (2012) equally bases her analysis on ethnographic interviews and participant observation, focusing on how six young Black women in Atlanta make sense of rap music and themselves. Love considers the context of the Southern racist conservative politics, gentrification, and ethnic relations when working out how Black women* navigate their identities along the axes of gender, ethnicity, class, Hip Hop, and pedagogy. The reception of non-Black consumers in the US and globally is less studied ethnographically, with only a few counterexamples (cf. e.g. Ege, 2013; A. Kaya, 2001; V. Kaya, 2015; Schischmanjan & Wuensch, 2007; Schwerdtner, 2018).[15]

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[15] For an analysis of the politics of appropriating Black culture, cf. Ege's (2007) study of how Black cultural formats were received and reproduced in Germany during the 1960s and 1970s. Ege provides a differentiated view of racist and fetishizing gazes on the one hand and the agency derived from African American popular culture and political movements for white, leftist activists in Germany on the other. Such a differentiated view of the decoding practices of popular culture is a solid standard for analyzing the politics of the global appropriation of Hip Hop. The baseline is to answer the question: What do the appropriators actually do with the cultural products and influences, and how do they negotiate their own identities?

In his study of migrant rap music in Europe, Rollefson (2017) exposes the hybridity and complex nature of how some rappers negotiate their postcolonial and European identities. In a dialogue with postcolonial theory, cultural, and Hip Hop studies, he focuses on the politics of how rap artists mobilize parts of their hybrid identities when negotiating lines of solidarity with African Americans and take a contradictory stance toward the national identity of their countries of residence.

A few recent scholarly works on Hip Hop thus move from recipient analyses to examining such practitioner perspectives outside of or beyond culture industries. Schloss analyzes the Hip Hop elements of beatmaking (2004) and breaking (2009) from practitioners' perspectives using methods of participant observation. He discusses the emic, aesthetic, and cultural values, pedagogy, musical ties, and imagining of traditions and identity practices therein and gives the actors themselves a strong voice. However, listening to the practitioners with little theoretical input results in less of a focus on the larger political implications of these practices and their structuration via class, ethnicity, and gender.

A growing body of research comes from practitioners themselves (cf. e.g. Aprahamian, 2020, 2021; Fogarty, 2012a, 2020a, 2020b; Frost, 2021) or takes the practitioners' perspectives quite seriously (c.f. e.g. Androutsopoulos, 2003; Forman & Neal, 2004; Johnson, 2009; Katz, 2012, 2019; Kimminich, 2010, 2015; G. Klein & Friedrich, 2003; Rappe, 2010; Rappe & Stöger, 2014; Verlan et al., 2015). In summary, a lot of the early works of Hip Hop studies have a strong formal focus on rap music and follow a cultural studies approach with its Marxist grounding of reading popular cultural phenomena via the realities of class fractions and the material context of the deindustrialized Bronx, as well as via mass media. Some recent works also take practitioner perspectives more seriously and analyze practices and relationships in Hip Hop cultural scenes.[16] Another major academic focus lies on Hip Hop and education.

2.1.2 Hip Hop-Based Education Studies – Classroom Transformation & Test Score Improvements

The second body of academic literature relevant to this thesis is the growing Hip Hop-based education studies (HHBES).[17] HHBES mainly focuses on employing Hip Hop as a pedagogical tool in the formalized, institutional classroom settings of public or private schools or universities.

Many of early accounts of HHBES set out to prove the worth of HHC and legitimize street, low-brow, and Black cultural formats as content for public

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[16] Other common themes of HHS have not been mentioned here, such as Hip Hop and religion or Hip Hop as therapy.

[17] Seidel et al. (2022, p. 104 ff., 184 ff.) argue that HHBES is too broad to be summarized in its entirety and also caution that giving credit only to those who write about their teaching practice neglects the collective achievements by the community of practitioners and educators who do not write about their pedagogy.

educational institutions (cf. overview in: M. L. Hill & Petchauer, 2013; and in: Seidel, 2022). They often focused on using rap lyrics in high school settings to make specific topics more accessible for a young demographic of color. The teachers were mainly of the Hip Hop generation (cf. Kitwana, 2002) and adept listeners of rap music. These classes were often framed as enhancing the linguistic and literary skills of the young learners and followed the strategy of defining rap lyrics as "literature" to be studied (cf. also Chapter 6.3.1). This textual focus on rap and the visual one on its music videos and Hip Hop movies is in line with the dominant understanding of Hip Hop as an industrial branch with a sellable product.

Having interviewed 23 Hip Hop educators and experts, Hall (2011) derives four core assumptions and seven tenets of social justice Hip Hop pedagogy in her encompassing study. In a broad literature review, she outlines HHBES to make three major points on how Hip Hop educates (cf. M. Hall, 2011, p. 110 ff.): Firstly, Hip Hop and particularly rap music have their own public pedagogy and educate outside of classrooms via rap lyrics. The proponents attribute such a public curriculum primarily to "conscious" rap instead of other subgenres. Secondly, Hip Hop culture is taught as a subject area of its own – mainly in college and university classrooms. Often the focus here is on the culture's history, its socioeconomic and cultural contexts, its Afrodiasporic characteristics, and its intersection points with class, ethnicity, gender, pedagogy, or culture industries. Academic teacher education classes often thus use Hip Hop as a subject (cf. Akom, 2009 and chapter 7; Irby et al., 2013). Thirdly, Hip Hop texts (lyrics, rap videos, movies, etc.) are employed – mainly in high school settings in the US – to teach other subject areas, such as social studies, history, natural sciences, mathematics, etc. It can also add a critical perspective to the standardized state curricula.

Love (2016, p. 423f.) argues that many of the prepackaged and for-profit programs in the third way of using Hip Hop text to improve student performance are faulty and have racist assumptions: *"Prepackaged hip hop education products remove and dismiss the culture, history, elements, sensibilities, and the ideas that students can critically examine hip hop culture's violent, homophobic, and sexist messages to form new knowledge and imagine new possibilities for justice."* Instead, these packages reduce HHC to a very singular definition. She attributes this partly to the *"the colonizing enterprise of educational research,"* which sees Hip Hop mainly from a deficit point of view for youths of color instead of *"a culture with a rich history that should be shared with all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, and class through hip hop education"* (Love, 2016, p. 424).

Emdin (2010b, 2010a) has argued that rap pedagogy can improve student performance beyond literature and for "MINT" subjects. In addition, he and other scholars from the #HipHopEd collective call for a transformation of institutions and valuing of Hip Hop in its own right: *"we push beyond having institutions just valuing hip-hop text, and towards a more radical position that does not seek permission and/or validation from schools. [...] the same people and institutions that failed the young people who wrote them"* (Emdin & Adjapong, 2018, p. 2f.). Rap music can thus be used to open pedagogical routes for MINT subjects and the authors have developed an extensive spoken

word/rap competition around them. They illustrate the "Science Genius B.A.T.T.L.E.S." many benefits from an organizer's and from the participants' perspective (cf. chapters 4–7 in: Emdin & Adjapong, 2018).

Educational scholars Hill and Petchauer (2013) provide a comprehensive overview of how to translate Hip Hop (mostly rap) practices and spaces into the classrooms of both secondary and higher education for more engaging perspectives and more equity in these educational spheres. In line with these analyses and building on Dimitriadis' (2001) focus on identity negotiations of rap listeners, Hill (2009a) brings an anthropological perspective to his own year-long evening course, "Hip Hop Lit." In this course, he discussed Hip Hop texts with the learners to open up discussions and let them journal their own experiences, trauma, and identities to question dominant narratives and power structures. In addition to improving learning performance, he makes out a vast and unpredictable potential of renegotiating the classroom space and the identities of teachers and students.

Similarly, Stovall (2006) and Alim (2008) provide examples of how Hip Hop literature, i.e., mostly rap lyrics, can provide a meaningful basis to critique established "high cultural" canons and curricula. Stovall (2006) looks at how radical artists can be used to politicize a social studies class and develop interdisciplinary curricula. He links the likes of Talib Kweli with Black American literature and critical historical accounts, e.g., Howard Zinn's "People's History of the United States," to look at racism, slavery, and other systems and ideologies of oppression and exploitation.

Like many within the field of Hip Hop based education, Akom (2009) relies on "critical race theory" and Freire's (2000) "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" and links these in an encompassing *"critical Hip Hop pedagogy."* Its goal is to *"unlearn […] stereotypical knowledge of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and other axes of social difference while analyzing, problem solving, and theorizing what it means to be part of a diverse population"* (Akom, 2009, p. 63). To do so, Akom proposes a comprehensive framework of participatory action research for learning youth, who – via Freire's problem-posing method – plan educational interventions in their neighborhoods and communities using rap music and other Hip Hop elements. Alim (2008, p. 219) develops critical Hip Hop language pedagogies, which have the goal *"of not just teaching language, but to inspire pedagogies that make explicit the link between language, power and social process."* Alim uses his ethnographic research in schools to analyze how this functions at the classroom level. He concludes that African Americans *"since integration can testify that they have experienced teachers' attempts to eradicate their language and linguistic practices [...] in favor of the adoption of White cultural and linguistic norms."* Standard language hegemony is further enforced via teachers in schools, which he terms *"a primary site of language ideological combat"* (Alim 2008, p. 215 ff.). Via different interviews, Alim follows students and teachers and infers how teachers are often unaware of how they enact white supremacy via linguistic standards. His Hip Hop pedagogy wants to lay open these oppressive relations and empower the youth to criticize them.

Petchauer (2015) calls for a second wave of Hip Hop education research to move beyond the field's past focus on teacher perspectives. He instead draws on Rose's (1994) analysis of Hip Hop aesthetics along the lines of "flow, layering, and rupture." He adds the element of sampling to illustrate how the research should now be *"starting with style"* instead of the previous focus on content.[18] He calls for further employment and development of Alim's "HipHopography," i.e., a research methodology drawing on ethnographic approaches but adhering to specific Hip Hop principles.

Seidel's (2011, 2022) analysis of the original school concept of the "High School for Recording Arts" is an explicit ethnographic account of what it looks like when Hip Hop practitioners themselves teach their crafts. This state-licensed school in Minnesota is run by practitioners of Hip Hop's musical elements (mainly rap and beatmaking). Seidel provides thick descriptions of the pedagogical settings, the educational tenets, and the learners' perspectives. The reader not only gets to know the organizers and what a typical day at this school looks like. The book also provides an encompassing analysis of the context of the small independent school, US educational inequality, as well as the direct interrelation between an education system discriminating according to ethnicity and class on the one hand and the prison industrial complex on the other. During the mid-2000s, the incarceration rate of young Black male high school dropouts in their twenties was almost 50 times the national average (Seidel, 2022, p. 91). In addition to the context, Seidel also analyzes this community high school's institutional challenges. The school's organizers faced drastic budget cuts and were wrongfully labeled and stigmatized as a "low achieving" school by the state for reasons related to budgeting (cf. Seidel, 2022, p. 96ff.).

Such a practitioner focus and particularly a meso-level perspective of Hip Hop organizations and projects, as well as of the challenges of the field and the strategies, is rather rare. Some exceptions include Kaya's (2015) comparative analysis of Hip Hop from Berlin and Istanbul and the respective institutional contexts. Kalinina (2020) analyzes the ethical issues of international Hip Hop exchange programs depending on Western funding and recognition in a field where Machismo, status of the project leader, financial compensation, and in- and outsider discourses determine potential lines of conflict. Kaya (2001) analyzes the role of Berlin's youth clubs in the founding of Turkish/German rap crews, while Caglar (1998) similarly analyzes the role of state-sponsored cultural institutions in the institutionalization of the German-Turkish rap scene. Pardue (2004, 2007) has analyzed individual youth centers in Brazil and their community and political implications. Bramwell and Butterworth (2020) have looked at the role of British youth center to maintain spaces

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[18] This is in line with Stuart Hall's views of how *"questions of style could be an exceptionally useful key (to attitudes towards the world, understanding the world) but this does not mean that one should stop analyzing them. [translation S.H.]"* (Ege, 2015, p. 3). Instead, they serve to understand larger sociocultural and political forces and possible intervention points. Some of such interventions into the larger culture-industrial developments are provided in Hip Hop cultural projects.

for rap practice and projects. However, the larger field of Hip Hop non-profits, the potential conflicts arising from the field's competitive set up, and the political implications of international financing mechanisms are rarely analyzed in greater depth.

To summarize, HHBES often argue for Hip Hop's pedagogical employment in light of a system that continually (re-) produces immense inequalities. HHC, with its appeal to marginalized youth, is described as the ideal means to reach the underprivileged. Analyzing its contradictions enables an accessible non-theoretical critique of society and emancipatory identity reformulations. This strand in the literature can be seen as the pragmatic counterpart to critical (Hip Hop) sociology, which often analyzes consumerist societies and the racialized culture-industrial entertainment machinery but offers no practical alternatives. Most of these pedagogical works focus on how critical pedagogues get children, youth, and adults to participate in a formalized classroom setting. However, they often maintain the rap and textual focus dominant in Hip Hop studies. Some recent studies focus ethnographically on learner perspectives and call upon researchers to focus not only on content but on style, HHC's more informal cultures of learning, and practitioner perspectives. Only a few studies analyze the meso-level of the Hip Hop non-profit field and organizational types. Having outlined some of main strands of HHBES and some under-researched areas allows me to explain the focus of this thesis next.

2.1.3 Research Questions, Case Selection & Research Objects/Subjects

In this book, I want to combine some of the insights of HHBES and move beyond the perspectives of media, teachers, and content and not only look at the classroom use of rap lyrics or videos as "literature." Instead, I focus on Hip Hop teaching artists (i.e., Hip Hop practitioners who teach), as well as organizers of Hip Hop educational projects, scene events, and social movements. [19] Secondly, via participant observation and interviews, I can analyze the teaching practices, their aesthetic implications and how HHC's "style" principles guide the learning. Thirdly, in the spirit of Dimitriadis (2001) and Hill (2009), I focus on the participants and have led group discussions and informal talks with learners in the various projects. In addition, I analyze the under-researched field and the organizational types of Hip Hop non-profits.

My research does not set out from a grand theory, but I have instead derived the structure of this thesis inductively from the life world and culture of my research subjects. Thus, let us look at the four main overarching goals formulated by activists in the field and the literature (cf. Chang, 2006; M. Hall, 2011; Kitwana, 2002; Rose, 2008). Firstly, many Hip Hop activists want to educate new practitioners and thereby sustain Hip Hop culture's face to face practices and "keep the culture alive"

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[19] I discuss some media work and rap lyrics in social movements in chapter 8, as well as some issues of teaching artists with prepackaged educational programs, and barriers for political lyrics in Senegalese schools in chapter 7.

or "give back," as many of my interviewees put it. Secondly, the activists and organizers want to professionalize their practice and education and create job opportunities for themselves, their students, and other Hip Hop practitioners. Thirdly, a lot of them want to raise consciousness and further a social justice perspective. Finally, some politically minded activists want to use Hip Hop for social transformation and social movement organizing. Thus, the first set of research questions looks at how activists pursue these goals:

I: How & what do people teach, learn, and do in the social, educational, and political projects of Hip Hop culture? What are the practices, spaces, relationships, and norms of these learning processes? What are the difficulties of such pedagogical projects?

Rather than focusing on the identification with rap superstars, their lyrics, videos, or Hip Hop movies, I want to analyze the potential to transform oneself, community, and society, which many practitioners assume comes from the practice itself. Thus, the focus is on education based on Hip Hop as culture, taught by practitioners, inside classrooms, in scene settings, and employed for social movements and political projects. What does it mean to master Hip Hop's art forms, to become involved in a community of practitioners, while transforming one's style and self-image and maybe gaining agency during the process? How do Hip Hop teaching artists connect these lessons in and outside of classrooms with social justice varieties of education and social movement perspectives?

At the same time, I want to specifically focus on the field of such Hip Hop cultural education. With its many contradictions, funding cycles, limited resources, competitive nature, incentives, and other forces, this field significantly impacts the actual projects, their practices, and agenda setting. Almost all of the projects I encountered in the field were in some way carried out via non-profit organizations. The creation of such non-profits relates to the previously stated goal of professionalization and employment. I address this meso-level and this particular form of Hip Hop culture institutionalization via the second complex of research questions.

II. What characterizes the field of Hip Hop non-profits and the different organizational types? What goals do the organizers follow, and how do the practitioners professionalize themselves? What are the field's forces? How do funders, social movements, etc., influence the messages and agenda-setting of these social, educational, and political projects?

Of course, I cannot discuss all Hip Hop non-profits and projects throughout the world. However, to infer some more general statements about the highly interconnected global field, I have chosen two different contexts of analysis: Hip Hop non-profits from the USA (mainly from New York City and Washington DC) and from Senegal (mainly from Dakar). I chose these two national contexts[20] for a

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[20] I originally intended to research and compare projects in three contexts: in the USA, Senegal, and Germany. I planned to grasp HHC's potential at its full width by comparing the diverse national

variety of reasons, such as, first of all, their different economic positioning. While the USA is at the imperial core of the capitalist world system, Senegal is located at the system's periphery under neocolonial strains, which allows for a comparison in different socio-economic contexts.[21] Both countries also differ socio-culturally, with Senegal being a majority Muslim and Black West African country. The USA, on the other hand, in addition to (and interlinked with) the antagonism between class fractions inside the country, also has immense ethnic tensions between racialized minorities and a shrinking white majority[22], which play out culturally. Secondly, – as mentioned in the introduction – the US context of New York City's Hip Hop non-profits has one of the longest traditions and experiences with this particular type of institutionalization due to its long-term austerity politics. Therefore, this context allows for an in-depth look at the long-standing experiences of practitioners and organizers, common dilemmas, issues of the field, and activist counter-strategies. Thirdly, with its particular tradition of highly political Hip Hop and especially rap, Senegal poses an interesting case of social-justice-oriented cultural content and even political organizing of the Y'en a Marre movement. Senegal is equally haunted by decades of austerity politics, and the non-profits are funded mainly by international foundations, which designate money to "development" projects. Both countries have seen large-scale social movements and are marked by vast social inequality and foundations controlled by the hyper-rich (cf. e.g. Choudry & Shragge, 2011; Incite!, 2017). These two contexts thus allow for some careful answers to the third and final set of research questions, focusing on the bigger socio-historical picture.

III. What is the potential of such Hip Hop cultural projects for the emancipatory transformation of society vs. their conservative and reactionary elements? Where are openings and points of intervention in the current culture of neoliberal capitalism, and how can Hip Hop cultural projects help intervene here? What is HHC's potential for social movement organizing and

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settings, aims, and techniques. However, I quickly realized that two national contexts with my broad focus on different organization types, pedagogy, and social movements were enough and reduced them to the American and Senegalese ones.

[21] According to Marxist historian Wallerstein (cf. 2005, p. 77ff.; 1983, p. 83 ff.), the world economy is defined by a global division of labor and relations of exploitation and domination between core areas in the Northwestern hemisphere and the periphery of poorer Southern and Eastern countries. The founder of the world systems theory names a few main factors which have traditionally stabilized this unjust world system. Among them is first of all the fact that the world's military has always been in the hands of a small stratum of capitalist elites in the core area. Additionally, the exploited masses are divided through different forms of economic advantages and ethnic logic to prevent unified resistance. Another main factor is the ideology convincing the subjugated masses that there is no alternative to the current system and that immediate requests for freedom and redistribution have to be postponed to ensure systemic progress and growth.

[22] This is illustrated by the polarization between demands to defund and abolish police and the prison-industrial complex in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement on the one hand and the neoconservative and alt-right alliance which found an early climax in the Trump government. However, parallels also abound, as in both countries the neoliberal hegemony is in crisis and parts of the ruling classes resort to more and more authoritarian methods.

mobilizing? Where are the limits to such Hip Hop-based projects and their interventions?

This last set of questions will allow for situating the projects, practitioners, and practices in a larger frame of generational change, political conjunctures, conformity, resistance, and a quest for cultural hegemony. Answering them will thus contribute to the analysis of the Hip Hop generation and its political projects by providing insight into practitioner and learner perspectives and how this particular strand of Hip Hop cultural activism plays out via non-profits.

2.2 Second Point of Departure: Ethnographic Methods and Research Stance

To answer the above questions, I chose ethnographic fieldwork methods for data collection (mainly participant observation and qualitative interviews) and qualitative content analysis for data analysis.

2.2.1 Explorative Ethnographic Fieldwork: A Hip Hop Approach to Studying HHC Projects?

Firstly, the large methodical cluster of ethnographic fieldwork implies a "long-term social immersion in a particular setting" (Clammer in: Mitchell, 2010, p. 56) for the researcher, from which he or she maps "the morphology of some area of the social world" (Hammersley in: Mitchell, 2010, p. 55). My research does not fully match this definition since my fieldwork consisted of four periods of around 1.5–2 months, i.e., two stays in each location (Dakar and New York), adding up to approx. seven months in total in both countries. Thus, I was not fully immersed in one particular setting but visited multiple organizations and groups multiple times. Mine is more of an exploratory employment of fieldwork than a classic ethnography of the immersive kind. This is thus closer to the methodology of multi-sited ethnography (Falzon, 2020; Jaeger & Nieswand, 2022) I nevertheless relied on standard ethnographic methods for data collection of participant observation and informal conversations on the one hand, as well as semi-structured interviews and group discussions on the other.

Ortner (2008, p. 42) gives a minimal definition of ethnographic fieldwork as *"the attempt to understand another life world using the self – as much of it as possible – as the instrument of knowing."* This happens mainly via participant observation, which means participating in typical field situations and interacting with the research subjects. Right after these interactions, when writing up the data, the ethnographer describes her observations of the events in detail to infer more general (and at times, theoretical) statements about social processes from them. Such "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) allows one to analyze culture and how people make meaning of their lives. Ortner (2008, p. 43) understands thickness as not only *"producing understanding through*

richness, texture and detail" but it also *"implies a deep contextualization in the world systems, as well as bodily processes of practice."*[23]

I thus focus on all three aspects of producing thickness: thick descriptions of practices, explaining these in larger systemic contexts (and in the mediating field), and bodily processes of practice. The methodical focus on participant observation is especially relevant, as three of the Hip Hop elements are practiced non-verbally. A lot of the social practices do not produce any text in the literal sense[24] – Hip Hop dance styles and DJing, for example, primarily bring forth movements and sounds and evoke emotions.

To grasp emotional and rational views, official, "sugar-coated" stories, underlying norms and motives, cognition, and knowledge structures of the informants, I have carried out both formal interviews and informal discussions with an emphasis on the latter. Such free discussions allow one to discover a field without forcing the informants to artificially compose answers through a formal setting, e.g., a catalog of questions. Thus, the fieldworker can establish friendly relations with the informants as a precondition for successful fieldwork and honest answers instead of advertisement stories (cf. Alvesson & Skoldberg, 2009, p. 9ff.; Mitchell, 2010, p. 56ff.).

The methods chosen for data collection enable good access to my field of research since, as Schloss (2009) points out, Hip Hop culture's own modes of learning bear many similarities to participant observation and interviews: approaching more knowledgeable practitioners to spend time with them, practicing the Hip Hop crafts, and asking questions is basically what students of Hip Hop usually do.[25]

2.2.2 Qualitative Content Analysis: Understanding my Informants' Meaning from the Inside

The data of field notes, interview transcripts, or journal entries provides the empirical basis for my second methodical approach for data analysis – namely qualitative content analysis (QCA). This method is compatible with exploratory fieldwork, as it enables one to view and organize data without one single preconceived theoretical framework in mind. Instead, its defining ambition is to consecutively induce new categories from the empirical material and organize it. As a result, novel theoretical insights are generated to be deductively tested against the data in feedback loops (cf. Mayring, 2010; Strübing, 2018).

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[23] Wellgraf (2020) understands current ethnography as enabling one to combine different modes of analysis and critique. This ranges from theoretical to what he calls representational forms of critique, i.e., showing how bad things are on a practical level via, e.g., thick description, without recurring to higher moral orders or jargon.

[24] This also counts for text in the figurative sense since cultural studies often times understand videos, movies, and other cultural artifacts and products as cultural text (cf. S. Hall, 2021).

[25] In Schloss' case of researching breaking in New York, his research methods and cultural practice were so close that some subjects even forgot he was researching for a book and thought that he was just learning "as one does" in the culture.

The two described types of qualitative research are compatible, as both are valid for generating new theoretical insights about socially innovative phenomena that have not yet been fully studied. With QCA always referencing communicative context and fieldwork being reflexive, they are also coherent in their social epistemology, meaning that *"the truth of knowledge is contingent on the social context in which it is practiced"* (Eyerman & Jamison, 2007, p. 61). Hence, my methodical approach rejects a positivist and often tautological *"strict hypothetico-deductive model of social research"* (Kelle, 2007, p. 205). Instead of only using the empirical material to prove a grand theory right, these two approaches enable me to take the actors' perspectives seriously. I have carried out QCA and multiple rounds of coding of my field notes, as well as the interviews and group discussions to derive codes and categories inductively. These helped me to structure the entire setup of the chapters and the larger composition of this thesis.

In the second step of the analysis, after coding and deriving a structure from the material, I qualified the data according to an approach of critical theory research of "qualified subjectivity" (cf. Morrow, 1994). This entails qualifying the observations and my informants' subjective views and statements in a second step by explaining them in societal context (as well as the specific field and its logic) and by bringing them into dialogue with theory. The following subchapter will provide some reflections on how I struggled to qualify the data and how my views and social position define the reading of the material.

2.3 Third Point of Departure: Reflections, Biases, and My Field Stays

2.3.1 Reflexions of a Fish Wanting to Become a Marine Biologist[26]

As mentioned in the introduction, I have chosen this research topic out of practical interest: I have been breaking for 26 years and have used the dance and Hip Hop culture for social, educational, and political projects during the last ten years. I have worked for the breaking world championship the Battle of the Year for the last decade. Together with my crew, friends and students from my Hip Hop seminars, I have organized international Hip Hop film festivals, local breaking jams, antiracist high school workshop-tours, and breaking classes for German and refugee kids. The latter included multiple (mostly successful) fights against the families'

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[26] I borrowed this line from Ali Konyali (thanks abi!). Being a son of Turkish "guestworkers" in Germany, he used it to describe the fact that he was the first one in his family to study and write a PhD on narratives of successful migrants. He is one of the rare few POCs in German migrant studies, i.e. "one of the very few fishes in marine biology".

deportations.[27] It was especially after beginning my PhD that I read up more on HHC, became more of a Hip Hop activist, and taught university seminars relating Hip Hop history and social justice topics. I have since then both glorified the approaches of Hip Hop activism (which is partly necessary to carry them out) and questioned their impact. I saw this research project as an opportunity to put them to the test and see what other practitioners were doing through the culture. My goal was to learn from them and see what does and does not work. Being a cultural insider, i.e., the figurative fish in the water, I intended to study marine biology.

This activist/practitioner status opened many doors during my fieldwork but also posed severe problems in writing this thesis. At times, I have had quite a partial view of the field, some career interests in it, ties of solidarity to my informants, and was lacking distance. While a fish knows what it feels like to be a fish, it might have a hard time leaving the water to enter the lab or faculty of marine biology and explain "fishness" and water in a scholarly manner – especially since it has a few stakes in the ocean itself.

In the following, I will reflect upon my research stance, which moved between the poles of "fishness" and "marine biology," i.e., Hip Hop activism and cultural studies. In order to not fall too deeply into the trap of what Bourdieu (1993, p. 369) calls researchers' "narcissistic reflexivity,"[28] I will follow the three moments of self-reflection he proposes to counteract three common fallacies of social research.

The first instance of reflection is to specify the researcher's social determination along the lines of ethnicity, class, and gender/sexuality and how this impacts her positions, interests, and views on what is researched. Being from a partly migrant background with a Kurdish father and German mother and growing up in a lower-middle-class environment in Germany, I had some privileges when facing some of my research subjects in New York and Senegal of different ethnic and class backgrounds. My being cis-gendered and a heterosexual man of color (who can sometimes pass as white) also made it easier to navigate the waters of Hip Hop culture with its predominantly heteronormative orientations. With a Kurdish father, I developed a consciousness of global inequalities and colonial oppression early in my life. Being a Kurd from Iraq and highly active in the resistance to Saddam, my father was subjected to torture, lost many of his comrades to the regime, and suffered

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[27] This helped me understand the impact of HH activism, but is also a major reason why my thesis took so long, since the destinies of families under threat of deportation are always more important and urgent to me than academic research.

[28] Bourdieu (1993) warns sociologists against engaging in narcissistic reflection, which does not further understanding but only the researcher's prestige. This warning stands in contrast to Hip Hop's self-bravado, where bragging and boasting have been central to the cultural process from its inception. The oppressed youth of the Bronx worked against their low status by slick talking about themselves and their achievements in their rhymes and also in the other elements of the culture. The process of creating an original style and a Hip Hop alter ego is about self-empowerment by aesthetically becoming "larger than life" (Ken Swift in: Schloss, 2009). I intend to resolve this contradiction by following Bourdieu's thoughts on reflection and discussing how being a practitioner has allowed for, impacted, and hindered my research.

from trauma and serious mental illness. During my childhood, he constantly sent money to Kurdistan and told me about family being killed during Saddam's genocidal campaigns (including the use of German chemical weapons, which made me aware of the interconnectedness of neo-colonial / imperial relations). This Kurdish background also made me question the idea of national or ethnic identities, and Hip Hop culture stemming from Black communities but propagating more universal ideals of a global unity of practitioners thus seemed like a good idea to me and still does. When I first saw breaking, it was practiced by an ethnically diverse mixture of folks from different corners of the earth and appeared like a welcoming place of belonging. It did not matter where you were from or whether you were missing an arm or a leg[29] as long as you had the skills. Starting with no guidance whatsoever at the age of 13, what I aspired to most were not only the insane powermove combinations championed by Korean b-boys of the post-2000 era of breaking. My idols were first and foremost the superhero-like figures of Style Elements crew – a diverse squad of style innovators from the Westcoast of the USA, as well as the Turkish, Arabic, and German Flying Steps and their cultural guide – Germany's breaking pioneer Storm. At the same time and during my entire youth, I mainly listened to American rap ranging from Tupac, LL Cool J, Nas, Wu-Tang, and The Roots to Missy Elliot. More *underground* and *conscious* rap entered the mix later on, including the likes of the Native Tongues, Soulquarians, Bahamadia, Mr. Lif, MF Doom, or French MC Rocé. Since then, I have often questioned a lot of the neoliberal propaganda, machismo, and consumerism of modern-day Hip Hop and rap. Nevertheless, my enthusiasm for the culture and the idolization of certain Hip Hop artists and activists have, at times, clouded my vision for my research field's complications and complexities.

I have also struggled with providing a realistic and differentiated view of the projects by people under dire circumstances of neo-colonial exploitation and survival. I often did not want to harm fellow activists with fewer resources by painting what I take to be a more realistic picture of their projects, including critique beyond the self-advertisement they necessarily have to do to survive the project-funding cycle.

Ortner (2008, p. 49ff.) warns of this common danger of adhering to *"sanitizing politics"* when analyzing projects of resistance. These "sanitizing politics" imply a binary logic of looking at the oppressors as inherently evil and the oppressed as inherently good.[30] Following both structural Marxist and feminist critiques, she states it is necessary to also look at the forms of domination that resisting and subaltern groups carry in themselves (e.g., gendered hierarchies preceding colonialism, etc.). I have tried to gain intellectual independence from my activist bias of

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[29] The international breaking crew Ill abilities for instance consists of dancers with various handicaps.
[30] This sanitizing politics often plays out in the field of HHC in a "good vs. evil" binary between underground Hip Hop culture and industrial Hip Hop, while actually both realms have oppressive and emancipatory aspects.

"sanitizing politics" by specifically taking an open look at what actually happens in these projects – i.e., unbiased, open-ended research. I also looked for hierarchies, problems, and limitations in the analyzed projects. Ortner (2008, p. 142) analyzes how such projects of resistance take place *"on the margins"* of power structures such as *"slavery, colonialism, and racism,"* and one might add patriarchy and capitalism.[31] Contextualizing the projects in these larger systems of power and showing how they are interrelated also helps counter the "sanitizing politics" bias and helps distinguish the projects' transformative potential. This is in line with some of cultural studies'[32] most central aims. Ege (2015, p. 38) describes these as finding *"a culture-analytical approach to the economic-political-cultural conjunctures [...] to understand these conjunctures, to understand the possibilities for action in them. And then, in turn, to act.[translation, S.H.]."* I want to thus study Hip Hop cultural projects as part of a specific historical moment in society and locate possibilities for action.

2.3.2 A Fish in Two Fields – Academic and Hip Hop Expectations

The second moment of reflection, named by Bourdieu, addresses the meso-/middle-level between the larger structures of class, gender, and ethnicity on the one hand and the individual researcher on the other: namely, the field of scientific research, its specific logic, incentives, and impact upon the sociologist and her research. While Bourdieu here mainly addresses the scientific field, it is worth mentioning a potential conflict of interest for me, stemming from not only being active in academia but also in a second field, i.e., the one of my research: Hip Hop activism. The expectations of my colleagues and supervisors in cultural anthropology greatly differ from those of my research subjects and "colleagues" in the field of Hip Hop activism. The former are paid to be critical thinkers and expect a differentiated analysis of the field and the actors. They want to see the contradictions at work and, for some part, indulge in the endeavor of intellectual abstractions. On the other hand, my informants in the field capitalize on the attention received from the academy. Some activists in the US told me, for example, that finally there was

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[31] Ortner (2008a, p. 143ff.) further differentiates between two realms: 1. Massive power relations where agencies exist that are either those of the people upholding this order or of the people oppressed by and possibly resisting it. The terms of action here work according to the terms of the oppressors. 2. Workings of agency in local contexts where the effects of the larger power structures can be averted or held at bay for a little while. I will try to analyze both and specifically locate the potential of Hip Hop cultural projects in the second realm and begin to transform the first.

[32] According to Ege (2014, p. 57f., cf. 2015), Birmingham-based cultural studies and their diverse range of research topics and methodological approaches can neither be understood as a scientific discipline nor as a research area. It is rather a loosely organized school of cultural sciences with different historical phases. These included an early explorative phase with a focus on the expanding culture of the masses, a later formative phase with a focus on subcultural and media studies, feminist and antiracist interventions, and a third consolidating phase with a wide array of different topics and perspectives.

someone to help them *"prove that what we're doing really works."* [33] At the same time, there are common reservations in Hip Hop against academia. In the field, I have often heard statements such as *"What do these academics want? They come, take the credit of our projects, and leave. Take that tourist shit elsewhere!".* Often, the question arose of who gets credit for Hip Hop pedagogical achievements: *"How come they [academics] are at the head of the Hip Hop education movement while we are down here in the trenches doing the actual work?"*

I found myself in somewhat of a "double bind": I wanted to maintain friendly and collegial relations with my fellow Hip Hop activists for reasons of Hip Hop community-building, as well as due to career and project interests. At the same time, the academy required me to critically analyze my colleagues' projects to meet the thesis standards of differentiated and "critical" research.

I have invited some of my fellow activists from Senegal to self-organized festivals and workshops. At the same time, activists in the US and Senegal have invited me to partake in Hip Hop projects, and I have become friends with some of them. This leaves me grateful and indebted to them for providing me with field access and might also hinder me from openly speaking about problems and conflicts in the field. I do not want to harm anyone in a sphere where activists often depend on funding, which might be granted or denied in (minor) parts according to their academic reception. Some of my informants with no academic credentials have told me how being mentioned in academic writing has opened doors for them to teach in universities and high schools and has proven some of their validity in the teaching realm.[34] To avoid harming anyone's income or career, I have chosen to speak about the most problematic issues of the field by anonymizing the actors wherever needed.

2.3.3 The Scholastic Bias and Negotiating Expectations

As a third academic fallacy, Bourdieu (1993, p. 371) warns of a *"scholastic bias,"* owing to the fact that researchers always have to "make sense" of and derive some theoretical insight from the field. This abstract meaning they derive from the research tends to be entirely separate from the research subjects' urgent needs for practical strategies. The danger here is imposing one's own thinking and meaning-making upon the actors. One counter strategy would be to disclose the subjects' strategies in detail and what Bourdieu (1993, p. 366) calls their *"folk theories"* and how they relate to the field and its forces. These *"folk theories"* in Hip Hop are often made explicit, as many of the practitioners and activists in the field actively engage in theorizing about Hip Hop's role in transforming selves, collectives, and society as

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[33] I have chosen to cite certain statements anonymously if stating their names could impact my informants negatively.

[34] This shows how symbolic capital in Hip Hop cultural scenes does not directly translate into other societal spheres and needs mediums, such as the academy, where institutionalized cultural capital is far more recognized by institutions.

part of Hip Hop's 5th element of "knowledge of self and community." However, many times when I talked to project organizers, they focused a lot on future projects and did not evaluate the shortcomings of past endeavors. The field of non-profits, with its funding cycles and report-writing, requires them to advertise their work and inhibits open and honest reflection in public. Some pedagogues were more open in their analysis of what worked, the non-profit sector's incentives, and its tendencies towards censorship, etc. In addition to these insights, participant observation could also counterbalance some of the organizers' and pedagogues' "sugar-coated" stories. During my last two field trips, I focused explicitly on lower ranks in the organizations and on participant perspectives to get a more realistic picture of what was happening. I could thus further qualify activist perspectives by looking at how they criticized their or other people's projects or by openly analyzing systemic constraints by bringing them into dialogue with theory and previous research, which allowed more of an ethnographic critique.

According to Wellgraf (2020, p. 16f.), ethnographic critique and activist critique are not always clearly separable but are not the same either: *"Ethnography and activism can inspire each other, but they also follow a partly different logic. Representational critique in the sense of showing the complexities, contradictions, and ambiguities frequently cannot be translated directly into political discourse and activist practice but instead often questions and irritates them [translation, S.H.]."*

The result of my research and my own academic/activist "double bind" is somewhat of a dialogue between activist perspectives and those of cultural anthropology, focusing on the societal context mediated via the field and the small-scale autonomous logic and forms of agency within the projects. To look at how this played out, a quick look at my four stays in the field is in order.

2.3.4 Four Fieldwork Trips and Choice of Projects – A Fish in New Waters

During my four field trips and the seven months in the USA and Senegal, I visited workshops and classes, festivals, battles, concerts, performances, offices and planning sessions, university seminars, conferences, movement meetings, and street protests. In Dakar, New York, and Washington D.C., I practiced breaking and stand-up dance styles and cyphered with local dancers, exchanged with organizers on strategies, and philosophized on Hip Hop in more informal ways. I gained such field access via personal and professional connections, e.g., via my contacts acquired working for the Battle of the Year. Through my colleagues' vast international network, as well as my own scene contacts, i.e., the Hip Hop social capital, I was able to get to know both American and Senegalese actors in the field.[35] Some friends of mine had also participated in the Bronx-Berlin exchange program organized by activists from a Berlin-based youth cultural non-profit and a New York-based Hip

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[35] I am also indebted to Professor Kimminich and Dr. Louisa Prause, who shared some of their research contacts in Dakar with me. Huge thanks go to Dr. Mamadou Dramé, who helped me with interviews and accommodations.

Hop organization.[36] It was also via their contacts that I got to know some of the first people on the ground in New York. Field access was thus provided thanks to my colleagues and thanks to the globally interrelated field of Hip Hop activism.

A significant difference between Dakar and New York was that in Dakar, Hip Hop practitioners were far more welcoming when first approached. This might have to do with my Battle of the Year contacts on the ground, which provided a pathway for me to teach workshops and introduced me to many other activists.[37] On the other hand, a Western contact for many Hip Hop activists in Senegal can be a pathway towards cooperative projects, which might bring in funding and help make ends meet in the precarious circumstances of Hip Hop cultural work in Dakar. At the same time, Senegalese people take pride in the hospitality of the "pays de la Teranga" (which translates roughly to "country of hospitality"), while New York is rather known for its "no bullshit" attitude. Even though it took me longer to enter the field of New York's Hip Hop non-profits, I eventually did meet many different and highly experienced Hip Hop practitioners. I was able to participate in their workshops, visit their offices and centers, and meet scene contacts in Washington, DC.[38] During my first field trip in the US, I also participated in the Hip Hop academic/activist conference "Show & Prove" at UCLA after my stay on the East Coast, which provided further insights into the spheres of Hip Hop activism and scholarship.[39] In Senegal, I gained insights from the fusion of academia and activism, too, since my field contacts regularly organized such conferences, in which I assisted and participated. Listening to academic Hip Hop scholars in both locations provided further understanding and qualified some of the statements made by the activists via more detached views of the field (which nevertheless always remained in solidarity with the practitioners). During the first two field trips to both Dakar and the US, I made many acquaintances, a few friends and scene contacts, and collected a lot of data in the form of field notes and interviews. However, these two stays of two months each were also at times marked by my activist stance, and a lack of professional distance. I was the figurative fish in the water (the regular crises of a fish in deep waters included).[40] Thanks to the guidance of my current

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[36] Shoutouts to the team of Gangway Berlin, as well as the Hip Hop Re:education project and Urban Art Beat, NYC.

[37] Thanks to Gacirah, Seska, Komi, Jean-Louis, and the whole team of "Kaay Fecc" I was not only able to teach workshops but even judge "Battle of the Year" Senegal twice. During these instances, I got to know many people and could interview them while also experiencing the organizing of a large scene festival in Senegal from the inside.

[38] Thanks go out to V-San, Bahar & the whole Urban Artistry fam, Junious, Russell, and especially Hannah for hosting me.

[39] Kudos to Professor Imani Kai Johnson and team for organizing an amazing academic/activist conference, Dr. Tasha Iglesias and b-boy Kid Freeze for initiating the fun flatshare, and b-boy Bravemonk et al. for some dope cypher action.

[40] The lack of academic distance was partly due to the fact I had little professional help from my first supervisor. After the sad case of ensuing personal and political conflicts, I had to switch supervisors

supervisor, Professor Moritz Ege, I was able to readjust the thesis on a methodical level, which helped with my research stance, choices in data collection, and qualifying and structuring the results.[41]

Another reason why my own and many others' Hip Hop activist stance was shaken was that after my first research trip in Senegal, several adult men spoke out against "Hip Hop's godfather" Afrika Bambaataa (who had named and canonized the culture) and told stories of how he had sexually abused them in their early youth. Many of my field contacts in New York confirmed these allegations, some even had large style writing pieces about it planned depicting Bambaataa and his Zulu Nation organization as the pope and the catholic church. The empowering founding myth of the gang leader turned social worker and Hip Hop renegade, which had provided a global guiding model for Hip Hop activists, was broken. This, in turn, shook the semi-religious fervor of many Hip Hop activists. While some of them perpetuated rape culture by blaming the survivors, others such as Clemente et al (2016) published an excellent statement to the HH community. I then focused parts of my research on how the pedagogues navigated this new situation in their teaching (cf. 6.5.4). On a personal level, this also helped me counter my "sanitizing politics" of seeing the oppressed as inherently good and instead analyze HHC's contradictions.

I also had to make readjustments on the level of focus because my first research and its results were not as linear as I had hoped, but this is the way the exploratory fieldwork cookie crumbles. In the earliest instances, I had wanted to limit my research to Hip Hop-based teaching outside of state institutions. However, after the first field trips, I decided to readjust my topical focus to include more classroom-based instances of learning and teaching Hip Hop and also the scene types of learning. I also decided to focus more on the case of the Hip Hop-based social movement Y'en a Marre. In the beginning, I thought I could separate these fields and single out Hip Hop-based learning instances outside of schools. In practice, however, the activists were not active in only one sphere but were moving in and out of movement and scene spaces, as well as state and non-state classrooms. Thus, to gain a realistic impression of the field and the activists' projects, I had to broaden the scope. I also focused more on the organization's regular staff to ask about strategies for navigating the complications of the field, such as censorship, agenda setting by funders, etc. Due to my personal connections being mostly around dance and rap, the research has a bias towards these two HH elements.[42]

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and also disciplines. This caused a lot of complications for me on a bureaucratic and a methodic level, and at times, I felt more like a fish on land than anything else.

[41] On a more personal and a Hip Hop scholarship note, huge thanks go out to my second supervisor Professor Michael Rappe, who supported me through personal and research crises and kept an open ear, door, and cypher at the faculty.

[42] There are some DJ and style writing perspectives, but it is not balanced, as the fields are not always equally balanced and style writing is least present in the non-profit sector since its often illegal practices and the clichés of the wider public make it harder to gain access to funds and classrooms with it. For

I can conclude that my first two instances of fieldwork were marked more by an activist stance, the latter two were characterized instead by one of cultural anthropology with more academic distance. I hope that the result is a fruitful dialogue between the two perspectives. To grasp the latter academic perspective more and enable this dialogue, I will outline a few basic theoretical foundations in the following.

2.4 Fourth Point of Departure: Five Theoretical Frameworks for Analyzing the Findings

In the following, I will briefly summarize five theoretical lenses I use to analytically zoom in on the Hip Hop projects, their practices, and their larger contexts. These will not be full-scale explanations of all theoretical details or their epistemological and ontological foundations.[43] Instead, I introduce these theoretical frameworks here only briefly and weave in a few other strings of theory in each of the empirical chapters. In line with the approach of "qualified subjectivity"(cf. Morrow, 1994), the goal is to bring the theories into dialogue with my findings, as well as with my research subjects and how they themselves frame their teaching, learning, and organizing practices, as well as relationships in HHC and the non-profit sector. The following section starts with the most macro-sociological theoretical frames and then moves on toward the theories operating more on the meso- and micro-level.

2.4.1 Gramsci's Cultural Hegemony and Organic Intellectuals

To situate the practitioners' projects, pedagogy, and political organizing in a larger societal context, I will mainly rely on a Gramscian reading of cultural hegemony and organic intellectuals in the context of global neoliberal capitalism.

Gramsci & Cultural Studies on Hegemony, Culture, and Class

The Italian Marxist was the leading organizer and intellectual in Italy's factory and council movement of the early 20th century.[44] From his practical experience and

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further research, I would recommend following the Tats' crew classes and the story of 5 Pointz in New York City, and Radical Bomb Squad and Doxandem Squad in Dakar.

[43] According to Wellgraf (2020), ethnography achieves thickness not only via thick description but also by combining many theoretical and empirical levels. This usually dissatisfies experts in each theoretical school and empirical field, since the theories are not spelled out in full detail. I explicitly do not want to follow a thorough theoretical exercise for its own sake. Instead, I intend to use theory to better understand my findings in a larger context and achieve thickness according to Wellgraf.

[44] Gramsci's theoretical views are determined by the praxis orientation of the factory council movements in Italy during the 1920s/30s and his party activism opposing Italian fascism. Parallel to African American political activist Mumia Abu-Jamal (who is important to my field), Gramsci wrote most of his analyses in jail, reflecting upon his political practice (cf. Barfuss & Jehle, 2017; Candeias et al., 2019). That should qualify him for a Hip Hop analysis in terms of "street credibility."

historical analysis, Gramsci understands hegemony as the way ruling classes exert control in a class society beyond simple state coercion. Instead of only being forced to submit by the police, the subaltern consent to their subordination by following the ideas of the ruling classes about a "just" society. Gramsci calls this ideological leadership the ruling classes' "cultural hegemony" enacted mainly in what he calls civil society. Apart from state force and ideology, the ruling classes also make minor material concessions to sustain their hegemonic position. Gramsci's (2000, p. 235) understanding of class rule is best illustrated in his famous quotation that the state consists of both *"political society + civil society, in other words hegemony protected by the armour of coercion".* His understanding of civil society is far broader than its current liberal definitions. It includes, in addition to the press and mass media, all private sectors, unions, religion, political interest groups, education, and popular culture (understood as culture industries and institutions and in the sense of people's everyday cultural forms of life). The ruling classes rely on their hegemonic leadership to ensure peoples' compliance until it is necessary to resort to the capitalist state's more openly repressive realms of force, i.e., police, the army, or the judicial system (cf. Gramsci, 1992, p. 12 ff.). Today, with such a strong bourgeois, neoliberal hegemony in place, power is not only located in government, at the management and ownership level of large corporations, and in the hands of the army and state police. In addition, power manifests in the media, educational system, popular culture, and as a result, in people's contradictory common sense. Revolutionary or transformative strategies thus have to think beyond just "taking over government" or "seizing the means of production" and also encompass a strategy of attaining cultural hegemony, i.e., the leadership of ideas in order to organize along mass bases (cf. Barfuss & Jehle, 2017; Candeias et al., 2019; Crehan, 2002; Gramsci, 2000, 1992).[45]

Such a Gramscian analysis of the relationship between culture and class structure and the possibilities for societal change will help explain the larger socioeconomic context of Hip Hop non-profits, how it influences project praxis, and how these projects can or cannot contribute to changing society. This is in line with the cultural studies understanding of popular culture. According to Ege (2014, p. 73 ff.) cultural studies follows Gramsci in understanding the cultural realm *"as the world of meanings, including subjectivations, and thereby particularly as the world of popular culture as one of the sites of the conflict for 'hegemony'" [translation S.H.].* Cultural studies proponents Hall et al. (1991, p. 10) understand culture with a materialist grounding as determined and mediated by class: *"the culture of a group or class is the peculiar and distinctive 'way of life' of the group or class, the meanings, values and ideas embodied in institutions, in social relations, in systems of beliefs, in mores and customs, in the uses of objects and material life. Culture*

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[45] For Crehan (2002) this Gramscian analysis of the cultural hegemony and people's contradictory common sense can act as an effective countermeasure against the often romanticized accounts that anthropologists provide of the groups they study. Instead, Gramsci's analysis is interested in a most realistic account of the potential for political intervention.

is the distinctive shapes in which this material social organisation of life expresses itself."[46] Under these class-based "parent cultures," there are sub-cultures and a hegemonic struggle between dominant and subordinate cultures at work.[47] According to Ege (cf. 2014, p. 64ff.), this class grounding and research of cultural identities have been complicated by societal developments. Societies have become more heterogeneous culturally via, e.g., migration, sexual liberation, and more expressed gender identities, different religions, and youth, and sub-cultural identity offers. Traditionally designated positions in society according to age, class, gender, and racialized order become thus more hybrid. The focus on individualized differences now often plays out more via sub-cultural identity performances. While a cross-reference to class and class fractions is still necessary, the "maps of meaning" of cultures and sub-cultures have to be studied empirically to see how individuals use them to negotiate their identities and the resulting subjectivations. I will thus employ this larger Gramscian frame of cultural hegemony to analyze and discuss Hip Hop cultural projects, their practices, and the resulting identity formations, as well as the field's forces. To understand how hegemony plays out and how it can be challenged, we have to also take a look at Gramsci's figure of the organic intellectual, which will guide some of the discussion of the findings.

Organic Intellectuals

From Gramsci's (cf. 2000, p. 300 ff.) point of view, everybody is an intellectual. However, his understanding of the latter is opposed to the everyday understanding of someone "reading and writing theory in an ivory tower." Quite to the contrary, Gramsci (2000, p. 321) designates an organic intellectual as someone who actively participates in *"in practical life, as constructor, organiser, 'permanent persuader' and not just a simple orator".*[48] Even though everybody has the capacity for such intellectual, i.e., organizing work, most people do not fulfill this role. He further differentiates between traditional intellectuals and organic ones. The former are pillars of the current state and power structure and include inter alia state politicians or established officials professionally trained within the system to support the current social order. Organic intellectuals instead arise "organically" from their specific class position

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[46] While Ortner (2008a, p. 112ff.) warns of the dangers of employing the concept of culture, as essentializing and demonizing certain groups, she says that one cannot do without it and should instead be aware of the politics of using it. She credits cultural studies proponents Williams and Willis (1979) with awakening the concept's critical potential by a Gramscian analysis of the culture of power formations and subjectivities with ethnographic methods.

[47] Hall et al (1991, p. 35) warn of class reductionism by reducing sub-cultures to analyses of the capitalist and the working class. Instead, the *"the experience and response to change within different class fractions, is now seen as a determining level. […] the sub-culture is seen as one specific kind of response, with its own meaning structure – its own 'relative autonomy.'"*

[48] This definition is based on a Marxist distinction between physical and intellectual labor in the factory, where physical work is done by the workers and intellectual work means organizing and managing people along the work process.

and directly represent the interests of this social class/class fraction.[49] They could be strike leaders, political organizers of an ethnic minority, or public figures who enter the political system from an outsider position to represent it. Even though often used that way, Gramsci does not imply this as a normative categorization: organic intellectuals could also be rich, far-right thinkers who propose a new ethno-nationalist hegemonic project serving their own power interests.

For Gramsci, the culture of the oppressed, or the subaltern, has to be studied by such organic intellectuals because "counterhegemonies, capable of challenging in an effective way the dominant hegemony, emerge out of the lived reality of oppressed people's day-to-day lives" (Crehan, 2002, p. 5). It is the intellectual's role in turn to engage with such cultural raw material and make it coherent and usable for a counterhegemonic project. Thus, the task at hand for organic intellectuals is to shape the worldview of the subalterns with their contradictory common sense, all their internal hierarchies, and inequalities into a counterhegemonic force. Hip Hop and particularly mainstream rap, with its many internal contradictions and hierarchies, could form a base for mounting such a counterhegemonic project.

Gramsci's views on a strategic analysis of the actual societal forces, power structures, and possibilities for change within them are particularly insightful concerning Hip Hop cultural activism. These concepts will guide the analysis, and especially his figure of the organic intellectual will come into play in the discussion of the Y'en a Marre movement and of HHC's potential for transformation in chapter 9 (cf. Barfuss & Jehle, 2017; Candeias et al., 2019; Crehan, 2002; Gramsci, 2000, 1992).[50]

2.4.2 Ortner's "Projects of Resistance," NGOization, & Movement Theory

In addition to the Gramscian and cultural studies perspectives of research, I will employ parts of cultural anthropologist Sherry Ortner's practice theory to look at

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[49] Crehan (2002) decries how the term "organic intellectual" has been "whitewashed" and used without Gramsci's Marxist analysis of class relations in many recent social and cultural studies.

[50] Another very central category for a Gramscian analysis is that of the conjuncture, which was taken up and further developed by Stuart Hall and others into the intellectual project of conjunctural analysis. Ege (2021, p. 181 ff.) describes how Gramsci's category of the conjuncture aims at a mid-level between the immediate aspects of everyday situations, which can be perceived, e.g., via ethnographic methods of participant observation, and the larger epochal developments, which are mostly a result of the larger socio-economic "organic" processes (e.g., capitalist production, heteronormativity, or coloniality (cf. Ege, 2021, p. 182). The conjuncture aims at analyzing the social relations of political blocks, culture, economy, political system, discourses, etc., of a specific society (social formation) during a delineated historical period (moment) and in a geographically limited space. The goal is to perceive of the specific economic, social, and cultural "settlement" between all social groups and the ruling classes, i.e., the current hegemony. However, in a Marxist dialectical tradition, conjunctural analysis aims to analyze not only the relations of domination but also possible sites of cultural or economic intervention, resistance, and a counter-hegemonic project. This is in line with cultural studies proponents who never theorize for its own sake but to *understand their own (developed, capitalist, etc.) societies, with the primary focus on their potential for change, i.e., partly/with a critical intention."* (Ege, 2014, p. 65) *[translation S.H.]*.

the Hip Hop projects. She analyzes the relations between larger social structures and lower levels of the individual's/group's subjectivity and agency. Ortner defines subjectivity as "*the ensemble of modes of perception, affect, thought, desire, and fear that animate acting subjects [as well as] … the cultural and social formations that shape, organize, and provoke those modes of affect, thought, and so on.*" (Ortner, 2008, p. 107). She thus moves back and forth between cultural formations and the inner state of acting subjects.[51] However, one should not over-analyze the subjective perceptions or intentions of the actors (which often do not overlap with their actual practice or its outcome). Instead, Ortner (2008, p. 55) proposes a practice perspective on *"projects of resistance"* to grasp their actual transformative potential: "*the importance of subjects (whether individual actors or social entities) lies not so much in who they are and how they are put together as in the projects that they construct and enact. […] For it is in the formulation and enactment of those projects that they become and transform who they are, and that they sustain or transform their social and cultural universe.*" I will thus balance out the interview perspectives of the activists with participant observation of their projects and participants' views.

This perspective will be enriched by analyzing the field of these projects mainly in the non-profit sector and within reach of social movements. I will therefore introduce the sociological and activist theories of "NGOization" and of what some activists call the "non-profit industrial complex" in following chapters (cf. inter alia Brunnengräber, 2015; Choudry & Shragge, 2011; Incite!, 2017; Ismail & Kamat, 2018).

Chapter 8 will introduce some additional social movement theory – mainly Eyerman and Jamison's (2000, 2007) analyses. Their views on the relationship between musicians and movements, as well as a movement's different phases and its "cognitive praxis,*"* will help analyze the Y'en a Marre movement in particular and HHC's potential for engaging movement action. Via the "dimensions of cognitive praxis," this theory helps to grasp the knowledge generated by a movement and its levels of activity from the micro level of everyday practices to the organizational level and the larger utopian vision and historical mission of the movement. These perspectives will allow me to situate the movement and its Hip Hop practices in the respective field and explain their reach, how they are subject to attempted cooptation and oppression, and which counter-strategies the activists employ.

2.4.3 Bourdieu's Field & Forms of Capital Extended

In addition to his focus on studying specific fields and their logic, Bourdieu's theory on the different forms of capital will guide parts of my analyses of the social and

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[51] However, Ortner lacks somewhat an organizing perspective on societal change and resistance. She states *that "the postmodern subject, in short, has been drained of subjectivity in the modernist sense"* and proposes *"cognitive mapping"* to produce *"firm subjectivities"* for subjects and restore their agency (Ortner, 2008a, p. 120f.). I would counterargue that collective agency can mainly be developed via collective practice, which requires social movements, education, and organizing. As a practice theorist, she could prescribe projects that allow for such a practice and not mere mental exercises.

educational Hip Hop projects. Bourdieu's field is a dynamic space of forces, struggle, and strategies, containing various potential future outcomes. Fields cannot be theorized about a priori but have to be researched empirically by studying their actual practices and material class base:

> *"Positions in the field are determined by the allocation of specific capital to actors who are thus located in the field. Positions once attained can interact with habitus to produce different postures (prises de position) which have an independent effect on the economics of 'position-taking' within the field"* (Mahar et al., 1990, p. 8).

Bourdieu uses the economic category of capital as a metaphor to extend the focus on resource inequality to the cultural, social, and symbolic realms. Capital thus encompasses *"all the goods, material and symbolic, without distinction, that present themselves as rare and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation"* (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 178). Just as economic capital, cultural, social, and symbolic capital are also distributed unevenly and passed on according to the individual's and her family's positioning, primarily along the lines of class (/class fractions) as well as cultural milieu. While economic capital is most directly transferable to money, the other forms are more indirectly transferred into material and status gains. Cultural capital, for instance, comes in three forms. In its embodied form, it includes class-specific taste, ways of speaking and acting, and knowledge learned mainly within the family and which designate one's status in the social hierarchies. An upper-class child learns different cultural references, ways of speaking, and acting than a working-class child. The educational system clearly favors the former's varieties of cultural capital over ghetto vernacular or "Hip Hop lingo" associated with a lower-class positioning. Cultural capital is transmitted by time investments of someone who has the cultural capital herself and stored in the learner's body.[52] Secondly, cultural capital can also take the form of objects, i.e., cultural goods such as books, pictures, music albums, etc. Thirdly, it can take an institutionalized form, such as educational titles and degrees, awards received, most often granted by the state and higher private institutions. These titles enable comparison and evaluation of an individual's worth in the labor market and enable the preservation of power structures (cf. Bourdieu, 1983, 2012; Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000).[53]

Social capital means an individual's network of relations and adherence to social groups, which she can mobilize toward her interests. It encompasses not only the number of high-trust relations but also the economic, cultural, and symbolic capital of the members of this network. Upper-class children will inherit a different network via their families than their poor counterparts. This enables career

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[52] Such incorporated forms of cultural capital tie into Bourdieu's (cf. 2012, p. 108) concept of the equally class-specific *habitus*. This designates an bodily system of dispositions situated between structures and practices and constituted by them.

[53] HHC does not have institutionalized forms of cultural capital equal to so-called "high culture"/more upper-class artistic practices. See how organizers find alternatives of institutionalized HH-specific sub-cultural capital in Chapters 4 & 7.

opportunities, e.g., in the economy, political parties, or cultural sectors. Social capital can be furthered by investing time and resources to establish and maintain a network of good relations, for example, via symbolic acts, such as gifts, hosting parties, etc. (cf. Bourdieu, 2012). Lastly, symbolic capital plays out on a superior level and includes prestige, status, and authority. Symbolic capital can be gained from economic capital via charity and donations or from cultural capital via winning artistic competitions.

For Bourdieu, these diverse forms of capital and the habitus structure the different fields and the competition between the actors. These capital forms are the basis of (often hidden) domination and can, under some circumstances, be converted from one to the other. The most striking and powerful conversion is from all other forms into the symbolic capital of status, authority, and prestige because this legitimizes a person as an authority. How symbolic capital is institutionally transferred and acts as a class-reproducing structure remains ideologically hidden, obfuscating the system's intrinsic inequalities. Bourdieu calls this mechanism symbolic violence, since the subordinated strata of society do not possess the skills necessary to publicly contradict their symbolic subordination. Thus, Bourdieu states that this uneven distribution and the passing down of the different forms of capital to the next generations account for the reproduction of inequality in a social formation, particularly in the education system (cf. Bourdieu, 1983; Bourdieu & Passeron, 2000). I will use these concepts to determine how Hip Hop projects can counter the reproduction of inequalities by redistributing different forms of capital and how they might create new hierarchies. In addition, I will use the field concept to explain the logics, incentives, cultural specifics, and hierarchies of the relevant fields, such as the non-profit sector, different Hip Hop scenes, social movement realms, etc. However, some additions to his theory are necessary.

Additions: Aspirational and Psychological Capital

Yosso expands Bourdieu's differentiation of capital by introducing aspirational capital. Building on critical race theory, she positively defines it as communities of color's *"ability to hold onto hope in the face of structured inequality [...] aspirations are developed within social and familial contexts, often through linguistic storytelling and advice (consejos) that offer specific navigational goals to challenge (resist) oppressive conditions"* (Yosso, 2005, p. 77).[54] In Yosso's understanding, this aspirational capital can challenge the inequalities of an ethnically stratified class society upheld by the educational system.

When studying her high school cohort's life paths decades after graduation, Ortner (2002) similarly adds "psychological capital" to Bourdieu's theory. She defines this form of capital as *"the quality of love and support that one gets from one's important social relationships, and particularly — for the years of growing up — from one's immediate family."*

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[54] The negative reading of this would be the American dream's individualized "from rags to riches" narrative of the US, which has the second worst upward social mobility of the G7 countries (cf. *Global Social Mobility Index*, 2020).

(Ortner, 2002, p. 20f.) In addition to money and cultural capital, her subjects felt that this form of emotional "investment" was central to their personality structure, their lives' successes and failures, and their ability to cope with the latter. While it does not refer to deeper psychological structures, the concept is used to explain *"the things that make for different kinds of social persons, different 'personalities' in the everyday sense: outgoing or shy, self-confident or timid, active or passive, open or closed. These are the kinds of things in turn that – along with other forms of capital – make for differential social effectiveness, whether 'popularity' in high school or 'success' in later life."* (Ortner, 2002, p. 13). Ortner thereby wants to thicken Bourdieu's notion of the subject, which she critiques as rather thin. She also warns of Bourdieu's and other "structure-heavy" theoreticians' deterministic/antihumanist stance as they focus mostly on the reproduction of inequality instead of the potential for change and agency (cf. Ortner, 2008, p. 109f.).[55] I will employ her and Yosso's additions to Bourdieu's forms of capital to see whether the Hip Hop projects can provide such resources and even out some social inequalities on a more individual level of the subjects.

2.4.4 Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed and the Banking Model

In addition to these practice-theoretical concepts, I rely mainly on Freire's (2000) "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" to structure the empirical analysis (cf. mainly chapter 5). Especially the Brazilian educator's concepts of the oppressive *"banking model of education"* vs. liberatory education will guide my analysis of the projects and their contexts on a more normative level. Freire (2000, p. 72f.) states that the "*banking model of education"* turns students *"into 'containers', into 'receptacles' to be 'filled' by the teacher.[…] Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor […]the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits."* By thus turning students into the passive receivers of knowledge, the teachers and the state institutions behind them uphold the oppressive conditions in most schools. Thus, the relationship between teachers and students is fully hierarchical: *"the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing; [...] the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined […] the teacher is the subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects."* (Freire, 2000, p. 73).

Freire also provides an emancipatory answer to this oppressive model of learning. His "pedagogy of the oppressed" is built on a complex process of dialogical learning. In contrast to a top-down way of teaching, knowledge here flows in both directions and the roles of learners and students are loosened. This loosening of the pedagogic hierarchies is expressed in the terms of "teacher-students" and "student-teachers" that replace the teachers and learners of banking style education. From the beginning, the pedagogues' *"efforts must coincide with those of the students to engage in*

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[55] More specifically, Ortner (2008a, p. 110) states that it is essential to restore subjectivity to social theory, because it is *"a major dimension of human existence, and to ignore it theoretically is to impoverish the sense of the human in the so-called human sciences. But it is also important politically, as [...] I see subjectivity as the basis of 'agency' a necessary part of understanding how people (try to) act on the world even as they are acted upon."*

critical thinking and the quest for mutual humanization. His efforts must be imbued with a profound trust in people and their creative power. To achieve this, they must be partners of the students" (Freire, 2000, p. 76).This creative dialogue happens via the problem-posing method, where teachers and students together view the learners' lives and specific experiences of oppression, exploitation, and domination as "problems". By framing oppressive situations that are "normal" within racialized patriarchal capitalism as problems, both teachers and students develop their critical thinking capacities and develop new ideas and approaches to these situations. The goal here is always to start from the learners' personal experiences, their life-worlds, and their emotions and perceptions to develop critical perspectives first and then social/political interventions in a second step. The learners are then encouraged to carry out these interventions and change things in their lives, neighborhoods, and environments, and to transform themselves and the societies on a small scale with abolishing oppression and social revolution as an end goal. After an initial period of practice, the learners bring their experiences back into the classroom and reflect upon them and develop new knowledge about the world and their own agency within it.

In Freire's (2000, p. 81) words:

"In problem-posing education, people develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation. […]Hence, the teacher-student and the students-teachers reflect simultaneously on themselves and the world […] and thus establish an authentic form of thought and action."

Freire continuously stresses that subjects' agency derives from their perception of the world and their own role within it. Since his process of learning is closely tied to the learners beginning to act and intervene in their life-worlds, people do not gain abstract knowledge about society but rather agency in it. The pedagogy of the oppressed thus follows an ideal of building power from the ground up by engaging learners and transforming selves and society.

To this end, Freire (2000, p. 91ff.) proposes a complex multi-level process: first interviewing the learners about their life-worlds and then having them generate themes and subsequently curricula, which are then discussed with the learners before entering the classrooms. This way of teaching also opposes dogmatic and top-down forms of "leftist" education. Freire (2000, p. 95) states that

"revolutionary leaders do not go to the people in order to bring them a message of 'salvation,' but in order to come to know through dialogue with them both their objective situation and their awareness of that situation […]. One cannot expect positive results from an educational or political action program which fails to respect the particular view of the world held by the people. Such a program constitutes cultural invasion."

This critique thus necessitates a democratic process between learners and teachers and goes against both oppressive state programs and hierarchical leftist models of change.

I will use these rather normative concepts in the empirical analysis to help assess the pedagogical relationships/hierarchies in the different projects as well as the institutional surroundings they act in. Freire's focus on liberatory education and action will guide the analysis of classroom-based Hip Hop learning, the various forms of Hip Hop mentoring, and also the discussion of the results. The final framework of understanding HHC's practices and pedagogy is explained in the following.

2.4.5 Oral Culture, Afrodiaspora, & Hip Hop as a Community of Practice

Many Hip Hop scholars trace HHC's core characteristics back to its West African roots of oral culture (cf. Dufresne, 1992; Kage, 2004; Kimminich, 2010; Rappe, 2010). Rose (1994) points out that Hip Hop is not only oral culture but combines elements from written cultures and the creative use of technology. Oral cultures are distinguished from written ones because they maintain their knowledge bases not in written form but through collective cultural practice. To be kept alive, knowledge is constantly paraphrased and made memorable through rhyme, rhythm, figurative language, exaggeration, stories, and metaphors. This leads to an understanding of artistic practice that contrasts with traditional European notions. *"Orality is functional. Art for art's sake makes no sense in Africa. Self-expression is not an end in itself but is always a form of communication"* (Sobol cited in: Rappe, 2010, p. 131).

The same holds true for art within the face to face realms of HHC. For example, in cyphers, the circular spaces of artistic practice, communication takes place through words or dance, artists clarify social realities, and community is created through shared practice. Furthermore, the primary (rhythmic) formulas of oral cultural practice form the basis for establishing a cultural identity and a political consciousness (cf. Kimminich, 2010, p. 82). This points to the culture's pedagogical potential where Hip Hop practitioners acquire a specific form of oral cultural agency: actionality. The latter includes *"acting and reacting within a communication process and the sensitive perception of the smallest units of information as a basis for spontaneous improvisation"* [translation S.H.] (Kimminich, 2010, p. 88).

In addition to strong community-building elements, there is also a high level of competition-based practices that act as the engine of cultural advancement. The precursors of HHC's competition, i.e., battles, are found in Afrodiasporic cultural traditions.[56]

As an oral, artistic practice, Hip Hop art forms see all of life, especially individual experiences, preferences, limitations, and one's personality, as a source of new artistic creation. Here, ideally, the artistic style corresponds to one's character. Thus,

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[56] The Dirty Dozens, for example, is a linguistic competition characterized by exaggerations and artful insults to the other person, which found its way from the Black ghettos into blues music, R&B, funk, soul, and later on rap. Capoeira is a competitive dance/fight practice and combines many of the call and response elements between both musicians and the players. Boasting (or self-praise) is found in diverse Afrodiasporic art traditions, and such artistic exaggeration of the self must be seen as a response to constant discrimination (cf. Dufresne, 1992; Kage, 2004; Rappe, 2010).

a person's eccentric musical taste, her cheerful temper, or sense of humor could become her trademarks as a DJ. In the case of breaking, which was initially learned mostly autodidactically and via collaborative practice and mimesis, one's personal style was determined from the beginning by movement characteristics that resulted, among other things, from physical impairment, a pronounced imagination, or a preference for kung fu films. In rap and style writing, the principle of authentically expressing one's identity in the art is just as important. Schloss (2004) quotes practitioners to argue that life narratives and even hardships can be positively reinterpreted in Hip Hop art forms. Practitioners can see such setbacks as artistic and stylistic resources to gain self-confidence and follow HHC's lifelong learning and collective development ideals. As one's standing in the community depends on one's artistic practice, the motivation for stylistic development is particularly high. Parts of these perspectives will guide some of the analysis of the aesthetic practices of HHC and their pedagogic merit in the empirical chapters.

Hip Hop Culture as Communities of Practice

A theoretical perspective on learning closely related to this view of Hip Hop as a partly oral culture is that of communities of practice. Here, learning is *"a source of social structure"* and *"gives rise to communities of practice"* as *"emergent structures"* (Wenger, 1998, p. 96). The Wenger-Trayners (2022, p. 2) define these communities as *"groups of people who share a concern or passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly"*. It is thus via practicing Hip Hop that a Hip Hop community of practice emerges and its members begin to enter relationships and *"imagine affinities"* (cf. Fogarty, 2012a). Three main characteristics mainly define such a community: The first is a domain of interest, to which members openly commit and bring a certain competence to the table that distinguishes them from non-members. In the case of my research, this domain of interest could be either the artistic practice of the Hip Hop elements, teaching, or project organizing. The second aspect is the community, in which the members engage via collective activities, exchange, and discussion. They help each other, share information, develop new knowledge, engage in relationships, and care about their standing within the community. This could be either the community of the Hip Hop artists of a certain scene, the teaching artists, or the organizers of Hip Hop projects. The third characteristic is that of the practice, which distinguishes it from more theoretically defined groups of interest. The members of such a community are thus practitioners. They develop a shared practice with collectively shared repertoires, resources, and experiences. However, the practice can also involve conflict and competition.

Such communities of practice's exemplary activities include collective problem-solving, sharing assets, growing confidence, requesting and sharing information, forming an argument for the collective practice in front of the larger society, etc. The perspective allows one *"to see past more obvious formal structures defined by engagement in practice and the informal learning that comes with it"* (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-

Trayner, 2022, p. 4). The very nature of such communities and their often informal practice orientation conflicts with the logic of confining knowledge, teaching, and learning of educational institutions based mainly on theoretical learning. Similar to the perspective of oral culture, the communities of practice-theorists see *"the real 'body of knowledge' as a community of people who contribute to the continued vitality, application and evolution of the practice"* (Wenger-Trayner et al., 2014, p. 13). They further distinguish that the body of knowledge of a discipline or an occupation is not a single community but rather *"a complex landscape of different communities of practice,"* among which conflicts and hierarchies can exist (Wenger-Trayner et al., 2014, p. 15). Other hierarchies in the community stem from the fact that there are usually leaders, coordinators, or stewards who conduct the exchange process. Additionally, in such a landscape of communities of practice, there are certain organizational and institutional structures that can either help reinforce the beneficial aspects of exchange or confine information to an institution's members and limit free knowledge exchange. The communities are marked by participation and reification, which either maintain the status quo, or redirect the future of the practice and the communities. The politics of participation include *"influence, personal authority, nepotism, rampant discrimination, charisma, trust, friendship, ambition,"* while those of reification include *"legislation, policies, institutionally defined authority, expositions, argumentative demonstrations, statistics, contracts, plans, designs"* (Wenger, 1998, p. 91 f.). As HHC and its project practices have not yet been fully institutionalized and mainly happen in a non-reified face-to-face practice, the former politics are more important. The latter will become more and more important with Hip Hop's growing institutionalization and reification, e.g. in the form of curricula or specific non-profit organizations, federations, etc. This is taken up in the discussion (cf. Wenger, 1998; Wenger-Trayner et al., 2014; Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2022).

Before applying all of these concepts in the empirical analysis, a brief review of the Senegalese context is necessary to complete the picture.

3 Senegalese Hip Hop and Class or: Why is Hip Hop Galsen so Political?

In the introduction and the literature review, we have taken a closer look at Hip Hop culture in New York City and its global reach via the various media and culture industries. American/Western Hip Hop culture and its industrial variants are more commonly known and have been treated extensively in the academy. To fully understand the analysis in the following chapters, however, some further explorations of this book's second national context are in order: the highly political Senegalese Hip Hop, or as the practitioners call it, Hip Hop Galsen. How did Hip Hop culture arrive in the West African country in the first place? And what made for its globally unique political drive? What are the class realities, the specific cultural industrial and state institutional context, and how did this influence the cultural developments? In the following, I will describe the historical development of Hip Hop Galsen in a nutshell and give some insight into the sociocultural and economic context.

   With a common political and activist stance in some of its spheres and its societal impact via social movements, Senegalese Hip Hop remains globally exceptional. Elsewhere, social-justice-oriented Hip Hop activists do exist and carry out a variety of projects, but nowhere else does this specific branch of Hip Hop culture carry the same weight as in Senegal. During an interview, Ismaila Ba – an organizer from the cultural center Africulturban – remarked on a side note: *"it's true that today the majority*

[of rappers] are still to some point politicized. Being real[57] *also means being activist in Senegal."*
Thus the equation of one of Hip Hop culture's most central principles, i.e., *realness*
(meaning authenticity, as well as adhering to Hip Hop principles) with having an
activist practice, is surprising. Aaro, a popular older MC, who is also part of the
Y'en A Marre movement, makes a clear distinction between Senegalese Hip Hop
and the celebration of material wealth and status symbols in Western rap music:

> **Aaro:** *"Senegalese Hip Hop is social and takes care of problems. It is not about bling
> bling, check out my car, but rather we call on the system to say "It does not work this
> way!" You have to help the youth, create jobs. Our Hip Hop is there to denounce, and at
> the same time, we also speak by actions. Because if you challenge the system, it is necessarily
> positioned against you. Thus, we don't have sponsors."*

This statement speaks to the political self-image of Senegal's political rappers but
has to be qualified on two accounts: Firstly, while there are few to no corporate
sponsors for the more activist spheres of Senegalese Hip Hop, there is, however, a
lot of NGO funding and by now also some state sponsoring. The influence of these
funding structures will be discussed mainly in chapter 8. Secondly, there is some-
what of a generational difference today, with many of the younger rappers having a
very different vision of making rap music. They receive corporate sponsorship, and
their music videos are often very close to the American hegemonic forms of rap,
with expensive cars and other status symbols and sexually objectified women. The
organizer and director of Africulturban, Amadou Fall Ba says that these rappers are
all about *"self-glorification"* and are present only on the internet: *"They have a million
views, but we've never seen*[58] *them [in the cultural scene/the banlieues]."* The attitude of many
of the younger rappers thus stands in contrast to the older generation, who had to
make a name for themselves by playing local concerts in Dakar's poverty-ridden
suburbs and its working-class/low-income neighborhoods.

In 2018, many organizations celebrated Hip Hop Galsen's 30th anniversary in
various events as they agreed on 1988 as the founding year of their cultural move-
ment. In the following subchapter, I will sketch out briefly the three decades of the
history of Senegalese Hip Hop[59] to understand this generational shift.

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[57] The US-American principle of *"keepin' it real"* obliges the artists to report authentically from the
lived realities of the ghetto. Rose (2008) criticizes this principle as often portraying one-dimensional
criminal and hyper-sexualized clichés of impoverished Blacks in the US. The mainstream celebration
of these cliches marginalizes the life realities of, e.g., single mothers, who heroically work two or three
jobs to care for their children. Hip Hop founding figure DJ Kool Herc (in: Chang, 2006) introduces
the principle of *"keeping it right,"* whereas these one-dimensional depictions should be replaced by more
progressive cultural perspectives. Hip Hop artists are thus supposed to take their responsibility more
seriously, which comes with their status as mediatized role models for youth all around the globe.
[58] The original quote in French is based on a pun, since the word for "views" is the same word as
"seeing someone": "Ils ont des millions de vues, mais on ne les a jamais vue."
[59] Most histories of Hip Hop Galsen only focus on rap. I have tried to include Hip Hop's other
elements where possible.

3.1 On Socio-economic Context: From the Colonial Past to Neo-colonial Exploitation

To understand Hip Hop Galsen's nature and the central position that hardcore and politically conscious rap and activist conceptions of Hip Hop still take in it, one has to take a genealogical approach. Taking a step back allows us to briefly consider both the socio-historical and cultural context of Senegal and the over 30 years of Senegalese Hip Hop history.

Today's Senegal had been a central area for trade (in both goods and enslaved people) and home to a large ethnic and cultural diversity long before the colonial era. When European colonizing forces arrived, the transatlantic slave trade was institutionalized. The Dakar region was a central shipping point for the horrors of the middle passage and chattel slavery, decimating and traumatizing local populations in the millions. During the ensuing colonial era slowly starting around the 17th century, the French empire practiced its assimilation strategy by converting a small stratum of the indigenous population to Catholicism, forcing the French language upon them, and giving them comparative privileges. In the 19th century, French rule forcefully replaced the dominant subsistence farming structures with a monocultural production of peanut crops, thereby destroying the country's material independence. The French empire thus integrated the peripheral colony further into the capitalist world system by switching the earlier supply of slave labor to the country's new main export: peanuts (cf. Wallerstein, 2005; Wallerstein & Hopkins, 1983). Appert (2012, p. 30, 2018) identifies this destabilizing of religious and social structures as a critical factor in further establishing Sufi Islam in the region, which mixed with and replaced the earlier animist traditions. The Sufi priests (called marabouts) gained influence in the resistance against the Catholic colonial rulers.

Following World War II[60] and during the era of decolonization of most of the African continent, Senegal officially gained independence in 1960. The socialist party of the country's first president Leopold Senghor stayed in government for 40 years until 2000, even though other parties were introduced into parliament during the late 1970s. Due to Islam's crucial role in opposing colonial influence, Senghor's regime relied heavily on the country's Islamic priests to stabilize its power. Thus, an influential and economically well-off religious stratum formed that still exerts an immense influence over the political process (cf. C. M. Appert, 2012, p. 31ff.; J. Hill, 2017).

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[60] Men from Senegal and other French colonies had been recruited during World War II to help defeat Nazi Germany and win the war. Upon returning to Dakar, they demanded their promised pay, which the French generals refused them. When protesting this injustice, the soldiers were massacred during their sleep by the French military. For a moving introduction to this story of the Tirailleurs Senegalais, cf. Sembene's (1987) excellent movie "Camp de Thiaroye". The topic is also often taken up in Senegalese rap. MC/organizer Matador designated an album to this betrayal and murder by the French generals.

After being president for 20 years from 1960–1980, Senghor then transferred power within the confines of the Socialist Party to his political protégé Diouf, whom he chose as his successor. In the late 1960s, with the end of colonial rule, France withdrew subsidies of the peanut industry. The country's major export of peanut oil became marginalized, as different oils from Europe gained weight in the European market. Following the oil and debt crises of the 1970s and 1980s, the Senegalese economy stagnated and underwent multiple crises. In contrast to neighboring Burkina Faso's iconic president Sankara, the Senegalese leadership did not substantially oppose imperialist influence. Instead, it allowed foreign interventions in economic policies by former colonizer France and institutions of a global capitalist regime. Faced with the multiple crises of the 1980s, the Diouf government consented to the vastly destructive austerity measures of the structural adjustment programs. These neoliberal reforms were forced upon countries in the Global South by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to protect the interests of Western financial institutions. The IMF and World Bank arranged for new credits to pay the old ones and conditionally tied the loans to these austerity programs, which these countries had to accept to survive economically. Implementing such reforms meant imposing budget cuts to social and welfare programs, as well as to public spending in the health, cultural, and educational sectors (E. Brown et al., 2000; Stiglitz, 2003). In Senegal, these social, cultural, and welfare cuts coincided with an economic crisis, mass layoffs, and the closing of factories, while multiple strikes shook the educational sector. In 1988 – the mythologically-constructed year of birth of Senegalese Hip Hop – these strikes reached a peak and resulted in a nullification of the entire school year, termed the *année blanche* ("the white year") in all of Senegal. Many young people filled the free time of this année blanche with activities to express and forget their frustrations. As in the Bronx during the 1970s, when many kids did not go to school, this time abundance allowed for a further spread of Hip Hop culture (cf. Latuner, 2018, p. 22; Osmanovic, 2017, p. 11f.; Tandian, 2018).

Even though Senghor had introduced new political parties in 1978, state and media power were still largely centralized. During the 1988 elections, urban youths protested against the Diouf regime's apparent corruption, which responded with violent repression. Most protesters were not old enough to vote and could not let their frustrations impact electoral results. However, their protests showed how deeply estranged the youth had become from the parliamentary system and religious elites, who consented to the Western austerity measures. This youthful political awakening is particularly relevant since under 20-year-olds comprise 50.9 percent of the general population (cf. Dimé, 2017, p. 84).[61]

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[61] In the literature, youth is often understood as more of a sociocultural category, including up to 35-year-olds according to marital status, financial independence, position in society, and participation in Hip Hop (cf. Dimé, 2017, p. 86).

The period of internal turmoil was also marked by a violent conflict with neighboring Mauritania, including numerous deaths and displaced people. From 1989–91, many young people started the *set setal* (clean, clean up) initiatives to clean and beautify their neighborhoods. Dimé (2017) sees this active reclaiming of citizenship as a direct reaction to the toils of war and the austerity-induced instabilities to regain a sense of agency. Hip Hop activists have later taken up parts of this activism.

3.2 1988 – Hip Hop's Arrival: A Class and Cultural Analysis

Certain Hip Hop elements had been present before 1988, as the culture had arrived in Senegal first via VHS and cassette recordings during the early 1980s. This import happened primarily via family members living in France and elsewhere abroad, who brought back these recorded blueprints for practicing the Hip Hop arts on family visits or sent them via mail. Since few had access to such expensive technical devices as VHS players or had relatives abroad, Senegalese Hip Hop was initially a middle- and upper-class phenomenon. For these kids, who were comparatively better off, the initial approach was the same as elsewhere around the globe: sheer amazement and enthusiasm for the flashy new artistic formats (C. M. Appert, 2012; Niang, 2006, 2010, p. 75f.). At first, Senegalese youth saw the new dance moves in movies and started copying and practicing them instantly. From the accounts of most of the old-school practitioners I interviewed, they took up the dance styles of breaking, popping, and locking first (subsumed under the commercial term of "breakdancing" cf. Rappe & Stöger, 2017; Schloss, 2009). Parallel to European developments, the other Hip Hop elements were only taken up later. Many of the earliest dancers turned to rap and other elements, such as style writing in the following decade[62] (Niang, 2006, p. 175; cf. Rabine, 2014 for an analysis of Dakar's style writing scene). The early imitating forms of adopting Hip Hop cultural practices, ways of talking, and fashion were met with strong opposition and skepticism by older generations of Senegalese society (Niang, 2010, p. 75). In 1988 with the school cancelled, the new cultural practices permeated different parts of Senegalese society and became more of a mass and lower class phenomenon.

Dimé (2017) further distinguishes this class analysis, extending the narrative of other Hip Hop scholars analyzing Senegalese beginnings. Hip Hop practice did not just start in the upper and middle classes and then spread throughout the lower classes but went hand in hand with the demise of the middle class under Diouf's austerity regime. Typical of this socioeconomic precarization were the beginnings of the still prevalent phenomenon of unemployed young Senegalese carrying university diplomas. Most of them had to take on multiple, precarious side jobs, which

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[62] Doug E Tee and Didier Awadi of pioneering group Positive Black Soul and Matador of Wa BMG 44, e.g., went from dancing to rapping. Senegalese style writing pioneer Docta told me in an interview that he had started as a dancer as well.

still marks the reality of many young adults today. When in 2015, I shared a cab with the owner of the small independent studio structure "Diegui Rails," Bamba, he would regularly make short stops for his various jobs. He either talked business with his colleagues at the gas station, where he worked part-time, or picked up pieces of electronic goods that he sold at the local street market. Through these often informal jobs, he knew people all over Dakar, and whenever I saw him, he would come from or leave for another job immediately afterwards.

Amadou Fall Ba, one of Senegal's most important Hip Hop organizers, also identifies class realities as a specific reason for the differences between US and Senegalese Hip Hop: *"We have other problems here. There is a certain class, not a middle class, which is on top of society and is a tiny minority and which does not share the resources with the others."* Even though the same might be said about Western industrialized core countries of the capitalist world system[63], he further clarifies that poverty in Senegal differs from poverty in "developed" countries. For example, he states that Dakar's suburb of Pikine, with around two million inhabitants, not only has a deficient basic health infrastructure and lacks a functional sewage system but also has neither a cinema nor a university. At the same time, he sees culture and especially religion as a major factor in explaining Senegalese Hip Hop's specific character:

> *"we don't have the same culture, and we don't have the same cultural references. For example, the country is 95% Muslim and 5% Christian, and there are local traditions which are still very respected, and even though you have a certain modernization taking place more and more, the people still remain themselves" (AFB in: Niederhuber, 2015, p. 22 translation S.H.).*

With these grievances of poverty, austerity[64], the impossibility of upward social mobility even for university graduates, and a loss of faith in political and religious elites, the first generation of Senegalese rappers used their music as an outlet and as a way of putting forward different political positions. Awadi and Doug E Tee of the pioneering group Positive Black Soul both have a university education and expressed a very intellectualized vision of pan-Africanism in their music. From the beginning, they rapped about the injustices of a racist and imperialist international order and their country's hardships. Even though some of their lyrics were in Wolof, they mostly rhymed in French, both a sign of their middle-class cultural capital and their economic orientation towards international audiences and music markets. In 1992, they played a concert with French rap star MC Solaar at Dakar's French Institute precursor, rapping in French and English. The cooperation happened via a sampler produced by the Centre Culturel Francais. This highlights the central role

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[63] This is more and more the case with the demise of the middle class in Western industrialized countries since the implementation of ever harsher neoliberal policies, (cf. e.g. Fraser, 2019).

[64] Since president Senghor, there have been budgets set aside for cultural institutions. Inclusion into such state funding for Hip Hop culture, has been an ongoing demand by many of the major actors in the various scenes (cf. chapters 7 & 8).

international organizations played in the country's rap scene from the beginning. At the time, Senegal's semi-formal music market was dominated mainly by the hegemonic form of popular music, Mbalax[65], and offered very few economic opportunities for rappers. At the time, no national funding was designated for Hip Hop yet. Positive Black Soul's connection to international institutions and artists allowed comparatively good recording opportunities. They embodied the aesthetic formula of the Senegalese rap music of their era, including reggae toasting, singing, and rapping. Similarly, the pioneering group Daraa J adhered to the same principles and included many sung verses in their music, as well as drums, and also appealed to an international market as ethnic or world music (Abrahams, 2013, p. 7ff.; C. M. Appert, 2015, p. 766ff.; Navarro, 2019, p. 8 ff.).

At this point, Senegalese rappers rhymed mainly in French and English not only due to their orientation towards international markets but also because the middle-class youth had started by mimicking flows, imagery, and the content of US-American and French rap music. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, Afro-centrist, conscious rap was salient in America and France, and this subgenre of Hip Hop music resonated with aspiring Senegalese Hip Hop artists. A major difference between these contexts is that in Senegal rap music was not produced from an ethnic minority position in a majority-white society with somewhat racist consumption patterns (cf. Hart, 2010; Rose, 2008). Another reason for Senegalese MCs identifying with the Afrocentrist US rappers is that many of them adhered to some sort of Islam-related faith, with the Nation of Islam and the Five Percenter Nation being common references (cf. Chang, 2006; Niang, 2010, p. 73ff.). When I inquired about their first influences, most artists of this era cited Afrocentrist and conscious rap artists such as Public Enemy, KRS-One, X-Clan, and at times Tupac Shakur.[66] Ndongo D from the pioneering group Daraa J even translated Public Enemy's "Fight the Power" from English into Senegal's national language Wolof (cf. Abrahams, 2013, p. 7). Rappers and activists Matador and Fou Malade of the second wave of Senegalese rappers, who founded the cultural and community centers in Dakar's Banlieues Africulturban and G Hip Hop, also mention Public Enemy as a major influence. Thus, much of Senegal's early rap criticized societal injustices with an outspoken political commentary. Consistent with the intellectual legacy of post-colonial independence thinkers (which it often cited), the earliest rap music was mainly pan-Africanist and an intellectually politicized endeavor. With the help of MC Solaar, the group Positive Black Soul was the first group to sign a deal in 1994

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[65] Mbalax, Senegal's most popular music to this day, is a mixture of Cuban son, salsa, and traditional Senegalese singing and Jembe drumming (Mbalax being one of the most foundational drumming rhythms) (cf. Navarro, 2019).

[66] Tricia Rose (cf. The Cipher, 2012) argues that, although considered a pioneer of gangsta rap, Tupac would, according to today's standards, be considered more of a conscious rapper due to his complex and political messages. While this overall classification might be questioned, Tupac did transmit political messages, particularly in interviews and when reflecting on his biography – his mother having been a Black Panther activist and naming him after a Peruvian anticolonial icon.

with an international major label. Other pioneering groups, such as Daara J, followed suit. At the time, rap was intertwined with other Hip Hop elements, as showcased in Positive Black Soul's (1992) music video *"Je ne sais pas,"* which featured breaking and standup Hip Hop dancing and style writing.

While breaking and related dance styles[67] were a media-fueled hype in the early and mid-1980s, they remained relevant until the early 1990s when (as in Western countries) the media coverage thinned out. At the same time, most of the first rappers still had some affiliations to dancers, having danced themselves and understanding Hip Hop more holistically as a culture with all the different elements instead of just rap. Style writing was only really taken up during the 1990s, with some writers defining themselves as part of a long tradition and continuing the activism of the set setal movement (Wolof for: "clean up"). The latter had painted slogans and faces of religious leaders on walls to spread messages of moral, political, and physical cleanliness. Style writing has a globally exceptional status in Senegal of never really having been illegal. Many writers recount stories of police officers inviting them to beautify neighboring walls or a hospital owner catching two artists red-handed, buying them spray paint instead of charcoal to finish the job and prevent the rain from destroying their art (cf. Rabine, 2014).

Following 1988, rap music expanded from middle-class neighborhoods into Dakar's poorer/working-class neighborhoods and suburbs as technology made it more accessible and as it gained more media visibility. These poverty-ridden banlieues (French for suburbs) often lack the most basic infrastructure, such as cemented roads, a proper sewage system (leading to recurring floods during the rainy season, which increases the danger of mosquito plagues and malaria), and sufficient hospitals. The new "hardcore" sub-genre of Senegalese rap made the living experiences of these poorer neighborhoods the central point of their artistic expression. Shifting focus away from the pan-Africanist perspectives towards the hardships of everyday life in the poorer neighborhoods parallels some of the "ghetto-centric" and conscious US rap of the late 1980s and early 1990s with less of a gangsta-rap- and more of a politically rebellious approach in Senegal (cf. Forman, 2000; George, 1994; Navarro, 2019, p. 11; Scharenberg, 2001). Another change, which goes hand in hand with this new thematic focus, is the shift towards Wolof as the primary language of Senegalese rap. A new generation of rappers did not address international audiences but rather the local ones of their neighborhoods, who often do not speak French. It was thus logical for them to communicate in the largest non-colonial language. The group Rap'adio is credited with publishing the first album entirely in Wolof in 1998. However, during the 1990s, not only content and language changed, but the music diversified style-wise as well (cf. Niang, 2010, p. 75ff.).

After the dance craze of the 1980s, rap became the most popular Hip Hop element, with estimations of around 2000 groups in the underground milieu in the

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[67] These dances included popping, locking, and later Hip Hop freestyle dancing called "Smurf" in Senegal

1990s (Dimé, 2017, p. 87). Despite a high degree of competition among them, these rap crews shared common tendencies concerning the topics and messages chosen according to each subgenre and style. Dimé (2017) names the main genres within 1990s rap Galsen as *"hardcore, freestyle rap, rap mbalax [and] radical."* Even though not all rappers of this period had analyzed the broader economic and systemic context, many of them depicted and criticized their immediate class realities.

Niang (2006) makes out a defining feature of the hardcore rap genre as initially being more oriented towards the internal cultural Hip Hop public itself than broader society. This orientation shows not only in the refusal to include singing but also in the high frequency of complex rhymes and slang, making it less accessible. At the same time, this genre is politically explicit for the most part and could be seen as an equivalent to the American conscious rap genre. It is specific, however, in how it aesthetically and politically distances itself from the more popular genre Mbalax[68]. Niang argues that the artistic approach changed in the late 1990s and early 2000s when rap became less a marker of difference for its practitioners. Instead, the communication of political issues to the broader public became more important, and thus the aesthetic format changed toward simpler lyrics, clearer images, and less slang and subcultural codes.

3.3 Power Play, Getting Paid and Singing for or Against Political/Religious Leaders

According to Senegalese journalist Hamidou Anne, rap played such a central role in challenging political and religious elites and calling out systemic corruption, mainly because the traditional left *"was practically dead at this moment in time."* Another particularity of this outspoken critique was the tone and extent brought forward by the rappers, which went against traditional forms of respecting one's elders and both religious and political authorities. Senegalese rap and its identity formations thus broke with social customs and traditional forms of music and their support of authorities.

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[68] Appert (2012, 2015) shows how Senegalese "hardcore" rap's refusal to include singing marks a symbolic rupture with the traditional popular music *Mbalax,* which to this day remains a focal point in the "imagining" of the Senegalese nation (cf. Anderson, 2016). The first generation of rappers (e.g., Positive Black Soul) did include singing into their aesthetic build-up, while the second generation of hardcore rappers refused to do so. This new subgenre in Senegalese Hip Hop would come to play a significant role in cultural and political activism. It centered around an account of "realness" or authenticity, which, in addition to giving accurate accounts of everyday poverty, also had an aesthetic component of excluding melodic and sung verses. This was in opposition to Mbalax's singing as *"a hegemonic practice"* (C. M. Appert, 2015, p. 760). Mbalax for these rappers thus represents the practice of griots (or "gewel" in Wolof). This low caste of musicians in traditionally stratified/hierarchical Wolof society praised political and religious leaders and orally conserved their histories through song in the absence of scripture. In contrast, hardcore rappers criticize these leaders.

Matador of pioneering hardcore rap group WA-BMG-44 had been one of the first people to publicly criticize the political and the religious elites of the marabouts. These often heavily bribed Sufi preachers legitimize politicians' acts in their speeches and sermons.[69] According to Matador's partner at Hip Hop cultural center Africulturban Amadou Fall Ba, the rapper instantly received death threats after criticizing this corruption in his rap lyrics. Such stories illustrate hardcore rap publicly breaks with traditional hierarchies (cf. C. M. Appert, 2015, p. 760 ff.; Dimé, 2017, p. 89). This clear distinction between corrupted Mbalax singers and seemingly incorruptible rappers is made explicit by today's MCs. Current rap artist Nitdoff, for example, claims that if people stopped pirating the music of Senegalese rappers, they would be able to remain independent and *"live off of their music, without kissing the rich's asses"* (Nitdoff quoted in: Navarro, 2018, p. 6 translation S.H.). Nitdoff explicitly names *"sambaay mbayaan"* a griot practice of financially compensated praise-singing. The semi-formal music industry that developed during the 1970s (including a large black cassette-market and later MP3s) has been dominated by the country's most popular form of music, Mbalax. Many buy records for reasons of religious patronage, as the Mbalax men praise specific religious leaders. In a country where 90% of the general population identify with one or another branch of Sufi Islam, such praise-singing has become a lucrative occupation for musicians and an easy way for religious authorities to expand their influence. Politicians also profit by seeking support from influential religious leaders, who in turn publicly call to vote for their political camp ("ndiguël" in Wolof). On the other hand, musicians themselves also sing or rap their praise for a political camp[70] (cf. C. M. Appert, 2015, p. 764f.; J. Hill, 2017; Navarro, 2018, p. 6f.; Niang, 2010). The question of how to get paid is central when neither public funding nor "making it in the industry" is really an option and NGO funding becomes more important (cf. Chapters 4, 7 & 8).

3.4 From "Boul Falé" to "Politichiens" and the Alternance": Hip Hop Raises a Political Voice

The rap-based Boul Falé "movement" is less a full blown political movement than a collective political phase in Senegalese rap. It started with an "armada of rappers" (Dimé, 2017, p. 83) spearheaded by Positive Black Soul, Rap'adio, Pee Froiss,

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[69] Cf. Appert (2015), Hill (2017), and Navarro (2018, p. 8) for a depiction of how the marabouts' disciples pay the traditional griots/mbalax singers and some rappers, who had earlier been compensated financially by the spiritual leaders themselves.

[70] There are numerous reports of politicians' attempts to buy the favor and public support of famous rappers (cf. Nomadic Wax, 2008 documentary "African Underground ..."). In 2011, President Wade tried to buy the leading rappers of the *Y'en a Marre* movement in support of his campaign, offered them posts in the government, and upon rejection, sponsored the unsuccessful propaganda campaign *Y'en a Envie* including a few lesser-known rappers (cf. Dimé, 2017; Nelson, 2014).

Xuman, and others. Boul Falé, the title of PBS' 1992 album, is Wolof street slang for "don't care/don't mind". The rappers used it to imply a message of

> *"Don't mind the corruption, the austerity measures, and the bad living conditions! Continue to follow your path of a progressive project instead!" The topics of this group of rappers included: "negligence of politicians, drug addiction, violence, greed, hypocrisy, egoism, corruption, poverty, obsession with material goods, moral degradation, excessive monetarization of social relations" (Dimé, 2017, p. 87).*

Even though critiques of some of these artists of the 1990s are rare in solidary journalism and academia, there is some differentiated commentary. Senegalese journalist/intellectual Hamidou Anne, during a panel on the history of political education in Hip Hop Galsen, pointed out the highly problematic lyrics of some of the artists of the 1990s rap era: *"There are lyrics, when I listen to them again, completely homophobic lyrics, racist lyrics, a lot of them are misogynist too".* Host Amadou Fall Ba's responded that: *"Rap didn't invent anything."* and that the rappers were simply homophobic because Senegalese society was. Rap's proponents often bring forward such arguments, seeing music as holding up a mirror to society, reflecting and documenting its injustices (cf. Rose, 2008).

Wittmann (2004, p. 181ff.) argues that many cultural studies scholars analyzing the Boul Falé movement as a project of *"empowerment, resistance, and subversion"* neglect the movement's reactionary elements. By analyzing song lyrics translated from Wolof, he points to the *"socio-religious conservatism" of "a considerable part of the songs [translation S.H.]."*[71] The researcher references mostly a group of rappers from an openly religious camp in Hip Hop Galsen (cf. J. Hill, 2017; Niang, 2015). He criticizes their and the movement's patriarchal thinking, Islamism, sexism, and bigotry. However, Wittmann (cf. 2004, p. 195ff.) makes too large generalizations at some points and fails to distinguish between subgenres and individuals when assessing "conservative" lyrics.[72]

Senegalese Hip Hop scholar Niang (2006) points out Boul Falé's critique of the individualizing tendencies of consumerism and marketization of social relations. He further states that some of the MCs were deeply committed to democratically transforming society and culture via their music. However, Niang (2006, p. 167) assesses that the *"hip-hop movement in this part of Francophone West Africa is a primarily masculine domain […] [and] the presence of girls is still somehow marginalized"* (cf. 7.4.3). During the 2000 elections, many members of the Boul Falé movement and others joined in the public criticism and protests against long-term technocratic president Abdou Diouf.

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[71] The debate of how music is received recurs both among adult Hip Hop listeners and in cultural studies. Wittmann (2006: 189) attests that Grossberg's focus on "moods" produced by music instead of clear *"narratives or representations of people's experience"* is well-written but lacks the dialectics to see the contradictory ways of popular culture.

[72] Wittmann (2004, p. 196 translation S.H.) in his generalizing statements also conflates Islamism and Islam: *"With their Islamism, the Bul Faale place their critique of society on a solid basis and take a stand towards their well-defined goals.".*

The rap compilation "Politichiens"(wordplay between politician, and *chien,* the French word for dog) was published shortly before the elections and is considered a milestone for Senegalese rap (cf. Kimminich, 2004). It illustrates the musicians' outspoken criticism of both political and religious elites (the cover depicts a politician with the head of a dog distributing money to a religious leader sitting next to a pile of money and gold that he received from the authorities). One track had to be taken off the compilation, as its author Bambino had received severe death threats for publicly criticizing marabout and politician Mbacké. Bambino being forced to leave the country illustrates the criticism's gravity (cf. Kimminich, 2004; Niang, 2010, p. 71). The overall imperative is a call to "uproot the socialist baobab" and to call for voter registration and change among the country's youth (Dimé, 2017).[73] Havard (2001, p. 75) summarizes the rapper's discourse involved in the campaign against then-president Diouf in three points: *"firstly, the will to demarcate a distance to the political class; secondly, affirmation of the necessity of a regime change; and thirdly, a refusal to support any one candidate in particular. [translation S.H.]."*[74]

As a result of massive oppositional campaigns, Diouf was defeated and the first electorally achieved change in government took place. Abdoulaye Wade became Senegal's first president outside of Senghor's "partie socialiste." The reaction of rappers differed. Awadi of Positive Black Soul declared in a press conference shortly after the election that all politicians were corrupt (cf. Kimminich, 2013). However, some of the country's youth and Hip Hop activists initially maintained hopes that the new government would bring about some change. They hoped the new government would stop corruption and recurring floods and bring better education, employment opportunities, and a less authoritarian style of governing. Initially, there were a few signs of a democratic opening, such as a reform introduced by Wade to limit presidential terms to only two. However, it quickly became clear that the new president's liberal reforms and austerity measures combined with costly prestige projects, such as the *"monument de la resistance,"* would not benefit the masses but a wealthy elite and foreign corporations.

According to rapper Keyti and organizer Amadou Fall Ba, realizing that change would not come from a corrupt government led the practitioners to initiate their own cultural and social projects directed toward the general public. Among these projects during what they call "Hip Hop's phase of proposing" was the founding of the first Hip Hop non-profits in the 2000s, such as Africulturban (cf. Chapter 4).

In 2007, Wade was reelected while many rappers of the hardcore genre opposed him and mobilized the youth to vote against him (cf. Nomadic Wax, 2008). In 2011,

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[73] It is hard to measure the impact of such a musical project. While the musicians stress its importance, HH scholar Dramé makes out a tendency of rappers to overemphasize their role in social change. This goes in line with HHC's self-bravado. What it surely did, was to interest many of the young generation in the electoral process and believe in potential change.

[74] Niang (2006, p. 183) cautions not to overstate the rappers' impact, since although he believes in their integrity and political goals, *"any mainstream individual will probably reject [their Hip Hop] [...] cultural forms and practices".*

Wade openly announced that he would break his promise of limiting himself to only two terms as president and run as a candidate for a third term in 2012. Rap group Keur Gui and a few journalists and activists had founded the Y'en a Marre (YEM) movement in 2011 and now effectively used this antagonistic opportunity structure. They mobilized for mass protests against Wade, his third candidature, and what they termed a "constitutional coup." The latter included Wade's attempt to introduce the office of vice president, apparently designated for his son. Together with a larger opposition alliance, YEM was able to mobilize many young people to register for the elections. They used Wade and his authoritarian tendencies as an adversary, and he eventually lost the vote to his successor Macky Sall. This rap-based social movement, its large-scale grassroots council structure, its mass protests, its voter registration, and its ensuing NGOization marked a new quality in Senegal's Hip Hop activism (cf. a more detailed analysis of YEM in chapter 8).

Much remains to be said about Hip Hop Galsen's history, context, and its other elements. I have not touched upon larger camps of more recent commercial rappers and religious propagandists, which are not central to my analysis. This brief context summary will have to suffice for the analysis in the following chapters. Now that we have gotten to know the context of Senegalese Hip Hop in this chapter and New York HHC in the previous ones, we can move on to the analysis of a specific form of HHC's institutionalization in the NGO sector. We will look at different types of Hip Hop non-profits, their specific character, functions, and relationships, as well as the larger forces of the field.

4 "We Be Buildin'": Hip Hop Organizations and the Non-Profit Sector

"You go from taking over empty lots and creating community gardens to taking over buildings. There's a sense of power that comes along with that work […] Like there's a saying that's like 'oh let's go empower the poor' and I feel like with us, we were [...] not 'organizing the poor' but 'the poor organizing'"

Rodstarz of Rebel Diaz Reflecting on their Cultural Center in the Bronx

4.0 A Look into a Neighborhood-Based Cultural Center and the Field of HHC Non-Profits

Looking at Hip Hop non-profits, I will during this chapter present a typology of the four most common types of such organizations, which I have encountered during my research. Looking at the institutional setup and specific characteristics of each organizational type, as well as the larger field will allow for a better understanding of the pedagogic, artistic, and organizing practices in the following chapters. Before going into too much detail, we will start by looking at one particular organization in Dakar.

We are walking the dusty roads from the vast festival grounds in a central square of Dakar's banlieue Guediawaye towards the neighborhood-based cultural center G Hip Hop (G being short

for Guediawaye).[75] *Here, the group of dancers I am walking with want to rehearse their show, which they are excited to perform that evening at the Senegalese national championship for urban dance styles. This year, the large-scale dance competition is part of a larger festival as a cooperative venture between three of Senegal's most prominent Hip Hop non-profits. One of these is G Hip Hop, in addition to one dance organization and another large cultural center and hub organization.*

The group I am walking with is G Hip Hop's regular dancing team, which consists of approximately eight skilled dancers, who each have a large repertoire in a plethora of styles. They all come from Guediawaye and meet at least three times a week at the cultural center to train, cypher, and talk. We chat about life as urban dancers and how hard it is to make a living off of dancing in Senegal, or for them even to gain recognition as artists and acceptance from their families. A younger dancer tells me about his stylistic parkour, starting with krumping and later discovering many other styles in the center. The regular practice sessions they share at G Hip Hop are supervised by Jeanne D'Arc, a young, award-winning professional dancer whom I had met and talked with a lot with during my first visit to Dakar four years prior. G Hip Hop's cofounder and current director, the pioneering rapper Fou Malade – one of Y'en a Marre's earliest members – takes great pride in his organization producing some of the most accomplished battle veterans in different Hip Hop disciplines. During my first visit, he had told me proudly that the current national champions in DJing and beatmaking in 2015 came from G Hip Hop. Earlier that day in 2019, during a panel that was part of the cooperative festival, he said equally proudly, "I am very content to know that it is DJ Pi who became the champion at the MixUp DJing competition. He is from Guediawaye Hip Hop and the event is organized by Africulturban [another large Hip Hop non-profit] [...]. And from now on, even if he doesn't earn any money with it, he will have confidence in himself. He knows that today he made a step forward; he is making a step forward towards social entrepreneurialism. Jeanne d'Arc [...] who has been crowned champion in Hip Hop dance in Cotonou, who went to all the way to Cotonou to win the African dance cup and she brings it back to Guediawaye, that's important. Yeah, four trophies actually. And if it weren't for the platform of Guediawaye Hip Hop offering all these opportunities to all these youths, who would?"

The question looms, and it becomes clear that these trophies are essential as a form of institutionalized cultural capital. They show the success of a Hip Hop cultural center standing on state-owned property, which until now lacks official recognition via state cultural institutions. The state and larger society do not necessarily recognize the mostly autodidactic and mentoring style of learning taking place here and the legitimacy in the Hip Hop scene. This also shows in the fact that most of the programs are funded via international funding structures and the staff successfully fought their eviction by state authorities.

It is the fourth time I am visiting this cultural hub that fights this very fight for recognition of the accomplishments of the local Hip Hop artists. Even though I have been here before, just the look of it still leaves an impression on me. Once you walk into the neat and colorful brick wall structure, you enter a large square yard. Most central and drawing your immediate attention is a smaller tiled space in the middle of the yard, with a small tin roof as a shield against the sun and recurring rain during the rain season. Under this roof, conferences and panels are held concerning various social, cultural, and environmental issues. Some organizers are part of the Y'en a Marre

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[75] I have put thick description, vignettes, and field notes in italics, to set them apart from the analysis.

movement and carry out the movement's educational activities here. At the same time, this central space is also the practice grounds for the group of dancers I am walking with, who train here at least three times a week. This is where they now rehearse their showcase, and we exchange different dance techniques right afterward: Together, we practice grooves and isolations. We show each other our methods of cypher-based learning games, which ends up becoming a very focused session, with a few silly moments and laughter during some of the collective cypher tasks. The space around this central, tiled dance and conference spot is a vast yard of sand, with small paths connecting its different parts. A gigantic turtle calmly walks the space, and upon my question, one of the dancers answers that this is the pet mascot of G Hip Hop. There are well-kept plants everywhere, which already hint at G Hip Hop being not only a space for cultural events but also home to the 'Volontaires Verts'. This collective of young people has their headquarters here, is guided by some of the older activists, and specializes in ecological education and urban gardening.

In front of one of the largest outer walls is a stage where G Hip Hop's staff hold concerts that are part of the regular program in addition to weekly rap cyphers. On the opposite end of the yard are a few offices and a small recording studio, where I meet two MCs and their beatmaker who are in the middle of producing music. In the corner, there is the room where the DJ classes take place and where I had interviewed the national champion and then principal teacher DJ Gasga four years earlier. To round it off, one of the rooms surrounding the central open yard holds a library with many books and DVDs on Hip Hop culture. In contrast to the cliché of a chaotic Hip Hop youth center, all of this is orderly and clean, while it is also colorfully painted. All of the walls are covered with large pieces and characters by one of the two biggest style writing crews from Dakar. These aerosol artists go by the name of Radical Bomb Squad, RBS for short, and have decorated the space not only with the name of the non-profit itself but also with the faces of Malcolm X, Angela Davis, Thomas Sankara, and Patrice Lumumba among others. In addition to these character depictions, there is also the face of the late MC Sarenzo, who had passed a year prior. RBS crew have placed the young rapper next to the organization's name – as if looking over the yard – as he was the one who had had the original idea for G Hip Hop. In short, the walls are lined with historical leaders of the pan-African struggle for independence, radical thinkers and movement activists from the US that stay relevant in conscious Hip Hop to this day, as well as a local hero and member of the community. While the loud music is blaring from the portable speaker next to the dance floor, two older Senegalese ladies are preparing food and engaging in a lively debate.

It is not only the inside but also the area around G Hip Hop that visibly contrasts with the city of Guediawaye, with its sandy streets and only a few concrete roads filled with a lot of trash. Around the center, it is equally tidy, there is no garbage lying around and different plants are growing, which are as well-kept as those inside the center. Keeping the neighborhood in order is one of the proclaimed goals of the center's activists and draws upon the Senegalese tradition of collective clean-ups, "set setal." G Hip Hop's staff invites the local neighborhood residents to participate in such local clean-ups and has planted various trees in the streets surrounding the building. In this way, the activists work against the stigma which Hip Hop still carries in some parts of Senegal – i.e. that of a foreign / Western and allegedly nihilistic youth culture. They thus gain more legitimacy with the older generations, whom they aim to invite into the center on special occasions.

G Hip Hop, as a cultural center, functions as a hub for many different activities. These range from dance practices, panels, educational activities linked to the Y'en a Marre movement, rap concerts and recordings, style writing sessions, DJ lessons, and urban gardening initiatives to cultural and project management seminars. This Hip Hop non-profit shares many features with some and highly differs from other organizations that I have encountered both in Senegal and New York. As a contrasting example, BEATGlobal in New York does not have an open space in the neighborhood and has instead specialized in providing Hip Hop-based educational services, such as workshops in rapping, breaking, beatmaking, or beatboxing all over the city. BEAT – short for Bridging Education and Art Together – is active mostly in after-school programs of New York high schools and in public libraries all over the city. They also offer "teach the teacher" programs or more exceptional initiatives, such as a breaking workshop in a refugee camp in Jordan. BEATGlobal and G Hip Hop thus clearly stand apart not only in respect to their spaces but also concerning the populations they serve, their institutional set-up, the relationships their settings allow for, and their funding schemes. They thus represent two different types of Hip Hop non-profits – G Hip Hop being a *neighborhood-based cultural center/hub* and BEATGlobal being a *pedagogic service provider*.[76]

According to Hall et al. (1991), sub-cultures are spontaneous reactions arising from a specific class experience. Reacting to their "parent" culture of e.g. the working class, and the dominant hegemonic neoliberal culture, these sub-cultures

> *"win space for the young: cultural space in the neighborhood and institutions, real time for leisure and recreation, actual room on the street or street corner. They serve to mark out and appropriate 'territory' in the localities. […] the key occasions of social interaction […] cluster around particular locations. They develop specific rhythms of interchange, structured relations between members: younger to older, experienced to novice, stylish to square. […] These concerns, activities, relationships, materials become embodied in rituals of relationship and occasion and movement." (Hall et al, 1991, p. 46f.).*

To answer the research questions about the specific practices (/rituals) used in Hip Hop pedagogic projects, this chapter will look at the type of institutions these HH projects bring about in the non-profit sector. This will make it possible to see how these projects take space in and outside of state institutions, in the neighborhood, and elsewhere. If one genuinely wants to understand Hip Hop's pedagogic and transformative potential as well as its limitations, one must not only look at the teaching and artistic practices or the larger societal context but also take into account the organizations and institutions which the Hip Hop activists build and through which they carry out their practices. Taking seriously Sherry Ortner's (2008,

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[76] Such ideal-types in social sciences illustrate certain specifics of really existing types by establishing categories of comparison to differentiate between the different types. Therefore, the types derived from the empirical data shall be characterized and followed by portraits of real cases representing this type (cf. Kelle & Kluge, 2010, p. 105).

p. 55) warning of romanticizing the resisting subjects, I intend to focus specifically on the projects they enact and through which *"they become and transform who they are and that they [utilize to] sustain or transform their social and cultural universe."* These projects largely depend on the type of organization they are based around. Therefore, I will lay out four ideal types of organizations that Hip Hop educators and activists in Senegal and the US have founded, in order to understand the practices they enable. What kind of organization allows for classroom-based teaching and learning, and what type is better suited for those pedagogic practices in the cultural scene outside of classrooms? What kinds of relationships do the different organizations foster, and what are the dangers and potentials of working within the non-profit sector? What agency does the specific organizational type allow for, and where are its restrictions? This analysis of organizations will thus not be an end in itself but rather constitute *"a necessary intermediary step"* (Kelle & Kluge, 2010, p. 91) for the analysis of the micro-practices of classroom-based (chapter 5&6), scene-based (chapter 7), as well as movement-based (chapter 8) learning and actions. This chapter therefore focuses on an analytical level that is rare in the Hip Hop and Hip Hop-based education studies literature[77] – the meso/middle-level of institutions and organizations. I intend to fill this gap in the literature by proposing the following four ideal types of Hip Hop-based non-profits, which I have derived from analyzing the many organizations I have come across during my research:

  I.   the neighborhood-based cultural center/hub
 II.   the pedagogic service provider
III.   the one-element-based organization
IV.   the federation

As exploratory research goes, this is but a preliminary list, and I am sure reality provides us with far more nuances and even different types of organizations.[78] These four types, however, are the most prevalent ones I have encountered during my fieldwork in the context of HHC's social, educational, and political projects and non-profits. To be able to compare them and designate their differences, I will lay out these four types with a focus on the following categories: **a) space; b) who is served (demographics)?; c) educational formats, time frames & relationship**

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[77] Both the larger societal level (cf. Chang, 2006; Hart, 2010; Kitwana, 2002; Rappe, 2010; Rose, 1994, 2008), as well as the small-scale level of individual actors and of micro-practices or pedagogies (cf. Emdin & Adjapong, 2018; M. L. Hill & Petchauer, 2013; Love, 2012; Porfilio & Viola, 2012; Schloss, 2009) have been analyzed for numerous contexts and equally so for educational projects. The organizational, or meso-level, which is situated between the ones mentioned above has been rarely addressed. When it was taken into account, then either only as a brief overview of different projects and organizations (cf. Diaz et al., 2011; Rose, 2008) or as an in-depth analysis of single organizations (cf. Pardue, 2007; Seidel, 2011). In contrast, this exact meso-level is a main focus of this chapter, as it is essential to understand the pedagogic micro-practices, the wider field of Hip Hop non-profits, and the potential for and limits to transforming larger societal structures.

[78] As mentioned before, further types include Hip Hop archives, as well as Hip Hop museums and there are definitely more.

types; d) events; e) typical problems and solutions. For the first three types, I will provide short profiles of organizations (I will introduce three federations only in chapter 7.4[79]). These cases give insight into how such organizations are founded, their particularities, and how they grow throughout the years. These profiles illustrate the breadth of variations within each type of organization and provide an understanding of how a gradual institutionalization of HHC's informal processes comes about. The vignette and description of G Hip Hop at the beginning of this chapter showed some of the particularities of the first type of Hip Hop non-profits. Let us now look at this first ideal type on a more abstract and general level.

4.1 Type I: The Neighborhood-Based Cultural Center/Hub

a) Space:
As a cultural center based in the neighborhood, this organizational type is characterized by a central, open space that is accessible to local residents and available for various cultural and educational activities. Most of the organizations of this type I have encountered were founded by Hip Hop practitioners, with the specific ideal of inviting every Hip Hop element into this space. They often become a hub type of organization throughout their existence, as their central space and expanding projects unite more and more different social, political, and cultural initiatives under one roof.

b) Who is served (demographics)?
Since the origin story of this organizational type usually begins with opening or occupying a space, this makes the center a meeting point for local residents. It is not only Hip Hop practitioners but often also local youth more generally, as well as older residents, who use these spaces for their initiatives. Many times, these centers thus become intergenerational and trans-disciplinary by combining HHC with other cultural practices and social initiatives. As they are often founded in economically marginalized neighborhoods, the demographics of the people served usually include poor, Black, and youth of color. With ongoing gentrification, the populations sometimes change in respect to both class and ethnicity.

c) Educational formats, time frames & relationship types
The cultural and educational programs offered by such institutions are usually not tied to school semesters, which allows for a plethora of both formal as well as informal processes of learning. In contrast to service providers, the institutional setup of these open spaces easily enables long-term relationships between activists and educators on the one hand and local populations on the other. This allows for long-term educational processes. At the same time, it is the organization's responsibility to advertise its educational programs and ensure enough participants, since its

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[79] The federation is not central to my analysis, since these are usually more focused on professionalization than on learning or political transformation.

activities are entirely voluntary in contrast to school-based ones. The organizational setup and space allow for both classroom- and scene-based teaching and learning.

In addition to these teaching examples, many such organizations have long-standing mentorship programs that accompany participating youth and young adults in their artistic development and professional career planning. This orientation often leads to the recruitment of participants as administrative staff. Such an employment strategy is often framed as a social endeavor and follows the political principle of offering career opportunities to disadvantaged youth at the center.

d) Events

Having one's own space enables the activists and the participants to organize various events, ranging from Hip Hop-based scene formats and competitions to theater productions, poetry readings, movie screenings, panels, and lectures, to large-scale cultural festivals. Some of these performance-centered events enable the participants in the organization's educational programs to showcase what they have learned at the center. This aligns with Hip Hop's cultural principle "show & prove" (cf. 5.2 & 6.5), which means that learned skills must be shown and proven in scene or community settings to become validated by the community. Large-scale festivals enable this organizational type to bring together all of its participants, learners, and teachers of the different elements. They then practice their crafts while also contributing topics connected to more political education and, in some cases, movement-related activities, such as panels on political strategies etc.

Activists can often include direct actions and social interventions in their events, thanks to the close ties of this organizational type to the neighborhood. These actions are usually designed according to the needs of the local populations and socioeconomic, ecological, and health-related challenges. The agenda-setting of financing organizations also plays a role here (cf. 4.5). Such initiatives can range from handing out free food, vaccination initiatives, planting trees, building playgrounds, educational campaigns on resident rights, and organizing protests against local as well as more general societal problems.

e) Typical problems and solutions

In addition to all these advantages concerning educational and social aspects, having a space of one's own also has some downsides. Concerning financing aspects, these cultural centers are at a clear disadvantage compared to some of the other organizational types, with the rent for such large spaces and maintenance costs being comparatively high. Most of these organizations have low financial resources and thus cannot always pay all of their teaching artists adequate hourly rates and often depend on voluntary work. Thus, organizers have to invest a lot of time and capacity into writing grant applications and reports, as well as the administration and accounting necessary for these grants. This requires professionalization on the part of the personnel, knowledge of budgeting, funding cycles, and buzzwords and results in a large bureaucratic workload at such organizations (cf. 4.5, 7.4). In the US, the money comes from mostly American state and private funding institutions, and in Senegal,

it is often international NGOs, private funders, and Western state funding/so-called "development aid".

Especially in large cities such as New York and Dakar with increasing gentrification and rising rents, this aspect of the equation becomes increasingly essential. Besides fighting against eviction because of such financial factors, some of the more political centers also have to fight against political/state repression. At the same time, such organizations often enjoy considerable social capital due to their neighborhood involvement and large teams. Because they are so well connected to the local residents, they can mount resistance against evictions, repression, etc. The emotional ties and relationships fostered at such spaces also allow for more resilience on a more personal level. This can be leveraged against recurring economic precariousness, political defamation campaigns, or state repression.

But what does such an ideal type look like in real life? How does it develop from the foundation to organizational growth, and what do the different categories above mean for the organization, its staff, and its participants? Let us find out by looking at three organizational profiles in the following.

4.1.1 Africulturban's Expansion from Neighborhood-Based Cultural Center to Hip Hop Hub

Africulturban is arguably the largest Hip Hop organization in Senegal today. Its team now administers two neighborhood-based cultural centers and organizes large-scale festivals and battles in almost every Hip Hop element and exchange program. They also host various educational and professionalization programs and have their own studio structure, record label, and booking agency. During the more than 15 years of its existence, the organization has run various Hip Hop educational programs, which were paid for primarily by international foundations and donors. In 2019, Africulturban constantly employed around 15 young adults, and according to the organizers, they had more than 1500 registered members.[80] To find out how the non-profit went from a neighborhood center to one of Senegal's most important HH organizations, a look at its history will provide some answers.

Africulturban's Founding, Taking a Cultural Space and Early Events

The organization was founded in 2005/2006 in Dakar's banlieue Pikine by a small group of Hip Hop practitioners and organizers around pioneering political MC Matador, who had practiced all HH elements. Many founding members stem from the

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[80] Numbers of participants given by organizers are to be treated with a fair amount of skepticism. In a field where a large share of the funding and the international recognition for the work is not necessarily based on qualitative changes in the participants' lives but in quantifiable results, these numbers mean economic survival for a non-profit. From what I saw, only a small fraction of the many members actively participated in the educational programs. Many among those who did, however, went through transformative experiences that shaped their life perspectives and their careers (cf. chapters 5 & 7).

first or second generation of Senegalese Hip Hop artists and have practiced multiple Hip Hop elements. Their vision of HHC thus informed Africulturban's organizational growth. The founders derived this vision from their practices and more holistic forms of HH present in early HH movies, French TV shows and global circles of HH activism, as founder Matador had participated in a year-long exchange program between his rap group and Belgium Hip Hop center Lezarts Urbains. In 2005, he wanted to organize a fundraising concert in solidarity with the flooded banlieues[81] and negotiated with a local politician. While the concert never happened, Matador also proposed establishing a Hip Hop cultural center in Dakar's impoverished suburb, similar to the one he had seen in Brussels. The politician's office directed him towards a group of local Hip Hop activists, who were already organizing monthly rap concerts in a cultural center in Pikine. Local dancers also used this center's large stone complex for daily breaking practices. Following his exchange experience with a European, state-funded institution and his holistic and social Hip Hop ideals, Matador recruited this group of local artists and activists to replicate the model of Lezarts Urbains. In 2006, they thus founded Africulturban as a non-profit in the cultural center, which still houses their main office and administrative area today. Here, they edit photos and videos, have installed a small Hip Hop library, and hold local cyphers and events. One of these is their main festival 'FESTA 2H', which they organized right after their founding as a small event with only a few international guests.[82] In the beginning, it was organizer Amadou Fall Ba's intent to reunite the whole team and its members around a common purpose once a year (cf. Navarro, 2018, p. 10). By now, it has become the most prominent Hip Hop festival in Senegal.

Early Educational Initiatives: Scene- and Classroom-Based Formats

While FESTA 2H's main focus is concerts and artistic performances of mostly rap and sometimes DJing, there are also dance and spoken-word performances as side acts of the program. The festival included workshops from the beginning, and according to Africulturban's founding member Omar Keita:

"For every stage of the festival, we were organizing classes, either DJing, or graffiti, or beatmaking workshops, etc. And we saw that instead of real education or proper training, these workshops were just tiny pieces of information, because you really need a longer duration and time and all. Thus, we automatically came up with the Hip Hop Akademy.

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[81] Many inhabitants of the two poor suburbs Thiaroye and Pikine lost their homes to severe floods due to a broken sewage system, which also furthered breeding grounds for malaria-spreading mosquitoes and further diseases.

[82] This included two Swiss DJs, with the Swiss embassy financing part of the festival. While at the first festival none of the artists were paid, today festival's headliners receive financial compensation. This shows the organization's professionalization in terms of grant writing and establishing close relations with funding institutions.

From scratch, we then launched this project together with the US embassy, which gave us financial support."

Omar thus describes an insight often voiced in the field, i.e., that to learn and master the Hip Hop elements, one needs time. Africulturban's team wanted to properly educate local youth in Hip Hop crafts. Realizing the limitations of "one-shot" workshops they had given during the festival and later in schools and prisons, they started the first edition of the classroom-based educational program "Hip Hop Akademy." The organizer states they had launched this program to fulfill the needs of the local scene and therefore focused mainly on educating young people to become DJs, who were lacking in Senegalese Hip Hop at the time. In addition, Omar recounts, *"we were thus able to train a lot of youth, around 100 adolescents, during three months, in such domains as graphic design, cultural management, cultural marketing, beatmaking, etc., as well as video production and photography."* They had to comply, however, with the project-based funding models of the non-profit sector, which do not allow for open-ended project durations. The result was a three-month-long first edition, with daily classes from 10 am to 5pm, funded by the US embassy.[83] They hosted this project for three consecutive years, with the final edition designated for women. The organizers had realized that there was a lack of female participation in what they term "les cultures urbaines"[84], and many activists described that most foreign foundations have specific budgets for female empowerment programs.

Recruitment and Africulturban's Growth into a Neighborhood-Based Cultural Hub

The organization further expanded following a model of individualized assignments based mostly on personal affinity. In some cases, founder Matador or others assigned certain persons specific tasks. Omar, for instance, was tasked with creating an organizational structure to professionalize the sector of spoken word poetry in Senegal, which led to him founding and heading a national federation and hosting national and international championships. In other cases, new organizers were recruited directly from the organization's own educational programs. Ina Thiam recounts, *"I did the Hip Hop Akademy, which is a training in audiovisuals, to take pictures and shoot videos. This is how I started working for the center of documentation. Thus, the idea is to*

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[83] The largest part of Africulturban's funding stems from foreign foundations and embassies – a fact which the organizers would like to see change by petitioning for state cultural funding (cf. 4.5.).

[84] In a Western context, the term of urban, as in urban dance, or urban music when designating Afrodiasporic cultural formats must be seen as a racist form of erasing African cultural influences. The activists in Senegal use the term strategically for two reasons: First of all, as a form of code-switching. This term does not carry the mainstream stigma of Hip Hop's standard cliché, i.e. of being a nihilistic Western youth culture that perverts youth towards crime, sexism, substance abuse, etc. It is therefore easier to acquire funding and recognition from state institutions, as well as from larger Western foundations. Secondly, it is used to legitimize growth in the organizations' competencies and activities, since the term encompasses not just Hip Hop elements, but also spoken word poetry, skateboarding, etc.

create archives of Senegalese Hip Hop, to have our own real archive." Having passed through the educational ranks of the organization, Ina thus directly began working for Africulturban's own documentation center, which is both a small physical library of Hip Hop literature, DVDs, CDs, and press articles, as well as an online platform on different social media.[85] She also saw the need for female self-organization and founded the Urban Woman Week on her own (cf. 6.1). This annual festival is held around International Women's Day and includes concerts, basketball tournaments, poetry and dance performances, panels, as well as seminars in cultural and project management and mentoring. These seminars aim to empower women to create their own organizations.

Many of Africulturban's staff are particularly proud of the Youth Urban Media Academy – a three-year-long, classroom-based reintegration program for 15 young male ex-convicts, which they organized from 2014 to 2016. More than half of the participants now work either full or part-time for the organization, illustrating the employment practices specific to Hip Hop non-profits.

In addition to such classroom-based Hip Hop educational formats, the organizers established a framework for scene-based learning. They do so by hosting performance events, such as regular rap, poetry slam, and DJ competitions and have recently added dance to their battle formats. Thus, they create incentives for young practitioners to work on their craft and help develop a scene. Additionally, they have founded their own booking agency, label and recording structures, which cooperate with international partners via exchange programs. All of this furthers the structuration of a scene, and professional opportunities for its members. Creating such alternative institutions, cultural and social structures, and projects is a foundational aspect of Africulturban, which has grown every year since its founding.

The staff has even used their grant writing and project administration knowledge to open up another cultural center in Dakar. The fact that Africulturban's director Amadou Fall Ba's was employed part-time as a cultural advisor to Dakar's mayor also helped to found a second center. When I first visited Dakar in 2015, the Maison des Cultures Urbaines (MCU) was a rundown three-story building still partly inhabited by residents. When I came back in 2019, the whole space had been renovated. It now featured a professional recording studio, multiple seminar rooms, e.g., for the Urban Woman Week workshops, a DJ practice area, a concert/performing stage, and a large dance studio.

Demographics & Africulturban's Proclaimed Mission(s):

During its growth, the organization had expanded following its explicit goal of creating employment for the youth active in Hip Hop domains and via a route that the activists themselves refer to as "social entrepreneurship."[86] According to one of

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[85] Cf. www.facebook.com/urbandoc/ last accessed 11/08/2022.
[86] Many activists in Senegal deeply identified with this term, which KRS-One (2009) names as an additional HH element.

Africulturban's main organizers, Amadou Fall Ba, their organization's social dimension and mission is due to its local context in the banlieue of Pikine:

> *"Pikine is not really a city in and of itself but rather a huge village, which lacks everything: You see it lacks even the most basic infrastructure, such as hospitals, schools of quality, cultural centers, maybe even police or security forces, places of leisure for the youth, places for self-organization for women and girls, etc. This is why we cannot betray these causes. We do our activism here and find the right milieus where we can always do projects with a cultural format, which have a side effect or even a main goal, which is social and economic as well."[87]*

According to the organizer, the social impact of their cultural activities derives from the context of extreme poverty and the lack of essential social and cultural public services. The organizers' proclaimed mission is not only to provide employment and professionalization to youth through Hip Hop culture but first and foremost access to culture. He and the team perceive large parts of the culture promoted by the state as elitist since only the upper classes can afford it. The fact that most cultural institutions are concentrated in Dakar's city center already makes them non-accessible to the many lower-class inhabitants of Dakar's poorer suburbs, let alone the rural regions of Senegal.

In conclusion, Africulturban gradually expanded on a project-for-project basis, starting as a small neighborhood-based organization in a local cultural center in the Pikine banlieue (**space a)**). Since then, it has expanded into an extensive network of different sub-organizations, events, and actors revolving around Hip Hop and related youth cultural phenomena. The **populations it serves (b)** are mostly Hip Hop artists and practitioners, i.e., young and middle-aged and mostly poor people from the banlieue and Dakar's low-income neighborhoods. In special programs such as YUMA, formerly convicted adolescents receive educational and mentoring programs. The organization combines both instances of scene- and classroom-based learning (**c) educational formats**) in their various programs, festivals, competitions, and panels (**d) events**). The team's vision of structuration and professionalization with access to funding opportunities leads to the continuous growth of the organizational web and an event-packed schedule for the organizers. Africulturban has set an example of what is by now a central pillar of Senegalese Hip Hop cultural activism, i.e., organizing festivals to enable scene-based learning, to create economic and artistic opportunities, and to renew the community. This exemplifies how Hip Hop's institutionalization plays out within this organizational type of a neighborhood cultural center/hub. Africulturban's organizational blueprint (itself inspired by a cultural center in Brussels) has been taken up by other organizations. But how

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[87] Pikine is one of the poorest parts of Dakar. Today, it counts more than 1.5 million inhabitants – a number constantly increasing due to desertification and rural flight. People who migrate to Dakar seeking employment largely end up in Pikine, as the rents in Dakar's city center are unaffordable for most rural inhabitants (cf. Niederhuber, 2015, p. 13 f.).

does such change take place? Let us find out by taking a more structured look at G Hip Hop.

4.1.2 Guediawaye Hip Hop

Many of Guediawaye (G) Hip Hop's characteristics have been discussed in the short vignette and ensuing analysis at the outset of this chapter. Therefore, the following profile will be brief and follow the comparison categories of the different types. According to G Hip Hop's former program director, Young Noble, it was in 2010, when

> *"the idea came from Sarenzo [the late young rapper painted on the organization's walls]. His idea was to do something like Africulturban, which is the first Hip Hop center founded where there was nothing and where the youth usually came by to freestyle and do their thing. So why not set up a non-profit built on Hip Hop and call it G Hip Hop? […] So basically, when it started, it was just a gathering of those who love Hip Hop, talking about Hip Hop, doing freestyles and rap battles and stuff like that. And then it became a big center."*

Having experienced four years of Africulturban's activism in the neighboring banlieue, G Hip Hop's organizers adopted the model. Both centers' organizers are friends and often cooperate for different events and educational formats.

a) Space

As described earlier, G Hip Hop's space is open and partly outdoors, with the activities visible and accessible to the neighborhood. It has many separate subspaces that allow for simultaneous artistic practice of the different elements and disciplines. These spaces include a small floor for panels, rap cyphers, and dance practices, a music and recording studio, two offices for different educational formats on cultural management etc., a small Hip Hop library, a stage to be used for concerts and festivals, as well as a room for DJ practice. The activists often play concerts in the surrounding streets to advertise their events, neighborhood interventions, and direct actions, such as neighborhood clean-ups.

b) Who is and who is not served? (demographics)

At first, G Hip Hop was designated mainly for practitioners of Hip Hop's different elements and for the area's youth who were interested in participating in the cultural practices. The organizers have since then worked with former prisoners and done specific formats just for women, as well as opened up their doors to neighborhood initiatives. While many activists are practicing Muslims, they did not want to have a religious study group on their premises, in order to maintain their political independence as a secular institution. One example of the different project branches that include different clientele is the "Volontaires Verts," a group of young people who do urban gardening projects, ranging from "hood clean-ups" to installing gardens at local schools or planting trees around central spaces. Some of these

initiatives were financed via Y'en a Marre's project bureau and partly funded by the European Union.

c) Educational formats for professionalization, movement orientation, and eviction attempts

The educational programs at G Hip Hop have expanded beyond the artistic elements of Hip Hop according to the needs of the artists. Program director Young Noble says,

> *"it started with the four basic elements of Hip Hop, and then we grew larger. So it included beatmaking, and then we had a studio for recording. People started to come, and we also saw that Hip Hoppers needed tools to manage their projects. So we started management: art management, Hip Hop management, how to manage their crews, leadership programs. And we also started with video and photography because we saw that Hip Hoppers needed to do something to work with their image, to handle the pictures, video production, and gain the tools to promote themselves."*

In addition to teaching Hip Hop skills, professionalizing the sector and the artists is as central here as it is with Africulturban. The organizers want the youth to be able to make a living off their artistic performances, and they therefore focus on both classroom- and scene-based education and tools necessary to manage and market the art to receive fair payment.

One particularity of G Hip Hop is that it maintains close ties to Y'en a Marre, since director and MC Fou Malade is one of the earliest members of the movement, which was founded in 2011 – only a year after the cultural center. Thus many of the movement's educational and political initiatives also took place at or via the center. Such movement events included meetings with local politicians, protests, campaigns against the government and on specific issues, such as the "European Partnership Agreements" or the intransparent and corrupt sell-out of the country's resources (cf. chapter 8). This political orientation and Fou Malade's outspoken critique of the government threatened the loss of the space. Y'en a Marre founder Thiat recounts that at the beginning, G Hip Hop had received the space from the local authorities, but when Y'en a Marre and the center gained influence, these same authorities demanded a lease. Thus, G Hip Hop according to Thiat

> *"really fought to get the right to stay there. […] At some point the brother of Macky Sall [president of Senegal] was trying to say that he'll open a hospital there, like just to kick them out […] but the community supported Fou Malade and G Hip Hop and said 'no, find another land to build your hospital! […] the youth needs a space, to express themselves!'"*

G Hip Hop's mission

In accordance with these educational activities, G Hip Hop's director Fou Malade describes the center's mission as providing

"an opportunity for the youth. This means that sometimes we help the youth better structure their projects, better compose their music, orientate them, manage them, and give them the tools they need. Because actually, as you see, the banlieues are very marginalized, and their inhabitants are left alone. There is no infrastructure for their cultural expression. That's why we think that we have to create our own frame and that the people living in the banlieue, who have their own independent structures, join our structures so that we can join forces and create even stronger projects together."

This mission of providing access to culture and structuring the sector by forming institutions and ties between them is thus close to Africulturban's. In addition, G Hip Hop has a more explicit focus on civic issues. Fou Malade states, "After all, the organization also has another important dimension: *citizen engagement. Because for us, in life, everything is political. Thus we have to prepare the youth to have the political tools to act in local development and the transformation of our society.*" This discourse of local development, transformation of society, and citizen engagement corresponds with liberal models of parliamentary democracy and civil society. It therefore conforms with many of the funding institutions' ideological approaches and the non-profit sector. However, at times, the organizers voice their political goals more radically as resistance to instances of neocolonial exploitation. This happens mostly internally, during rallies, and in Wolof language. Many organizations share this strategy of code-switching and seemingly aligning with funders' goals while following an agenda of their own (cf. chapter 8). The conflicts which this strategy entails will be discussed at the end of this chapter. After looking at two similar institutions of this type in Senegal, let us now look at another profile of a neighborhood-based cultural center in a different context and geographical location: Brooklyn, New York.

4.1.3 El Puente. How a Neighborhood-Based Art Center Expanded to a Culture & Education Hub

El Puente, Spanish for "the bridge," was founded as a small, community-based initiative by a handful of artists in 1982. During the almost 40 years of its existence, it has grown into an organization of immense proportions. B-boy and aerosol artist Waaak One, who introduced me to the organization and its staff, describes it as

"a human rights organization in Williamsburg, Brooklyn; they started in the early 1980s. Most of the founding members were Young Lords, part of the Young Lords party. […] They were revolutionary, they were activists, they've been responsible for helping things like getting the US Navy out of the Puerto Rico Islands [...], getting toxic waste storage removed from Williamsburg, Brooklyn. And a few other things you know. They come from dirty Williamsburg when nobody wanted it, and they're part of the reason why Williamsburg is popping right now. […] they're an amazing organization. And they gave me the opportunity to teach, and [...] I've had many mentors that have come out of El Puente."

Waaak One, who credits El Puente for helping him advance his career as a full-time teaching artist, points to many characteristics that the organization shares with the two cultural centers portrayed previously. Just like G Hip Hop's links with Y'en a Marre, El Puente retains movement ties to current climate justice movements and historically to the Young Lords Party – the Latinx equivalent to the Black Panther Party (cf. Enck-Wanzer, 2010; Fernandez, 2020). It engages its members on different political fronts and concerning issues facing the neighborhood and its communities. Waaak also credits the staff with helping him and other economically disadvantaged youth of color to professionalize and become employees of the organization, which is typical of non-profits of this type (cf. 5.4.4).

Today, El Puente encompasses one large and five smaller cultural centers in Brooklyn, two high schools in New York, and another on the island of Puerto Rico. Under its roof, the hub organization unites many educational and cultural initiatives, including Hip Hop and other cultural traditions, since the organizers were part of Brooklyn Williamsburg's local Latinx and Afro-Caribbean populations in the 1980s. Even though Brooklyn has undergone vast gentrification, they still retain extensive relationships with its most marginalized residents. But how has such an organization grown over time, and how did Hip Hop enter their program? To find out more, we will now get to know two of its cofounders, the couple Frances Lucerna and Luis Garden Acosta, who stand out from the other organizational founders in this chapter, as they had not been Hip Hop-affiliated before founding their organization.[88]

El Puente's Founding, its Movement Ties, and the Integration of Hip Hop into its Program

Frances Lucerna has been with El Puente from the beginning. She was its director in 2019 and the first principal of their own high school, the "Academy for Peace & Justice." Being a professional (non-Hip Hop) dancer, she had already started a dance and fine arts program in the poverty- and violence-ridden neighborhood of Williamsburg, Brooklyn prior to El Puente's founding in 1982. The organization's late co-founder, Luis Garden Acosta, was a Puerto Rican radical who had been a member of the Young Lords Party and would later become Frances' partner. Having experienced the violence of crime- and gang-ridden Williamsburg first-hand during the 1980s as an emergency room doctor, Luis Acosta decided to quit this job. He wanted to invest his activist energies into what he saw as a culturally preventive measure: opening an artistic and educational space for young people. Since he also adhered to Latin American liberation theology and the Christian Workers Movement, the local diocese granted him a former church building to start the center. The building still houses El Puente's main offices and is used as a space for political theater shows and other artistic performances today. When I visited the

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[88] I discovered El Puente late during my second fieldwork in NYC. I have interviewed organizers, teaching artists, and a group of participants at a local leadership center. A return visit was made impossible due to the coronavirus pandemic.

space for the first time, what struck me was that the formerly Catholic institution flies a large LGBTIQA+ pride flag inside and El Puente uses the main church hall as storage for many of the enormous puppets with indigenous features, which the participating youth carry during marches for climate justice.

Being a generation older than the local youth involved in Hip Hop in the 1980s, the founders' own artistic practice was in Latinx and Afro-Caribbean artistic traditions and genres, such as salsa, Puerto Rican nueva cancion, or bomba y plena. When I asked the organization's cofounder, Lucerna, how the street cultural phenomenon of Hip Hop entered their organization, she explained that

> *"it was like in the early 1980s. Right? I mean, we had like 100 breakdancers here at El Puente in this church building at one moment in time because that was really like the rage, you know. [...] they would just come. If they weren't in the abandoned buildings doing their thing, then it was El Puente. […] We had a space here. It was open. And so we had breakdancers here. Right, in the 1980s. It wasn't anything formal. It was kind of just happening. 'Whooo we're having battles duuuude!' and everybody would show up and we'd have the whole place packed [...] because that was what was happening in the community."*

Providing an open space in the Latinx neighborhood of Williamsburg's Southside during the cultural tide of the 1980s breaking wave automatically led to El Puente becoming a Hip Hop hub space. With the second generation of dancers mostly having a Latinx / Puerto Rican background, the b-boys and b-girls used the space for practice sessions, battles, and jams and invited the other Hip Hop elements as well. At the same time, the different cultural forms besides Hip Hop, which the organizers themselves practiced, were still central to El Puente's programming. This explains the intergenerational character of El Puente, which sets it apart from some of the other purely Hip Hop non-profits I have encountered.

While breaking entered the picture early, the organizers stress the importance of having young facilitators, who would gradually turn El Puente into a presenting space for HH artists. Lucerna states that

> *"this became a place where we started to integrate within our programming, you know, dance and the four elements of Hip Hop, right, I mean, rap, graffiti, deejaying […] we had young facilitators here that, you know, this was their space. So they were doing programming and said 'we should be having showcases this week!' […] this became a presenting space for Hip Hop artists."*

Waaak One's own early history at El Puente illustrates this point very clearly. He describes it as follows:

> *"So I'm like shoplifting before work, painting all night. Going on with this [...] helping kids with homework after school […] math, homework, reading, and no formal training in that just, you know doing it. And that summer comes along. They're planning for summer programs. My homegirl Lay […] she's like 'and he's gonna teach a breaking class.*

> *[…] they go 'Oh, cool. Okay, and he's gonna teach a dance class' […] And I kept going*
> *from there. I just kept teaching."*

Waaak, now an experienced full-time teaching artist, thus found his way into more formally teaching Hip Hop skills via the organization's open space and focus on the cultural lifeworld of the participating youth. The organization has also invited Waaak's group "The Breaks Kru" to organize events at their facilities.[89]

Expanding the space and formalizing education: the El Puente Academy and the great arts divide

According to Waaak, this access to young autodidactic Hip Hop pedagogues also entered El Puente's more formal education. He describes the team as *"pioneers in art and education […] They [even] started their own high school in the 1990s. The El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice. [...] Some of the people who work there were the first people writing Hip Hop curriculum."*[90] In addition to having the Hip Hop communities of practice at their disposal, they also had the necessary space and the staff's academic credentials. These factors and the hub-organizational type allowed them to found their own high school and register it with New York's Department of Education.

Frances Lucerna, the founder and first principal of the El Puente Academy, identifies a divide in the US educational system concerning the role of the arts. On the one side are private schools, and on the other side there are public ones, which are free but

> *"predominantly […] for children of color, and poor children, working-class children." The*
> *difference in how classes and curricula are composed becomes clear when "you look at*
> *schools, where people pay mega money to go those schools and put their kids in those schools*
> *and that curriculum is absolutely infused with arts training, arts experiences, travel,*
> *projects… all of the things that we are clear is roughly what intellectual rigor and inquiry*
> *is all about. And then you go to public education and all you see is standardized tests and*
> *this kind of watered down, very minimal kind of stark kind of curriculum that is all*
> *about rote and you know, wiring the brain so that they can answer every question on that*
> *test. And to me it's a real question […] of equity and issues of justice" (Lucerna in:*
> *Justice Matters, 2013).*

The critique of the *rote learning* and the *stark curriculum* accompanying the public schools' system of standardized tests is in line with Paulo Freire's critique of the banking model, which, as part of the pedagogy of the oppressors, passivizes the students and makes them accept their own oppression and systemic injustices. Instead, Freire calls for dialogical teaching, which starts at the thematic universe, objective, and felt realities of the learners (cf. Freire, 1971, p. 73 ff.). Lucerna (and the

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[89] Lucerna explains that this cultural openness was derived from following Freire's (1971) Pedagogy of the Oppressed.

[90] This is a compliment not lightly given by a practitioner who is highly critical of large parts of Hip Hop academia and of non-practitioners appropriating the culture for educational purposes.

rest of the activist staff) adheres to Freirian pedagogy and clearly identifies the learners' thematic universe:

> *"When we started the academy, we were very clear that what was going to be very, very essential and non-negotiable was to really – and this comes out of popular education and Paulo Freire – start at the lived experience of our young people. Well, Hip Hop was that. And so that was in the center of our work and understanding of how do we use Hip Hop and the elements of Hip Hop, to really be able to open up young people to be able to embrace learning and understanding, there's clear connections [...] and from the genres that were their own, right."*

When developing what he calls "generative themes" that lay a basis for the curricular content and later teaching, Freire (cf. 1971, p. 106 f.) himself calls for working in dialog with collaborators stemming from the community of learners themselves:

> *"the methodology proposed requires that the investigators and the people (who would normally be considered objects of that investigation) should act as co-investigators. The more active an attitude men and women take in regard to the exploration of their thematics, the more they deepen their critical awareness of reality and, in spelling out those thematics, take possession of that reality."*

As the founders of El Puente themselves were already from the Puerto Rican and Latinx communities, this can be seen as one step ahead of the Freirian model. When working with Latinx youth, however, this role of collaborators expanded to include Hip Hop artists. Lucerna first names

> *"the facilitator Hector Calderon. He was my mentee and the second principal here in the El Puente Academy. [He] and others, they, you know, created this curriculum, taking the four elements of Hip Hop and really integrating them within a humanities course and projects that they were designing around issues of social justice and human rights. I think understanding the elements of Hip Hop in a historical context was part of the curriculum […] in terms of you know […] a struggle for liberation."*

According to the former principal, this enabled the young people at El Puente to appreciate their cultural genre and become critical of it. Thus, by working with members of Hip Hop's communities of practice, they established political and integrated Hip Hop curricula, which always included artistic practice by the learners. These unconventional curricula caused harsh conservative reactions and had to be defended.[91] With their integrated way of teaching (cf. 5.5.2) and combining school

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[91] Right-wing pundit Heather Mac Donald, for example, not only criticizes El Puente's "progressive education ideology" but specifically points out that Freire, whom the facilitators often quote, is a "Marxist pedagogue." Her greatest criticism is directed towards the fact that the course of Hip Hop 101 embraces graffiti, and therefore "a practice both illegal and destructive of the city's spirit is a troubling indication of how far the educational system has lost its bearings." (Mac Donald, 1998). According to Lucerna, the conservative commentator spent only 20 minutes at the school and then

and after-school programs under one organizational roof, they were able to build longer ties and relationships with the youth. Among other things, this led to substantially better grades and graduation rates, as after just a few years the school had *"a 90% graduation rate in an area where schools usually see 50% of their students graduate in four years"* (Westheimer, 2007, p. 184).

This apparent success led to the organizational staff being offered administrative oversight of additional schools in New York and Puerto Rico, which further illustrates the hub character of the organization uniting so many different sub-branches under one roof. At the same time, the organization also expanded within the informal sector of neighborhood-based cultural centers by opening up six leadership centers in different parts of Brooklyn. Here, different local festivities, cultural, ecological and political interventions, and information campaigns are carried out in the neighborhood and with the residents. These include, as in the case of G Hip Hop, planting trees, informing people about their rights, the census, and local budgets, free-food and homework programs, doing health-related research (on asthma), and successfully protesting against the construction of a vast incinerator in their immediate surroundings. The organization hosts large cultural and theater festivals and smaller breaking and Hip Hop jams to bring together the artistic practices from all the different venues in certain events (cf. 6.5.6).

El Puente's Mission, Funding Principles, and Threatened Eviction

During the four decades of its existence, El Puente has grown from an artistic performance space into a cultural hub with multiple neighborhood-based centers, which not only focuses on Hip Hop culture, but uses it as a core component. Today, the organization's different educational formats range from informal breaking practices and events to more formalized social justice-oriented teaching via Hip Hop and other cultural practices in their high schools. While Brooklyn's demographics have changed, the organization continues to work mainly with the remaining marginalized Black and Brown populations and also addresses gentrification on educational and protest fronts. Frances Lucerna explains El Puente's mission as defined by the founders being Young Lords and artists:

> *"We all came out of a youth movement […] what we wanted to do was to create a space, a safe place for young people to come because young people were dying and that there was a crisis and dying not only physically but dying emotionally and spiritually in this community*

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left to write her condemnation of the whole organization. Other right-wingers like professor of education and public policy Chester Finn, who describes himself as a "conservative Republican," came to a different conclusion after visiting the El Puente Academy: "I'm not in favor of fostering social revolution or of indoctrinating kids […] [but] it's worth something if it gets a poor minority kid fired up, if it gets those cognitive engines racing" (Finn quoted in: Gonzalez, 1995). At the same time, Finn warns of extremist groups starting schools and makes El Puente's curricula out to be "plenty eccentric," while the EP academy listed as a public school in his eyes gets "away with it as they are part of 'the system'" (Finn et al., 2001, p. 154).

with schools that were totally failing us, you know no resources and no way to really be safe, find support. You know, we wanted to create that kind of space, to, I think, replicate what we had."

The founders' movement ties and political standards also lead to them carefully choosing their funding sources. According to Luis, former member and now director of one of El Puente's local leadership centers, their founder Garden Acosta

"would always like check like, the people who were funding […]like the board, so like, you know, what associate affiliations they have and stuff. And that's what makes it a little more difficult when like there's like larger organizations trying to give you […] and they're like associated with like [...] private prisons, you know, the tobacco industry and such […] He'd refuse the funding."

El Puente thus receives public state money, as well as carefully chosen private funding, which marks a distinction with other organizations and their private sponsoring. Similar to G Hip Hop, El Puente was also threatened by political reaction and with foreclosure but could successfully fight both using their broad ties into civil society, including the local diocese and a nation-wide coalition of supporters. In summary, El Puente represents an institutional merger between social movements, cultural spaces, and formal education rooted in the neighborhood.

4.1.4 The Rebel Diaz Arts Collective: From "the Poor Organizing" to State Oppression

The following brief organizational portrait of the Rebel Diaz Arts Collective (RDAC, 2007–2013) is relevant to the research question of Hip Hop's transformative potential because it speaks volumes on state oppression in spaces with radical movement ties. The founders of the center are the two Diaz brothers, G1 and Rodstarz, from Chicago's highly political rap group Rebel Diaz. They are sons of a Chilean revolutionary activist, who – as a supporter of the socialist Allende government – was imprisoned and tortured by the Pinochet military dictatorship following the 1973 US-backed military coup. Their family's background in radical movements in the Global South strongly informs their activist approach to Hip Hop, as Rodstarz points out: *"We're second-generation activists, fighting for social justice […] That military dictatorship lasted for 17 years, until 1989, but the whole history of Latin America is […] what fuels our work. That's our history"* (Rodríguez, 2009). Being from Chicago with a very traditionalist understanding of Hip Hop as culture and a strong scene, the two brothers not only rapped but also practiced style writing and breaking and, with DJ Illanoiz, united various Hip Hop elements in their crew. Having such a holistic view of HHC, the group coherently moved to the culture's birthplace, the South Bronx, in the mid-2000s, where they started organizing jams outside in a place called "Jardin Laroca." After establishing the space as a neighborhood institution with elders gardening there, an international experience sparked the idea of a cultural center – similar to Africulturban. The two brothers participated in the first edition of the

Bronx-Berlin exchange program in 2007 – a youth exchange still organized by Hip Hop practitioners from Berlin and New York. Sitting in a Berlin apartment of political activists and graff writers, G1 tells the story of how they not only played concerts but also

> *"we got to see a lot of the social spaces here in Berlin and we were just bugging like man [...] these huge, you know, what have had probably been either factories or giant school buildings and now were community centers. And you know, that had like, little German kids, you know, doing breakdancing and spinning on their head and shit and we're like, 'Yo, how is this not happening in the Bronx and we gotta come halfway across the world to see it?' So we came back with that energy of like 'Yo, we want to get a space!'"*

With the impression of well-funded German youth centers as an example, they found an abandoned candy factory in the deindustrialized Bronx, where the group initially just squatted to live, but which they quickly turned into an event and community space (**a) space**). Furthermore, they started involving local residents constructing a recording studio as well as dance, concert, and workshop spaces.

G1 and Rodstarz state that one of the greatest successes of the RDAC was bringing together a large variety of poor and marginalized people at their center. This was confirmed by multiple practitioners and Hip Hop teaching artists I met in New York (**b) who is served/demographics**). G1 attributes this success partly to the fact that *"there was no agenda behind it... it wasn't like... we weren't like tied to any political party or to any NGO, or to any like ideological dogma, you know I'm sayin'. We were like, we were just trying to do fucking Hip Hop man, and so you know... folks got down man."* According to Rodstarz, this political independence enabled a feeling of ownership on the part of the people at the center: *"the key victory was that it was local, right? Like we literally had, like, the local homies that weren't politically organized, weren't part of the Hip Hop group, get inspired by the work that we were doing, and then join in with that work and feel they were part of it."* Giving the people a say and responsibilities are fundamental lessons of organizing (cf. McAlevey, 2016). According to the group, this approach was marked by sheer necessity, a lack of funds, and professional backing during the development and renovation of the open space. Their claim of being "the poor organizing" at the outset of this chapter is in line with Freire's (1971, p. 182) *theory of dialogical action*, where *"revolutionary leaders must avoid organizing themselves apart from the people."* For Freire (1971, p. 178) "o*rganization is, rather, a highly educational process in which leaders and people together experience true authority and freedom."*

However, similar to the Y'en a Marre movement (cf. Chapter 8), the two brothers name their members' poverty and precarious living conditions as one of the main problems in their organizing process, since they often shift priorities to basic survival. Originally, the group was able to live off of their music and established a strict anti-commercial and underground Hip Hop ground rule: no one should earn any money from anything happening at their center (apart from some exceptions for city-funded jobs for youth carrying out educational programming). In hindsight,

the two reflect on how this made it difficult to keep many of their youth involved in the long term:

> **Rodstarz:** *A lot of young folks, […] you lose em and they get involved in other things because like...*
>
> **G1:** *gotta eat.*
>
> **Rodstarz:** *I can't tell you 'you're not committed because you're not coming to a meeting.' and they tell you 'I ain't got money for the train.' What do you say then? If you can't provide that money for them?*

Nevertheless, they were able to involve the local residents in the long run, not only by organizing concerts and cultural events but also by providing an open space, which according to the activists, was to be used by the locals as they saw fit. Such use ranged from the weekly meeting of a biker gang to baby showers, to fundraisers for Puerto Rico, to MC battles and local breaking practices. As the open space now included two recording studios, computers, and a good sound system, many local Hip Hop practitioners started frequenting it. Rodstarz recounts how being based in the South Bronx and adhering to an underground Hip Hop approach, as well as locally organizing against police violence and repression, would earn them recognition and respect from many Hip Hop pioneers: *"Africa Bambaataa before all the craziness* [referring to sexual abuse scandal] *would come by all the time. Kool Herc, like bro, so what was crazy was that we received a lot of love from the pioneers, you know. Smif-n-Wessun came to perform, Dead Prez."* Up-and-coming rappers, such as Kemba, or older hardcore MCs such as Immortal Technique, as well as style writers and breakers started using the center as a base. When asked about the RDAC, b-boy Theatrix (teaching artist at El Puente and BEATGlobal) responded tellingly that many other practitioners mirrored: *"You know about it? Yooo, that was THE spot! I used to be mentored by The Bronx Boys [a pioneering breaking and rocking crew] right there!"*

Another key factor in uniting such a wide variety of Hip Hop practitioners and everyday people, according to G1, was about learning to counter a recurrent problem in Hip Hop and social movements, which he calls *"'founder's syndrome', like, 'this is my little baby that I've worked on and I hold it and then eventually it just dies out because I never let it grow in other people's hands.'"* He says that the central lesson learned thus was *"letting go a little bit of leadership and not micromanaging."* The result was shared ownership and *"at some point you had like 20 motherfuckers that had keys,"* who would keep the center open while Rebel Diaz went on tour.

c) Educational formats, time frames, and relationship types

The relationships forged in the many informal settings were of a longer duration than in semester-bound classroom settings, and the immersion in the neighborhood led to social ties and friendships. G1 states that they are still in close contact with many of the youth and activists from their *"lil' institution here in the Bronx, […] [which] lasted till 2013. And really, the people. We're still connected to all the young people, a lot of young people now are like [...] in their mid 20s, even some in their late 20s."*

There was a lot of informal scene-based Hip Hop learning at RDAC, including dance-mentoring or youth using the recording studio, in addition to more formalized summer programs, e.g., by educational service provider Urban Art Beat (cf. 4.2.2). However, G1 states that he and his brother in the beginning *"kind of rejected somewhat like the more formal political education shit, because [...] we were kind of jaded with a lot of the more traditional shit."* As Rodstarz states, they were nevertheless grateful for *"some amazing women in the collective who were really powerful, and giving structure to some of the curriculum" […]* **G1:** *"they gave more structure to the political education."* The two go on to name four female activists, who according to them started organizing reading groups and more formalized workshops and developed political curricula.[92] On top of these formal classes of radical leftist political education, the center also regularly housed political book releases and readings and was open to many solidarity groups for Puerto Rico, Palestine, or police and prison abolition. Aside from Hip Hop events, such as MC battles, breaking jams, or concerts, they also organized political interventions, such as rallies against racist police violence or to free political prisoners (**d) events**).

e) Typical problems and solutions: from agreements, to financing, police oppression, and eviction

A problem typical of their organizational type was paying rent. After squatting in the empty building, G1 recounts that *"you might call it making a mistake or not... we came to an agreement with the owner and started paying him some money ... that was like a [...] I would say symbolic sum. […] so we had a relationship that was at least working, you know, through five or six years."*

Obtaining an official non-profit status later, they also received some smaller grants and partly financed the center via their music or other sources of income. According to the two, another unconventional source of financing was their unlikely winning of a case in court against the New York Police Department. The two brothers had defended a South Bronx street vendor from being harassed by the police and were, in turn, themselves aggressively arrested (cf. Murray, 2008; Noor, 2009)[93] After having read over 30 letters by community members from the RDAC, their Bronx neighbors and their global Hip Hop network, the judge *"unexpectedly granted a motion to dismiss the brothers' two misdemeanors charges of obstruction of justice and resisting arrest, citing their positive impact in the community"* (Noor, 2009)**.** According to G1

> *"We beat the case. And then we sued them. And we got a settlement. And it was like, that was also a huge, you know, plus for the space because we pretty much put the money into like infrastructure. You know I'm saying, sound system, fucking t-shirt press. We did a bunch of shit outside of the city to we did a huge Fred Hampton Mural in Chicago".*

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[92] Claudia De La Cruz for example led The Peoples' Forum's educational programming when I visited New York in 2019.
[93] Cf. https://youtu.be/RJ-_1b6AO6w last accessed 02/09/2023.

While this unconventional source of income led to them being able to pay their rent, it also fueled what Rodstarz calls *"a little low-intensity war with the police,"* which finally led to their closure. While tolerating their activities, their landlord was waiting for gentrification to increase the value of this large piece of land in a relatively central district of New York, a city with one of the highest rents per square meter globally. He placed various complaints with the police that their center and activities furthered graffiti in the neighborhood. Combined with their radical marches and political activities, this led to various raids of their center by the police with no final result. In 2012, however, they had a style writing piece on their roof demanding freedom for political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. G1 recalls that

> *"the policeman union […] saw this shit because thousands of people would see it every day on their commute right off the highway [...] they didn't even go off to the owner they went to the insurance, like 'is this insured for political campaigning? No? Okay!' So the insurance went to the owner, said 'your property is being used for political campaigning, your rates are doubling' or some crazy shit. So at that point we were fucking with his money and there was no more tolerating you know."*

A few days later, as their DJ Illanoiz vividly recalls, a highly armed military-style police unit stormed the center at 5 in the morning to evict them from their premises. It was thus a combination of their movement ties, ensuing political repression, as well as gentrification in light of them not owning the space that led to the closure of their center. Hip Hop teaching artist Farbeon called this *"a huge loss for the community."* Concerning ownership of the space, another Hip Hop cultural center in NYC has similar concerns. **Rodstarz:** *"The Point, is like an OG type organization that we always had love for and you know […] the reason The Point is still there is because they owned the space.. if they didn't own the space they'd be the same place we are... you know… ."*

Conclusion for the Neighborhood-Based Cultural Center

The space and the neighborhood ties of this type of Hip Hop non-profit enable it to have a plethora of different activities and educational formats. These centers can thus foster long-term community and learning relationships and cater to a very diverse demographic while building political organizing power from the ground up. However, the space also brings the burden of high fixed costs and necessary bureaucratic work for grant writing and maintaining the premises, unless the organization owns the property. The staff also have to invest a lot of resources in mobilizing and inviting local populations into their center. The threat of eviction due to political oppression or simply gentrification is the primary risk to this type of organization, as experienced by El Puente, G Hip Hop, and eventually the RDAC. This story of eviction is emblematic of Hip Hop as well as leftist movement spaces under gentrification and at a moment of growing political repression. The latter is characteristic of the current global conjuncture, where the cultural hegemony of a neoliberal project is in decline and the ruling classes resort to more open oppression

(cf. Fraser, 2019; Mason, 2021). These centers can, however, be spaces of resistance, depending on their movement ties, their financing models, and the content and types of learning they enable, as well as their organizers' specific Hip Hop and political orientations.

4.2 Type II: The Pedagogic Service Provider

The second type is the pedagogic service provider, which differs in many respects from the neighborhood-based cultural center/hub organization. Within the two national contexts of my research, this second organizational type of Hip Hop non-profit is mainly prominent in the US. Privatizing cultural and art programs in American public schools has led to many non-profit organizations funded by private foundations filling this gap in the after-school sector. On the one hand, this privatization has to be seen as an instance of the broad neoliberal austerity attacks on the welfare state and common good, aiming to cut funding for public education (cf. Harvey, 2003, 2005 and 4.5). On the other hand, it has opened up a possibility for Hip Hop-based education to enter the school system via such newly founded and decentralized non-profits (in turn financed by large private foundations). In Senegal, some teachers also use HHC/rap in the classroom. Such classroom-based Hip Hop is, however, a lot less common, depends on the individual initiative of the teachers, and is not yet as organized via non-profits as in the US.[94]

a) Space
In contrast to the neighborhood-based cultural center, the pedagogic service provider does not have a central space of its own. Specializing in cultural and educational services, organizations of this type usually operate mainly within other public or private institutions, such as schools or even prisons. Thus, they depend on contracting institutions to provide them with a space to carry out their cultural and educational programming. Usually, this means that they teach not in scene-based cultural spaces but instead in classrooms and classroom-type spaces of other and different organizations. Sometimes, pedagogic service providers arrange for their teaching to take place outside of schools to escape the institutions' negative connotations for young people, who do not necessarily "fit in" to its hierarchical structures and the antidialogical banking model of education (cf. Freire, 1971, p. 72 ff.). The non-profits can obtain such other spaces via cooperation with a professional recording studio, a neighborhood center, or a theater to do semester or vacation programs of classroom-based teaching. Some teaching artists from this organizational type also teach in universities but rarely do so via the non-profit itself.

b) Who is served (demographics)?

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[94] One case of teaching via Hip Hop in Senegalese public schools is discussed under 6.3.1. In addition, the larger hub organizations have also done programs in Senegalese schools. However, I have not come across specialized non-profits as in New York City, where this societal context left the necessary leeway for many such ventures.

Whom these organizations educate thus differs from one contracting institution to the next. It might be children in the preschool daycare of a university settlement, youth from public high schools, or low-income communities of color, from special needs schools, or vacation programs serving middle- or upper-class youth in white suburbia. One organization even works with incarcerated young adults during and after their time in prison. Since these organizations enter other institutions where participation is obligatory, they can reach many more young people who otherwise might not join optional programs. Accordingly, they do not have to invest as much energy and time into looking for participants and advertising their programs for young people. In terms of HHC and political education, entering other institutions ensures a larger reach than those organizations working with young people already on the scene or in the know. This can help overcome the "preaching to the choir" of many political and scene-based education formats. However, young people who are not there by free choice must thus be convinced and won over for a new practice or new societal perspectives. This also contrasts with the often emancipatory self-understanding of many of these organizations. The result is that the educational service providers have to use inviting approaches to cater to the common sense and aesthetic preferences of youth who might not be inclined towards (the teaching artist's definition of) Hip Hop yet.

c) Educational formats, time frames, and relationship types
Other institutions usually "order" the mostly classroom-based teaching of this organizational type either for vacation programs or for one or two semesters maximum. The contracting party can renew these fixed-term engagements as long they can ensure funding and access to the institution. The educational programs usually consist of Hip Hop practitioners teaching their artistic craft(s) – mostly rapping, but also dance, beatmaking and beatboxing, and, in rarer instances, DJing and style writing. Often, the pedagogues also use the history of their respective art forms and Hip Hop culture more generally to talk with youth about larger and systemic social justice issues (cf. 6.3 & 6.4). Local community issues, feminist-, anti-racist-, as well as social movement-oriented perspectives, and in some rarer cases, even anti-capitalist views are discussed with learners through a pop-cultural lens. Since the time frames of these programs are limited, the potential for long-term mentor-mentee relationships is equally so. However, teaching artists and organizations try to find creative institutional solutions for this problem.

d) Events
The pedagogic service-providing organizations do not necessarily organize scene-type events but often employ a final artistic performance as part of their curricular setup. The most typical form is an end-of-the-year showcase in front of the school, a theater piece, or an exhibition. Instead of an event, this final result can come as an artistic product, such as a recorded album, a rap or dance video, or a painted wall. Some teaching artists invite their learners to visit or even do their final performances in culture-specific settings, including battles, concerts, or open mics. Such external events provide a more authentic experience of HHC and can integrate the

learners in the scene. Since the teaching artists and organizers are usually practition-ers, they often host scene-type events that are not connected to the programs and invite the classroom participants to these events, such as rookie dance battles or jam and cypher sessions.

e) Typical problems and solutions

As mentioned above, the teaching artists often bemoan the limited time frames of these classroom-based formats. The educators often see the learners only once or twice a week for one semester and then lose contact. When they have established relationships and sparked the learners' interest, the semester is often already over. Hip Hop teaching and relationship-based mentoring take a lot more time. HH ed-ucators often want to win over the learners to become part of the scene as inde-pendent practitioners and look for different institutional solutions. These include longer-term contracts with some schools, cooperating with neighborhood-based cultural centers, and mentoring schemes built on employing the participating youth as mentors. I will provide examples of such strategies in the organizational profiles below.

Another problem for this type of organization is gaining access to private and public institutions. Since large parts of society do not recognize the educational value of HHC-formats, this can pose a hurdle. A more severe hurdle is that many contracting institutions, larger foundations, and corporate funders often do not ap-prove of radical political education. Counterstrategies include code-switching and taking "neutral" teacher positions to introduce radical content by analyzing political rap lyrics in class (cf. 6.3.1).

One source of conflict concerns the ownership of the produced music and ar-tistic material. In some cases, teaching artists and non-profits fight over the owner-ship of the artistic results. Whoever owns the music or videos can use them for personal or organizational promotion and career advancement.

Let us now look at this organizational type in practice via two HH pedagogic service providers in NYC.

4.2.1 BEATGlobal: One of NYC's Largest Educational Service Providers

BEAT – short for Bridging Education and Art Together – is one of the largest purely Hip Hop non-profits in New York, that does not have its own cultural space in the neighborhood. The organization has a central office across the bridge off of Manhattan in Queens, where three to five full-time employees coordinate funding and programming and where they have a small dance studio. Thus, BEAT's mani-fold educational programs are not tied to one space but are happening all over the city's five boroughs at high schools, public libraries, special-needs schools, via va-cation programs, or at larger neighborhood-based cultural centers. Beyond their New York-based activities, the staff has even organized a multiple-week breaking workshop at a Palestinian refugee camp in Oman. BEAT is the most professional-ized organization of this type that I have encountered during my research in terms

of online representation (including website and social media) funding, and making use of their professional ties. The staff's professional network spans many Hip Hop cultural underground scenes in New York and globally, well into academia and corporate and foundation-sponsoring. They have printed and published Hip Hop curricula, offer teach-the-teachers programs, and the staff pilot research projects in cooperation with various universities. Nutritionists, speech and language therapists, and sports researchers research the benefits of their educational formats. A few HH teaching artists told me that BEAT paid some of the best hourly rates in NYC's after-school sector. They offer classes in all HH elements, including breaking, MCing, DJing, beatmaking and beatboxing, and occasionally style writing. But how did such a specific setup of a large and professionalized organization come about and grow accordingly? What are its pedagogic orientations, and how does it cooperate with other organizations to overcome the field's problems? A look at its origina story will help answer these questions.

BEAT's Origins: From Event Organizing to Running a Hip Hop Non-profit

Like most other Hip Hop non-profits, BEAT was founded by a practitioner: Asian American DJ James Kim. Having worked as a corporate-event organizer for Comedy Central, James left the TV station: "*I quit my job... I started hating it because [...] actually, MTV bought Comedy Central, and I got consolidated into this whole Viacom work, and I hated it.*" He left his post of corporate event organizing for one of the world's largest media giants for a career in a more underground Hip Hop cultural scene. A friend of James was organizing the South Korean R16[95], a world championship of breaking, and recruited him as a freelancer. Being from Chicago and having lived in New York for almost a decade, James describes the R-16 as his "*first significant sort of experience with like, true b-boy culture [...] [in New York] it kind of gets lost in all the madness that's here and man, I mean, at one point it was super out. [...]Even still, like people's perception of what b-boying was, it's still sort of locked into the 1980s.*" When managing a Korean all-star team of dancers during a breaking world tour[96], James met b-boy and rock dance pioneer Ken Swift and b-boy Waaak One, who had already been teaching breaking at cultural center El Puente. Together, they reflected on the amount of

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[95] The R-16 was a state-sponsored tournament and hosted 16 of the world's strongest crews to perform shows and battle for a world title. The South Korean government sponsored the event after their countries' breakers had won many international titles during the 2000s with their groundbreaking air- and powermoves. The government stopped the sponsoring after top b-boys were found to have faked mental illness to dodge obligatory military service. The organizers used government funding to fly in 16 crews, historian Jeff Chang, and photographers Martha Cooper and Joe Conzo to take pictures and exhibit.

[96] The all-star team "Project Seoul" was booked for the "Rocking It!" tour by UK's well-funded HH dance theater festival "Breaking Convention." South Korean b-boys still had superstar status then – James describes their posters covering huge buildings and Pepsi cans. Today, Korea's breaking hype has passed, but some K-Pop superstars still dance breaking.

financial support and publicity breaking received in Europe and Eastern Asia and the little visibility the remaining underground scene had in the US, where people still thought of the art form as a fad from the 1980s.[97] James then initiated BEAT's first project, the BEAT Breakers: a program during which Ken Swift and Waaak taught 15 kids for one year at a high school in the Bronx, i.e., the dance's birthplace. Being unfamiliar with the regular financing models of the after-school/non-profit sector with its short-termed and small grants, James used his background in corporate event organizing. He negotiated a marketing sponsorship with the sports brand Puma, which already sponsored some of the world's top breaking events and dancers. This allowed for the high hourly wages, which the non-profit is known for among New York's HH teaching artists.[98]

BEAT's Expansion: Following a Hip Hop Blueprint, Pedagogic Needs and Chance

After the BEAT Breakers program, the organization's services gradually expanded to include different artistic elements. This expansion happened via James' network of friends, professional event-organizing contacts, and his social Hip Hop capital. He invited beatboxers to imitate a live band using only their mouths and microphones for the predominantly Black and Brown students at Lavelle School for the Blind in the Bronx. The idea was to surprise the blind youth with multiple disabilities by revealing that the sounds they had been hearing were not live instrumentation but a few talented beatboxers only after the performance. This show/prank became a year-long cooperation project with the school, where a team of beatboxers teach weekly classes using a loopstation to sample their own and the kids' sounds to create original music. This instance shows that the institutionalization of Hip Hop learning does not always follow a master plan. Instead, the organizers develop – sometimes by accident – according to their networks in different institutions and their often-holistic understanding of HHC.

While the responsible personnel were initially skeptical, James leveraged his social capital in popular culture: One of the beatboxers was the son of musician Bobby McFerrin (of the hit single "Don't worry be happy"), which gained them access to the school. Such strategic positioning to gain recognition is often necessary to gain access to institutions and funding in a sector where HHC is still primarily associated with gangster rap and follows a racist and one-dimensional depiction of Black culture (cf. Hart, 2010; Rose, 2008). The program was then introduced into the school's

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[97] In James' words, "on that tour the whole idea of even this [BEAT] started right? Bro, we sold out all 15 shows that tour. And these were big theaters man. They're not club gigs bro, they're like what you would find here in Times Square like where you would find like Phantom of the Opera […] this is so crazy man. We've like nice tour buses, nice hotels, we're getting paid […] you can never do this in New York and it's so sad and like ironic in the sense that this shit started here.'"

[98] Teaching artist "Y?" told me BEAT paid 125$/hour, which he at times shared with his mentees to coteach.

regular schedule twice a week, as there was no after-school programming. The speech therapists realized beatboxing's potential for practicing pronunciation, and via its professional network BEAT initiated academic studies on the benefits of beatboxing for speech therapy. These opened up new ways to pay their teaching artists.

Bit by bit, the organization introduced HHC's remaining elements into its workshop portfolio, including DJing and beatmaking classes, as well as MCing. The organization's staff also attribute this to student demand, as youth immersed in popular rap music wanted to learn how to produce beats and rhyme instead of the other less commercially mediated Hip Hop elements (such as breaking, beatboxing and DJing). Thus, the organization mainly expanded into New York's after-school sector and the cultural programming of public libraries. [99] At the same time, entering these institutions required the teaching artists to formalize their pedagogy and design curricula, which had to be approved by state officials. The pedagogues internally exchanged information on the structure and methods of a good Hip Hop lesson, as well as with researchers on how to academically write and publish their first curricula (cf. chapter 6). The state institutions where the classes take place therefore require a formalization of the Hip Hop learning processes. Leveraging their insights to expand further, BEAT started organizing 2–3 days-long teach-the-teacher programs to instruct pedagogues on incorporating Hip Hop into their practice

Limited Time Frames and BEAT's Institutional Innovations

While BEAT's personnel agree on these success stories, two of their teaching artists found this institutionalization of their pedagogy to come with some downsides. One of these downsides is the limited time frames of high school semesters and after-school programs. B-boy and aerosol artist Waaak One and musician and MC Y? told almost the same story of frustration working in after-school programs.
MC and beatmaker Y? recalls discussing the problem of semester durations with organizer James:

> "I said, 'I'm tired of that shit, man. I want to work with one group for a long time.' Because just when I felt like I was getting some way to make impact in their lives, I was removed or the budget went out […] And I said, 'James, if you could put me in one site, where that could be my home base. And I could work with those same group of kids for a long time. That would be my artistic vision as an educator.'"

Accordingly, James arranged a cooperation with Eastside Community High School in Manhattan, where Y? had already taught in the afterschool program for a year. Y? then started to teach an elective during the regular day-school hours with a group of around 20 kids for two years, whom he saw four times a week for about four hours each day. This institutionally innovative move from the after-school towards

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[99] Style writing is only taught on rare occasions, which might be due to its mostly illegalized practice not being as well accepted in public institutions such as schools or libraries.

the day-school programming allowed for a long-term, relationship-based Hip Hop learning (cf. chapter 5). However, after two years of teaching the elective, Y? went back to teaching in the same institution's afterschool program, because of a large percentage of kids who were forced to sit in the elective class. Y? and the learners described the frustration when confronted with other young people who did not want to learn. There is thus a tradeoff between job security and the long-time spans, which day school teaching allows for, and the institution forcing young students into classes. The latter seems to be incompatible with Hip Hop culture's ideals of intrinsically motivated learning and Y?'s very open, dialogic, and egalitarian forms of teaching (cf. 5.3.2 and 5.4.2).

Similar to Y?, b-boy Waaak One states that "I don't like going to school for a semester and then never come back. And those kids feel you abandoned them. You know and you have some people who work so hard, you have kids […] learning windmills and getting power like getting dope and then you never get to see them again. I don't like working like that." Waaak further says that the final showcase might go well and the kids might have a good time, but for him, the real success would be to introduce some of his students to the scene and keep them dancing in the long run, i.e., them becoming practitioners in their own right. B-boy Waaak could compare BEAT's well-paid but short-term workshops to his previous long-term teaching experience at a neighborhood-based cultural center: "I came from El Puente, where I was like watching these kids grow up. So I just wanted to merge the two teams like 'yo, trust me on this.'" When his crewmates' partner Rosa took over one smaller leadership center in Brooklyn and invited Waaak in, the opportunity for institutional cooperation played out. The practitioner's following statement illustrates how programmatic and organizational independence is among the highest values in underground Hip Hop culture. Waaak describes feeling like the hero in Braveheart:

> *"'The Island is mine!' That's how I felt like we were on our own island, and nobody was coming to check in on us. So we could do whatever the fuck we want, so we painted how we wanted to paint, […] it was just amazing. And they turned it around to the point where like the city was coming in and like showcasing us [...] we were the prime example of what you could do with nothin': […] 'Keep making us look good! We're not gonna give you any more money!'"*

With little to no public funding for El Puente, BEAT entered the picture with a different funding scheme. With its Young Lords background, El Puente is stricter on not taking corporate funding to maintain political independence. In contrast, BEAT, with James' background in corporate event marketing, does take such funding options and was able to pay the dance instructors appropriate hourly rates. At the same time, El Puente could host the workshops and maintain its political integrity by not taking corporate funding. Thus, Waaak's group "The Breaks Kru" could teach, organize competitions and jams, and found new crews for their students at El Puente via BEAT funding. This cooperation stands for what Nunes (2021) calls

an "organizational ecology," whereas diverse organizations with different models are benefitial for political activism. This contradicts many leftist and Hip Hop circles, who often see their model as the only viable option.

These two institutional innovations provide one answer to the problem of limited time frames.[100] Another one is employing former students as mentors and thus maintaining long-term relationships (cf. 5.4.4). The next HH non-profit is smaller, more political, and has a different demographic and mission.

4.2.2 URBAN ART BEAT-Politicizing a Hip Hop Non-Profit

Urban Art Beat is a small, service-providing HH non-profit whose artists teach mostly rap and songwriting in after-school and vacation programs as well as on Riker's Island, in New York's largest prison. They also organize smaller community events, protests, and marches and have developed from being a more arts-based program to being very political today. I had heard about Urban Art Beat through another of their main activities – international exchange programs and workshop formats. A few friends in Berlin who had taken part in the Bronx-Berlin exchange program had linked me up with radical MC, DJ, and political activist Spiritchild. The Black artist from the Bronx is one of the two main organizers of the comparatively small grassroots non-profit today. Spiritchild's partner and founder of Urban Art Beat is high school teacher Rosa. The white woman, sensitive to questions of social and racial justice, described the organization to me as having *"two co-directors and we're both parents of the same kids [...] Definitely like a mom and pop business. But the village that's been involved with it is deep."* I met a few more of this village's inhabitants during my fieldwork. Rosa's partner and father of her two kids, Spiritchild, entered the programming and the organization about 4–5 years after its founding and gave it a new, more political spin. Today, the organization stands for merging classical rap and music-based teaching with more political forms of education and organizing on a small scale around social justice issues. They focus on racialized state violence as well as the prison-industrial complex. The activists also have various international connections in Europe, since Spiritchild spends a few months teaching workshops in Belgium and Berlin every year.

This case illustrates how for smaller organizations, growth in one or the other direction highly depends on the people teaching and running it. The specific mental blueprints of Hip Hop educational and political activism, which they bring to the non-profit's table, thus determine its actual practice. Political values, ideology, and teaching styles matter. But how did a white teacher from Maine go about founding this non-profit in the Bronx? How did it expand, and how did its political turn take place?

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[100] Y?'s story also illustrates the incompatibility of HHC's learning ideals, and the force of the public school system.

Origins: How a White Teacher from Maine Brought Underground MCs into the Bronx

Although high school teacher Rosa founded the organization, it was not necessarily her interest in Hip Hop but rather her students' cultural identification that brought rap music production to the classroom. Thanks to a program called teaching fellows, Rosa was still a master's student when she started teaching in a high school in the Bronx around 2006. With her background in theater, she initiated an after-school theater program and was confronted with serious topics and a particular cultural format:

> *"that school that I taught at in the Bronx is situated between three different projects. And those projects were warring, as they often do when they're close together. And some of the kids had been caught in the crossfire [...] it was like friends of our students. [...] I asked the kids if they wanted to respond to that, and they did. [...] I was expecting them to come back with skits because it's theater, and they all come back in with songs, and I was stuck with how to help them develop their songs and respond to this tragedy that happened."*

Rosa thus started inviting friends from New York's infamous underground MCing event "Freestyle Mondays" to come to the Bronx and teach Black and students of color the craft of MCing.

Rosa's response of bringing in people from the community of practice is in line with culturally relevant pedagogy, where the participants' culture is the basis for any learning process (cf. Adjapong, 2017b). The most prominent teaching artist during the organization's early years was Y?. After losing his best friend – a politically minded Hip Hop activist – to gun violence, Y? had a great interest in rap-based volunteer work in New York's projects focusing on antiviolence campaigns[101]. The jazzy and skilled freestyle MC recounts that Rosa

> *"started asking all these Hip Hop artists, DJs, dancers, producers to come in and volunteer. And because I was the most dedicated volunteer, she offered to pay me. So [...]I was like, 'Yo, name it, I'm in there.' [...] She gave up her classroom to after school for two hours, two days a week. So I was going in there and then me I'm a Queens guy, so I was going to the Bronx. So now I'm like 'Oh shit, I'm doing it like, it's coming back.'"*

The organization's beginnings illustrate that recreating Hip Hop's mythologized formula, long lost in the mainstream, and returning to its birthplace is a central motive for Hip Hop pedagogues. Thus, Y? and Rosa expanded the organization's staff to a pool of over 30 Hip Hop teaching artists. They generously planned and carried out after-school and vacation programs for youth, mainly focusing on writing and recording rap music on topics relevant to the youth. When Y? had told me this background story, he beamingly played two of the numerous songs they had produced during that time, bobbing his head and rhyming a few lines along to the

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[101] Anti-violence campaigns have a long tradition in HH, e.g., KRS-1's "stop the violence" (cf. Dufresne, 1992; Rose, 1994).

songs. The quality of the recordings is high, the beats are complex, while the sung vocals and clever rhymes work around light topics such as bullying and love.[102]

The grassroots/do-it-yourself approach of the non-profit also played out in economic terms. When I inquire how they generated funding, Rosa laughingly tells me:

> *"Well, the first three years, everything was completely volunteered, and everyone just did it because they believed in community. And then we started our own fundraising. And we also started to charge the schools […] we didn't have any overhead. So the folks like myself and Y? who were coordinating and writing the curriculum, that all was volunteer."*

While Y? was eventually paid, the early enthusiasm of the Queens native did give way to some artistic and economic considerations. As Y? entered his mid-20s, he realized that bills had to be paid and life and career choices had to be made. At the same time, the organizations' small budgets did not allow for all the songs the youth wrote to be recorded. Y? thus started working for other organizations that paid better and had larger project budgets. Acquiring funding to pay adequate hourly rates is one of the critical factors of a Hip Hop non-profit's ability to maintain its staff. Rosa said that over the years, *"we had to like learn […] how not to let... let our hearts guide us all the time because… not that that's horrible, but it doesn't make it sustainable because eventually you'll lose people to jobs that can pay."* In short, idealism does not pay the bills. According to Rosa, this is one reason why

> *"we don't work too much together anymore with the original team. And I think part of the reason why we're just so many people is that we're always trying to get new youth involved. And, you know, the people that started with us, they should be making like $500 a workshop. Do they always make that? No, but they should... So, you know, unless I'm like, really, in a bind, where I think it's like very specific for them, I don't want to call people unless they can sustain themselves and respect their experience."*

Another reason for not working with the original team is the employment of former mentees as mentors in their programs (cf. 5.4.4). This employment practice entered the non-profit around 2013, together with the second head of the team, who gave the organization a more radical spin and rendered funding issues more complex.

Spiritchild: Political Preferences of a Bronx-Born Black DJ and MC

Y? and Spiritchild had been doing similar work and the former stated that "Spirit kind of came in when I went out. […] I still help Urban Art Beat a little bit, but I see they have now kind of molded into like a social justice organization. They are a lot in Riker's Island now, […] they're not trying to be the biggest business or organization in the world." After joining, the Bronx-born Black DJ and MC and radical transformed the organization's political orientation. My first meeting with

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[102] I had not expected this production level from these informal workshops during the organization's early days, which only proves my cliched distinctions between more and less formalized forms of education

Spiritchild was at the Harlem day parade, where he was DJing on a float for the "Jericho Movement" to free Black political prisoners. Being criminalized as members of the Black Panther Party, some of them have been in prison since the 1970s. Reading Spiritchild's website, one can see that he is one of the few exceptional HH pedagogues with an openly radical approach, which he calls "critical revolutionary hip hop pedagogy" (cf. Spiritchild, n.d.). Outspokenly anticapitalist, socialist, and revolutionary stances are rare in the non-profit sector, as this conflicts with the grants paid by large foundations of the "non-profit industrial complex" (cf. Choudry & Shragge, 2011; Incite! Women of Color Against Violence, 2017 and chapter 8).

This lack of funding for more radical activists is confirmed by Spiritchild himself when I visit his and Rosa's house in Staten Island. Seeing the intriguing mixture of superhero toys for their two kids on the one hand and the Black Liberation flags, political flyers, and posters on the other, I ask how he can sustain himself economically. Spirit laughingly declares that from the Hip Hop projects "the income is not really coming in" and we continue to joke that it remained far out there. Oftentimes, he goes on to explain, he would take the money he made in some projects and then teach his pedagogy for free in others. And "luckily enough, my partner is a teacher, so we have that income." Spiritchild tells me how growing up in the Bronx in the 1980s, he was immersed in HHC and developed a political consciousness by reading Malcolm X's biography and going to Egypt on an exchange program via a pan-Africanist Black Studies course in high school. Having been highly active in the movement against the Iraq war, he recounts some key moments in his political activism. Among them are the "anti-recruitment recruitments" against the military draft and meeting political mentors of his. One of these mentors was Chinese-American socialist organizer and artist Fred Ho, active in the Chinese-American Socialist organization "I Wor Kwuen." To this day, Spiritchild continues to organize solidarity actions, protests, and reading circles for and around his mentor's comrade, political prisoner, and theorist, Russell Maroon Shoatz. Such personal connections influence his work with the youth via Urban Art Beat, as he invites them into reading groups, to political marches, etc. Further important points include organizing with original Black panthers, visits to many movement summits, such as the world social forum, and meeting and exchanging with the Zapatistas in Mexico. However, Spiritchild states that today, he prefers local and more long-term organizing and pedagogic processes. For the last years, he and Rosa have been carrying out rap workshops on Riker's Island, New York's largest prison, and keeping in touch with the young adults after their release from prison. They organize protest marches against the prison-industrial complex and regular events for cultural and political education. The two make it a point to employ young Black people and formerly convicted in their projects.

Unsurprisingly, it becomes clear that specific people matter and determine an organization's profile - especially for smaller organizations such as Urban Art Beat. Spiritchild, for example, brought various social justice topics to the forefront of the non-profit. His entry, however, also brought implications for the financial sustainability of the different projects. While the Riker's Island rap workshops are funded by the rather radical and anti-prison non-profit called "Youth Justice Network," the radical political positioning also leads to isolation among other Hip Hop teaching

artists. Spiritchild describes how the issue of funding and political stances started separations:

> *"I was like 'wow these are my people that I grew up with in the Hip Hop world, who would definitely take Coca Cola money,' but I was like, […] they still your peoples, like 'those are my boys!' I would rhyme with them, but I'm like, 'dude, I wouldn't be fucking with what you fuckin with'. Like I have principles and they're like… but it's hard because you start isolating yourself, if you become too radical […] And a lotta people stopped messing with us, cause they were like, 'you guys a little too hardcore' they're like 'they're giving you free money.' You know like 'That's not free money. There's no such thing as free money.'"* If a Hip Hop non-profit is not radical, taking corporate sponsorship does not risk its mission, which might be just to bring Hip Hop activities to its participants. However, if a non-profit has revolutionary goals, such funding can undermine this mission, according to Spiritchild: *"They don't know that there is a whole history of cultural cooptation."* The following chapters will discuss how such cooptation and censoring plays out in the non-profits' daily activities.

Conclusion for the Pedagogic Service Provider

It becomes clear that besides the activists' Hip Hop ideals, i.e., their cultural blueprint, it is also political positions and personalities that determine organizational growth along the incentives and power structures of the non-profit sector (cf. Choudry, 2010; Choudry & Shragge, 2011; Incite! Women of Color Against Violence, 2017). The educational service provider is thus a particular organizational type that can take different shapes and ideological stances. It has the advantage of not having to administer and finance a space in the neighborhood and is thus more flexible. It can also access the various participants of hosting institutions. At the same time, it is confronted with the limited time frames of semesters or vacation programs according to the hosting institutions and funding cycles. These often conflict with the long time frames required by Hip Hop teaching artists to enter long-term relationships of mentoring and produce new members for their HH community of practice. The organizations find various institutional solutions, such as longer cooperation with other types of HH non-profits, or certain schools, as well as employing their students as mentors. I dedicate a special mention to two further pedagogic service providers in NYC that I could not portray here: MC/all-round musician Y?'s "Creative Expressions" and "the Hip Hop Re:education Project" – run by multi-element HH practitioners Farbeon and Rabbi Darkside. These teaching artists, however, will have a larger say in this thesis.

4.3 Type III: The One-Element-Based Organization for Professionalization

The one-element-based non-profit for professionalization is oriented towards scene-based learning and events similar to the first type. The difference here, however, is that this type of organization specializes in one Hip Hop element only, with the explicit goals of developing and structuring a functioning scene and professionalizing the actors in it, allowing them to live off of their artistic practice.

a) Space

There is a large variety among these organizations: They either have a space of their own, such as a dance studio, or a "hall of fame" (a legal public outdoor spot for aerosol art). Alternatively, they might use spaces belonging to other cultural centers or institutions to carry out their activities.

b) Who is served (demographics)?

These organizations intend to serve mainly practitioners of their art form and those aspiring to become such. This is somewhat in contrast to the earlier organization's demographic focus, whereas the neighborhood centers instead aim to involve the local population more generally, and the educational service providers often cater to high school students of a particular class or after-school program. The one-element-based organization's practitioner focus in practice entails an often broad ethnic and generational diversity from children to youth and adults of the almost 50 years of HHC's existence.

c) Educational formats, time frames, and relationship types

The educational formats these organizations focus on are often a combination of scene-based learning via events on the one hand, which also enable a constant cultural practice, and classroom-based teaching on the other. The classroom-based teaching here also focuses on scene practices. It comes either in the shape of master classes for advanced practitioners or as initiative classes to invite young people into the culture. At the same time, panels, lectures, and exchange formats on the history of the specific element also aim to further the practitioners' understanding of their craft and to sometimes educate about its social context. Other educational formats by this organizational type focus on monetizing one's artistic practice.

Relationships between organizers, educators, and learners often focus on long-standing mentoring and -similar to neighborhood-based cultural centers- are intended to last beyond official programs. The learning here focuses on artistic practice, career planning, and professionalization.

d) Events

These organizations often organize competitions, cypher events, and large-scale festivals, which intend to bring together practitioners from different local and international scenes. The competitive event formats are intended to produce a high level of engagement and artistic performance and determine a winner – which is quite marketable in regard to both state and corporate funding. More cooperative cypher events are less marketable and attract mainly practitioners themselves and not lay

public. These events aim to foster exchange and mutual learning and to build emotional ties.

e) Typical problems and solutions

The typical problems here are similar to type I, i.e., establishing lasting funding streams to organize the larger events. Especially with little/no state funding for such cultural formats, these organizations have to maintain a balancing act of pleasing both the scene and its practitioners on the one hand and the non-profit and corporate sponsors on the other. These two groups sometimes have conflicting visions of what a festival should look like. One solution is to offer different events: larger and more marketable ones geared towards a lay public and others for the practitioners themselves.

Other problems lie in the nature of the field, where organizations are tied to different camps of practitioners and compete for the same limited resources. Sometimes cooperative ties are established, but more often these conflicts remain unresolved. Artistic visions and personalities often determine if cooperation ensues or whether camps remain mainly competitors. The result of the latter option is that practitioners from different camps often end up boycotting each other's events.

4.3.1 Dance Organization Kaay Fecc

The first one-element-based non-profit to be discussed here is the Senegalese dance organization Kaay Fecc, which is Wolof for "Come and dance." This organization has its office space inside a larger state cultural center in the center of Dakar, with a huge open space. Here, the non-profit's activities were able to unite dancers from different styles, ranging from breaking, to traditional Senegalese, contemporary, and a plethora of other Afrodiasporic, Hip Hop-related dance styles (a) Space; cf. 7.2.2).

The organization was founded around their "Festival Kaay Fecc," with its first edition in 2001 and which presents a wide choice of dance theater pieces to a larger public for almost a week. In an interview in 2015, the non-profit's long-time director Gacirah Diagne stated,

> *"We are around 15 members who have a fixed position here at Kaay Fecc and who have become the organizational team for events. So, we really work with a primary mission: the professionalization and the development of choreographic creation in Senegal, a maximum cooperation with the whole African continent, and presenting the maximum of African dance theater creations and open them up to Senegal and the world. That is also why we call Kaay Fecc the international festival of all dances."*

Their professionalization approach aims mostly at creating employment opportunities for dancers so that they can live from their artistic practice. They offer training in dance and choreographic techniques, health, and artistic production, in addition to marketing, event programming, and support to local and regional smaller organizers to ensure a high quality of dance events. Organizer Gacirah was a professional

dancer in both traditional Senegalese and Western contemporary dance[103] and toured the globe with various dance companies (i.e. Urban Bush Women). It is her and Kaay Fecc's stylistic openness to "all dances" that led them to incorporate Hip Hop dance styles into their festival in 2005, and to even bring them to the prestigious dance school Ecole des Sables near Dakar.[104] According to versatile Hip Hop and traditional dancer Seska – a long-time member of Kaay Fecc –

> *"the first organization to start including Hip Hop dance styles in their program was Kaay Fecc, […] and now it is also at 'L'Ecole des Sables' But at the time, Ecole des Sables didn't have it, and they were saying all the time that 'Hip Hop dances aren't dance. They're just show!' and they didn't respect it, saying that 'there are no basics, nothing at all, it's just some youth who are jumping from left to right.'"*

So for Gacirah and Kaay Fecc's former directors to include Hip Hop-related dance styles in their organization was quite an unconventional move and established these sub-cultural dance forms in more high-cultural spaces. Kaay Fecc now often hosts Hip Hop dance theater shows in the prestigious "Theatre National," Douta Seck, or Dakar's "French Institute."

A year after the inclusion of Hip Hop related dance styles into their festival, Kaay Fecc also founded the Battle National–Danse Hip Hop – a national dance championship with a breaking crew competition and preselections in all of the country's regions for a 2vs.2 battle in popping and Hip Hop freestyle dancing. It has also included other Afrodiasporic/"urban" dance styles, such as dancehall, house, or krumping. In 2008, they founded the African breaking championship "Urbanation BBOY" with links to many other African countries and organizers to have a competition from the continent for the continent.

Gacirah said that with *"Hip Hop dance we found that it is happening underground and we tried to give it more visibility […] today we are covered by national TV, we now have Hip Hop dance on TV and are covered by the mass media in general."* When I participated in the 2019 edition of the Battle National in Dakar, a famous TV persona hosted the event, it was streamed live on a national TV channel, and there were radio and press interviews with some of the artists and judges. However, in contrast to media coverage and access to high-cultural spaces, the remaining goal of professional employment is still far from being attained. Only a handful of Senegal's Hip Hop dancers can live from their dancing and mostly do so via teaching and performing contemporary and traditional dance styles, which state institutions and foreign funders recognize more. The organizers are not able to charge an entrance fee, as Gacirah stated that parts of their public would have difficulties to attend once they started charging entrance fees.

Thus, Kaay Fecc's three festivals (events d)) focus firstly on dance theater creation (festival Kaay Fecc) and secondly on competitions in Hip Hop dance styles

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[103] Her education including training at Alvin Ailey Dance school in New York
[104] Only contemporary and traditional African dance styles had been taught here before.

(Battle National and UBB), with the winners of the breaking crew event being flown to the Battle of the Year finals in Germany or France (for the difficulties in this process cf. 7.1.2). In addition, the organization has hosted so-called "Red Bull BC One Cyphers" in Dakar, which is a national qualifier for the 1vs.1 breaking world finals. However, according to long-time responsible person Komisaire, the funds here are also rather minimal. I found out later that Gacirah had paid for the funds lacking for their annual events out of her pocket many times.

The demographics (b)) served by Kaay Fecc mainly consist of active practitioners of different dance styles in their late teens and older. However, b-boy Seska and other experienced dancers have also taught workshops in all of the regions for school children, in a local youth center in Dakar for street kids, and for already experienced youth in preparation for their national championships. In the past, the non-profit organized dance events and workshops for disabled people and cooperated with other non-profits. Another demographic served is the cooperation with other dance event organizers in all of the country's regions (cf. 7.1.1.). The organizers also try to follow a female focus. When asked about the state of women in the dance realm, Kaay Fecc's adjoint general secretary, Komisaire, responded that *"the situation of women in urban dances is a disaster. For ten male dancers, you will have one woman. They're really a minority, so last year we dedicated the 'battle national of Hip Hop dance' to women […] where we organized special battles and workshops open only to women."*[105]

In addition to the scene-based learning via events, the organization also hosts multiple-week-long workshops and tries to establish long-lasting relationships with organizers and practitioners in Senegal and globally (c) Educational formats, time frames & relationship types). They therefore make use of the staff's international scene contacts, i.e., their social Hip Hop capital, by inviting friends and scene contacts, who know about the country's limited funds and do not charge high rates.

4.3.2 Dance-Organization for Professionalization URBAN ARTISTRY[106]

The one-element-based organization Urban Artistry, Inc (Urban Artistry) is only portrayed briefly here according to the main categories of its type (For a more detailed analysis of the organization and its institutionalized mentoring practices, cf. 7.3.1). The organization was founded by versatile African American dancer Junious Brickhouse after coming back from Germany, where he gave and received

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[105] According to Komisaire, *"it's seen as inconsiderate for women to dance and do male movements […] For me, there is no such thing as female rap or male rap or female breaking and male breaking, However, in Senegal, everything that requires force, people perceive it as a male activity and we have to work against this misconception"*

[106] The fact that there is an over-representation of dance-related organizations surely stems from my own role as a dance practitioner and my easy field access via dance-related contacts, scene networks, and my own Hip Hop social capital, while other spaces were not as easily open to me or did not fit into my tight schedule, as I discovered them too late during my field trips. Further research would have to counter-balance this with a focus on DJ and style writing non-profits.

mentoring and was inspired by how Europe's dance scenes were structured via a vast network of state-funded cultural institutions.

a) Space

Urban Artistry runs its own dance studio outside Washington DC's city center, where these professional and semi-professional dancers teach classes, rehearse for themselves, and throw smaller events. While they can finance parts of this studio via the workshops taught there, the group often has to chip in with private financial contributions to pay the rather high rent. The collective of dancers, however, also uses more scene-specific spaces, such as a weekly Sunday ritual at a particular club, and organizes events in malls or clubs (cf. 7.1.3), or dances more commercial shows at various events. In addition, Urban Artistry's team uses online video calls to reach their collaborators, students, and community members.

b) Who is served? (demographics)

The group is composed of an ethnically and stylistically diverse group of adults, who practice many different dance styles ranging from breaking, house, Hip Hop, popping, locking, memphis jookin', whacking/punking, and krump, to vogueing. They even revive older Afrodiasporic dance forms, such as blues or buck dancing. In contrast to Kaay Fecc, there is no non-dancing staff at the organization, and their approach is practitioner-based. Apart from learning themselves, they also give dance classes for other adults as well as for kids and teens, including their youth group "The Funkateers." For youth, who are primarily poor and of color, who cannot afford their classes, the organization also offers scholarships for the youth to be able to continue participating in their activities.

c) Educational formats, time frames, and relationship types

The educational formats at Urban Artistry include a full weekly schedule of dance classes at their studio, which aim to build long-term mentorship relationships. The organization has a specific approach to mentoring, as every member is supposed to both receive and pass on mentoring (cf. Chapter 7.3.1). This approach also includes regular exchange trips to Europe to meet Junious' original mentors and exchange ideas with them, their students, and the local scenes. In addition, they intend to educate via their events.

d) Events

Urban Artistry's yearly international dance festival, "Soul Society," includes battle formats, workshops, panels, and cypher/club sessions with their international guests. In addition, the group organizes different battles and cypher events for the entire scene and internal competitions for their learners. The latter function as spaces for learners of all skill/experience-levels to participate and gain more experience This can build up confidence before participating in regular scene events.

Conclusion for one-element-based organizations

This type of organization mainly focuses on professionalizing the actors and the scene of one particular Hip Hop element by formalizing the education and recreating scene settings as well as organizing events and opportunities for income. They

combine various ways of classroom- and scene-based learning and devote their energies to creating spaces for artistic development.[107]

4.4 Type IV: The Federation

The fourth organizational type is introduced here only briefly since it constitutes a minor focus of my analysis of HH education. However, the federation is noteworthy since it is distinct from the other types. While following goals that are somewhat similar to the organizations of type I and III, i.e., professionalization and scene-building, this type of organization differs highly in its internal composition and activities. More detailed profiles of three federations, their teaching, scene structuring and organizing practices are to be found in Chapter 7.4 (i.e., Senegal's female HH federation "Genji Hip Hop," Senegalese federation of HHC managers "WeManagement," and the US breaking federation "UDEF").

a) Space

Apart from their own office, which might include a meeting area, the organizations of this type I encountered did not have an open space of their own. Instead of running such a space, they focus on establishing a professional and work-related network of different actors.[108]

b) Who is served (demographics)?

These federations usually aim to federate either one particular scene or practitioners from different scenes with something in common. Such an organization can thus consist of practitioners of one Hip Hop element, such as b-girls and b-boys, or for example, of women* active in different Hip Hop disciplines. Two further examples are a federation of cultural managers that work for all of HHC's elements and the Senegalese federation of slam/spoken word poetry, founded by Africulturban's Hip Hop activists. Their goal is usually to foster more communication, cooperation, and exchange internally and build an institution for a more professional external representation. This external function is similar to advocacy or lobby groups, and the

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[107] Honorary mentions go out to the one-element-based organizations I could not portray here in full detail, even though I met or interviewed some of the organizers: There is Senegalese style writing pioneer Docta's non-profit/crew "Doxandem Squad," founded in 1994. which organizes a vast array of style writing festivals all over Africa, such as Dakar's "Festigraff" (cf. 7.1.1). "Radical Bomb Squad," another writing crew from Senegal, also works with explicit anti-colonial and pan-African messages and also does contract work, e.g., for Dakar's Cheikh Anta Diop University or the cultural center G Hip Hop. I had the chance to meet Meres One and Marie, who ran New York's legendary style writing mecca 5-Pointz. They told the story of losing their center to gentrification, how the owner destroyed most of the art, and how they subsequently sued him and won. DJing-focused non-profits also exist in both countries. In Senegal, DJ pioneer Geebayss recently opened up his own DJing organization, which remains under the Africulturban umbrella. In the US, the "scratch academy" does similar work to professionalize the craft of turntablism. Their work deserves more attention and another thesis of its own.

[108] While this type can have a space of its own, this is not central to their work.

organizations aim to gain a more legitimate standing when confronting the state, society, possible funders, or international partners.

c) Educational formats, time frames, and relationship types

Educational formats here often include classes for professionalization as well as cultural and project management and open workshops for skill sharing. Along the lines of professionalization, the topics taught or discussed here include grant writing, finding sponsors, negotiating and maintaining adequate income, cultural marketing, or optimizing one's media presence.

d) Events

Most of these federations organize events to gain visibility, grow as a network organization or to establish an (inter-)national champion of their artistic discipline, similar to a sports league.

e) Typical problems and solutions

The most typical problem here stems from the goal of uniting a conflict-ridden field of practitioners who compete for limited resources. A federation is the most legitimate when it succeeds in uniting and federating all of the relevant actors in a field to then speak in unison to outside institutions and authorities. However, the different Hip Hop disciplines are full of artistic battles, personal feuds, enmities, and fierce competition for public recognition and financial compensation. Like in many sports fields, competing federations often fight for a hegemonic position, leading to deep divides in an already competitive scene.

4.5 Field Conclusions: Non-Profit Funding, Competition, Repression, & Social Movements

In conclusion, it can be said that the various types of Hip Hop non-profits shape classroom- and scene-based Hip Hop learning, providing the spaces and the institutional / ideological setting for the pedagogic practices described in the following chapters. Each type enables particular relationships, forms of organizing, and artistic production. The non-profits either enter state institutions, such as the educational service providers, function independently and create their own spaces in the neighborhood, such as the cultural centers, or shape the scene via events, such as the one-element-based organizations.

Looking at their growth, it becomes clear that these organizations often have role models globally. In Hip Hop culture, activists not only quickly pick up successful stylistic innovations, flip and develop them further. They also pick up models of building organizations and institutions and adapt them to their local contexts. Often, it was practitioners visiting other places with larger budgets for cultural centers and activities, such as Europe or East Asia, who then tried to import the organizational models into their countries. This was the case with the Rebel Diaz Arts Collective, who were inspired by a leftist cultural center in Berlin and then started their neighborhood-based cultural center by squatting in an old candy factory in the

Bronx. Africulturban's staff became inspired by Lezarts Urbains in Brussels and wanted to establish a similar Hip Hop center in Dakar, in turn inspiring the founding of G Hip Hop. BEATGlobal was founded after a world tour of New York b-boys / rocking dancers and South Korean b-boys. Having seen the state- and corporate-funded large-scale dance events and theater productions in Europe and East Asia, the organizers and practitioners thought up their organization. Both Kaay Fecc's and Urban Artistry's founders had been abroad and seen better-funded scenes and cultural spheres where artists could live from their craft. The organizers wanted to bring some of these models to their homes in Dakar and Washington DC and thus founded their Hip Hop non-profits.

In contrast to the substantial state funding for culture in Europe and Asia, the two national contexts of Senegal and the US are marked by little to no budgets for popular culture and interrelated education. In the US and West Africa, this led to a lack of institutions and open spaces for lower-class youth to practice Hip Hop (cf. C. M. Appert, 2018; Chang, 2006). The dominant neoliberal austerity politics in both national contexts led to non-profits filling this void in the educational and cultural sectors. As New York's public schools no longer had arts and music programming, the non-profits mentioned above rose to the task. At the same time, Africulturban and other organizations built their own music distribution networks, platforms, and smaller sources of income in the absence of a larger music industry open to rap music in the country. The building of these organizations all represent major achievements of both the individual organizers, as well as larger HHC.

But what about the field? Let us return to Ortner's (2008) perspective of how actors are enmeshed in relations of power and rivalry, as well as affection and solidarity. In how far does the field of Hip Hop non-profits foster cooperation or competition between the organizations and how does this influence their ability to act collectively? What are the field's forces and incentives?

I argue that the field of HH non-profits can be understood along two normative/material/financial axes:
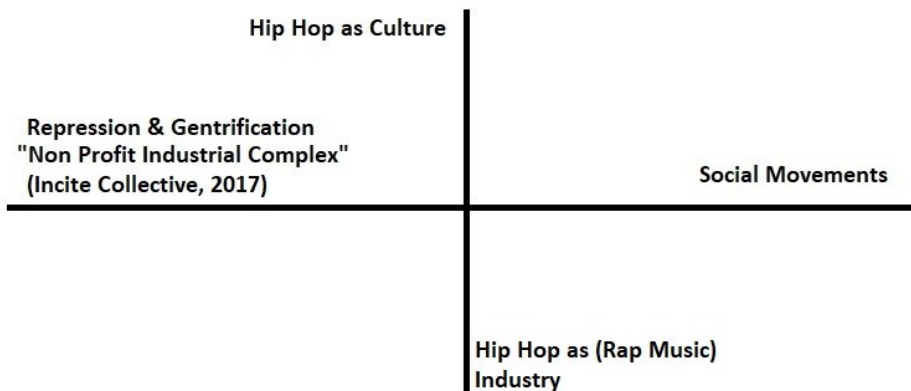
Figure 1: 2 Axes of the Field of Hip Hop Non-Profits

1. Underground and non-commercial Hip Hop culture vs. Hip Hop as an industry
2. The non-profit industrial complex vs. the influence of social movements / a justice orientation

4.5.1. Hip Hop as Culture vs. Hip Hop as an Industry

Speaking in a broadly simplifying manner, the first of these axes, which are at times normative orders, at times describe material realities has two different understandings of Hip Hop at its ends. On the one end are the norms of the "Hip Hop as culture" narrative with its non- or sometimes anticommercial underground ideals, which come in partly anti-systemic and renegade varieties, but also in apolitical ones. Here, a stance of rebellion is often attributed to Hip Hop's Black and Brown, lower-class origins in the US, to which many older Senegalese activists and New York City's Hip Hop pedagogues refer. These ideals pull the non-profits and their practices towards a traditionalist enactment of Hip Hop learning and position themselves against too commercial formats. Rebel Diaz and Spiritchild use these ideals to argue against corporate and some non-profit funding and its political strings attached. On the other end of the spectrum are the major Hip Hop industries, which are mainly based around rap music but increasingly expand into marketed and branded breaking competitions or sponsored individual artists. Corporate funding for Hip Hop arts classes or organizing qualifiers for Redbull's dance events would bring a project more towards this end of the spectrum. I explicitly do not want to judge the organizations or practitioners who are more on the Hip Hop as industry end, since in capitalism people are forced to sell their labor to eat and pay rent. Additionally, large commercial events can be helpful from a purely artistic and cultural standpoint, as they spread the art form, open up employment opportunities, and allow for mainstream society recognition. However, I argue that this commercial orientation systemically hinders more radical political positioning of the participating artists since "you do not bite the hand that feeds you."

4.5.2 Gentrification, Oppression, and the "NPIC" vs. Social Movements

Political organizations, such as the RDAC, G Hip Hop, or Y'en a Marre, can suffer from outright state oppression (cf. 8.5). At the same time, the question of who owns a space becomes central, when rents are rising as rapidly as is the case under New York City's gentrification. This threatens non-commercial and grassroots Hip-Hop cultural spheres, as was the case for style writing mecca "5 pointz" and posed an equal danger for the RDAC and El Puente.

Similar to the commercial orientations, the Non Profit Industrial Complex (NPIC) often deradicalizes projects, movements and larger spheres of society (cf. chapters 2.4.2., 8.5, and 9). The "Incite! Women of Color Against Violence" collective (2017, p. 3f.) explains how through the NPIC

> *"capitalist interests and the state use non-profits to: > monitor and control social justice movements; > divert public monies into private hands through foundations; > manage and control dissent in order to make the world safe for capitalism; > redirect activist energies into career-based modes of organizing instead of mass-based organizing capable of actually transforming society; > allow corporations to mask their exploitative and colonial work practices through "philanthropic" work; > encourage social movements to model themselves after capitalist structures rather than to challenge them."*

At times, this deradicalization happens via such interventions by the richest 1% and their agents, as the authors describe. Other analysts see also more indirect effects of NGOization as it fosters bureaucratization and professionalization of movements. Instead of working towards an organizing of the masses, the non-profit personnel now work via politics of representation and technocratic elites. These non-profit elites then confer with politicians to lobby for change and represent "the voiceless", instead of them speaking for themselves (cf. Choudry, 2010; Ismail & Kamat, 2018; Kamat, 2004).

According to Choudry and Shragge (2011, p. 510), non-profit deradicalization happens via an *"'ideology of pragmatism' […] Missing from this is any fundamental critique of capitalism or reflexivity about the organization's own implication in structures and systems of power. [...] this ideology assumes that the most that can be hoped for in terms of social change are limited gains as opportunities permit within existing structures."* One Hip Hop non-profit organizer in Senegal colloquially worded this pragmatism during a cab-ride as a question: *"Well, what can we do? We can only do so much. Capitalism is too big."* Which is of course true, in the absence of broader organizing. The deradicalizing effects of non-profit funding are real. At the same time, the political organizations engage in code-switching and write different things into their grant proposals and reports and onto their webpages, than what they say behind closed doors. They might also use the money to invite radical artists to be heard, or enable grassroots projects on the ground, that fulfill basic communal needs or that educate. Nevertheless, the impact of a political project can suffer via these funding models (cf. also chapter 8.5).

I argue that the question of having resources with strings attached or no resources at all poses a dilemma that is not easily resolved and is best thought of as a trade-off: non-profit funding can enable various practices and projects, but it might at the same time hurt an organization's ability to make political statements, change its modes of functioning, and cost public legitimacy among the population (cf. chapter 8.5). Especially political Hip Hop organizers should be well aware of the benefits and downsides of the various sources of funding, discuss these and make a conscious decision about them.

Another detrimental aspect of the non-profit realm is how it places Hip Hop non-profits competitively against each other as they strive for the same and limited sources of funding and recognition by the scene and larger society. Many organizations share ties of friendship and ideals with the Hip Hop community and often cooperate: Africulturban, Kaay Fecc, and G Hip Hop organize large-scale festivals

together, while BEATGlobal has worked with El Puente to organize breaking work-shops with adequate pay. However, the various Hip Hop scenes are already quite competitive and focused on battle culture. This is a logical result of their origin on the lowest echelons of racialized capitalism in the US. In addition, the different Hip Hop non-profits compete for grants, for the status of the "realest" or "most under-ground" organization, as well as the one who has the best organizational model and artistic results. A class-conscious orientation and cooperation of all organizations runs counter to the field's contextual setup. In scenes where financial compensation is rare, symbolic gestures, respect, and recognition of activists' achievements be-come more important. This is especially the case since companies such as RedBull specifically target the artists with the most "authentic" image, or in Hip Hop terms "the realest ones," since they will provide the brand with the most sub-cultural cap-ital and scene recognition.

When the scarcity and importance of symbolic and financial compensation meet a battle culture and a field of competing non-profits, conflicts are bound to follow suit. In the dance realms of both the US and Senegal, various actors have claimed that they had thought of a particular event format first, that the other side had stolen it or insulted them, and they refused to work together. This incapacity of the whole scene to unite and cooperate would be criticized by other Hip Hop organizers from different organizational types as *a lack of leadership."* At the same time, some of the organizers had long-lasting conflicts with former colleagues who were now arch-enemies. I witnessed many similar stories in the US, where questions of conflict were often about who received grants, who was placed on a judge panel of a dance competition, or even stories of racist discrimination. A particularly telling story was told by an organizer of a small non-profit, who blamed the head of a larger organi-zation for purposefully organizing similar events on the same day. Since the large organization had more resources and prize money, no one would attend the event of the smaller non-profit. Such monopolist strategies tie in with the competitive nature of the non-profit sector. The depoliticizing and competitive structural set up of the field of non-profits might seem depressing and hopeless. Gacirah Diagne from Dakar's dance organization Kaay Fecc, however, finds a positive outlook on the field: *"there are youth who begin to become angry with Kaay Fecc and I say that that's something positive. Finally, you begin to understand. If right now you begin to organize things on your own, that's the right thing. It's our aim to foster a generation of leaders, who work with or without Kaay Fecc, and to build audiences for new forms of dance."*

Intentional cooperation among organizations can counter the non-profit sectors competitive set-up. To resist its deradicalizing effects it might need another force: social movements. Radical and emancipatory social movements, can pull the pro-jects, its educators and the various Hip Hop scenes into a direction of social justice. When the Black Lives Matter movement spawned, many of the HH activists the US posted solidary statements, visited protests and supported radical calls for abolish-ing police and prisons. El Puente comes from a Young Lords tradition and takes part in the various movement for climate justice, while the approach of the RDAC

was inspired by their family ties to Chilean socialist movements. In Senegal, the Y'en a Marre movement, and its more radical partners have politicized a lot of the other Hip Hop non-profits and brought certain neocolonial realities to their attention, such as the EU's exploitative trade deals, or the dominance of French corporations. While these movements can function as an antidote, they also become subject to the non-profit industrial complex, which will be discussed in chapter 8.

These two axes of Hip Hop culture vs. Hip Hop industry, and of the non-profit sector vs. social movements are in reality never a binary affair of either/or. Instead, most Hip Hop non-profits, learners, and teaching artists carry elements of both ends of either spectrum. While the ends of the two spectrums serve mostly to illustrate the forces of the field, practitioners themselves often use these positions in their extremes to position themselves or justify their actions. However, reality as always is more complex and as Ortner (2008, p. 55) stated, it is less about what people say they do, than about what they actually practice and which *"projects that they [...]enact. [...] For it is in the formulation and enactment of those projects that they become and transform who they are, and that they sustain or transform their social and cultural universe."* Thus, to determine whether Hip Hop non-profits inside and outside of schools have emancipatory potential and how they are impacted by the non-profit realm, social movements, Hip Hop industries, and Hip Hop cultural norms, one has to actually look at what is practiced and taught in these projects.

To see how the organizational types and the structural set up of the field influence the actual projects, let us now take a look at the pedagogical and organizing micro-practices of Hip Hop learning in the following chapters. In addition to the analysis of the pedagogic practices, another central question will be how the teaching artists, organizers, and learners navigate the dangers of ideological cooptation and censorship via the NPIC, as well as the pull of actual social movements and of justice-oriented ideals of Hip Hop culture.

5 "Gettin' Busy": Practices, Space, & Relationships in Hip Hop Classrooms

The last chapter analyzed the different types of Hip Hop non-profits, their pedagogic and organizing practices, and the relationships they enable. But how does all of this play out on the micro level? How do teaching artists carry out pedagogic projects and how do the learners experience them?

The following two chapters will take a more detailed look at some of the most prevalent themes and practices of learning Hip Hop's elements inside classroom settings, which I have witnessed during my fieldwork, and how they are used to teach about related societal issues. This first of two chapters focuses on the practices, spaces, and relationships in classroom-based Hip Hop learning. After a short overview of the institutional context and the contrast between standardized state school learning and Freire's (2000) dialogical pedagogy (5.1), the first element to be analyzed is the practice of *show and prove* (5.2). This performance introduces Hip Hop learning to potential students, sets a few ground rules, and fulfills a structuring role for the later pedagogical process while awakening the learners' interest and entertaining them. Secondly, I will analyze how Hip Hop pedagogues use the *cypher* (5.3) as a space and set of practices for more dialogical learning with little hierarchies. Thirdly and finally, the various *mentoring* practices (5.4) will be analyzed, including a more institutional focus and the ensuing relationships of learning.

Chapter 6 analyzes *values, curricula, and final performance*s, looking at how and what messages are transmitted in classroom-based Hip Hop learning.

The analysis in these two chapters builds on participant observation in the different projects. It also derives insight from interviews conducted with the teachers and some of their students, numerous informal conversations, and my own Hip Hop learning experiences. Both chapters 5 and 6 look at classroom settings[109], which are often part of state institutions such as high schools, middle schools, or even universities but could also be in private spaces, such as Urban Artistry's studio in Washington D.C., or in neighborhood-based cultural centers, as with Africulturban's YUMA – the social reintegration program for formerly imprisoned young males in Dakar. As already mentioned, these two chapters will focus more on US contexts, where classroom-based set ups for Hip Hop learning are far more common. Before we find out how the teaching artists translate HHC's pedagogical practices into the classroom, let us briefly look at the institutional settings they are confronted with.

5.1 On Context: Public Schools, Inequality and a Dialogical Solution?

The most common institutional context for HHC's classroom-based learning instances are high schools. According to Hall et al. (1991) public schools are working-class institutions that are horizontally and vertically bound. The horizontal level describes the school's ties to the local culture, neighborhood, and their institutions. It involves friendship or competition relationships among peers and their class milieu. The vertical ties bind the school to dominant power structures, institutions, and cultures:

> *"in terms of vertical relationships, the school has stood for kinds of learning, types of discipline and authority relations, affirmed experiences quite at variance with the local culture. Its selective mechanisms of streaming, 'tracking', eleven-plus, its knowledge boundaries, its intolerance of language and experience outside the range of formal education, link the urban working-class locality to the wider world of education […]. It remains a classic, negotiated, or mediated class institution. In this context, we can begin to look again and assess differently the varying strategies, options and 'solutions' which develop in relation to it" (Hall et al, 1991, p. 43f.).*

Hip Hop teaching in public high schools moves within these contradictions. It negotiates, mediates, and also subverts these institutions' vertical ties of power by

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[109] I follow this division between classroom-based learning and scene-based learning because both constitute two different phenomena and separate but complementary types of education. Of course, this division is not always as clear-cut, with hybrid formats connecting the scene and classrooms. Such hybrid learning formats include e.g. how HH pedagogues DJ Geebayss, Y?, or Urban Artistry's teachers integrate scene-based performances into their classroom programs.

expanding the *"knowledge boundaries and their intolerance of language and experience outside the range of formal education."*

In working-class schools, Hip Hop teaching artists are also confronted with what Freire (2000) calls a "culture of silence" of the oppressed, who lack the concepts and terms to name and therefore perceive their own oppression, dispossession, and exploitation. Instead of equipping the learners with such terms and concepts, the educational system is *"one of the major instruments for the maintenance of this culture of silence"* (Shaull in: Freire, 2000, p. 31). This is in line with what Freire (2000, p. 72 ff.) calls the "banking model of education," where the teacher is the active subject and upholds the culture of silence while the students are degraded to passive recipients and storers of the knowledge dictated from above by the oppressive interests of the system. This happens via state curricula and standardized testing (cf. a longer description in chapter 2.4.4). In this process, the learners have no agency and learning is neither a creative, emancipatory process nor a transformation of the self or the collective. Dimitriadis (2001, p. 7ff.) highlights that more than 60% of overall school time is spent preparing and testing according to the banking model, leaving the learners' identities and lifeworlds out of the equation.

Concerning the material basis of US students, the inequality is vast and important to consider here as well. In January 2022, 17% of all children in the US lived in poverty, which amounts to 12.6 million individuals. This is an increase of 5% or 3.6 million over the month before, as Congress did not extend Biden's Child Tax Credit payments after December 2021. As part of the larger "American Rescue Plan," this payment had brought child poverty in the US to a historical low. When broken down by ethnicity, the numbers are particularly drastic: every fourth Black and Latinx child lives in poverty, while only 1 out of 10 white children lives under the poverty line (cf. Democracy Now!, 2021; Parolin et al., 2022). Viola (in: Porfilio & Viola, 2012, p. 145ff.) describes how the neoliberal US school system reproduces and legitimizes social inequality. It does so by assigning people different class positions while providing the illusion of equal opportunities. In fact, the education gap in the US plays out in different schools for rich and poor people since local school funding depends on tax revenue: *"Economic vulnerability also undermines access to quality education. In our current system, school funding is determined by property tax revenue. This means that, effectively, we have accepted a social contract that consigns poor people to inferior schools"* (M. L. Hill et al., 2020, p. 6).[110] The larger socio-economic context of this educational

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[110] Going into further detail on how this inequality plays out institutionally, Scott (2009) describes how, in contrast to impoverished public schools, charter schools represent a model of elite education. They do achieve higher compliance and achievement in terms of measurable banking model style education; however, students that do not comply with their high standards are left behind and put into public schools. The educational researcher states that "these enrollment patterns have the potential to leave traditional public schools to educate a comparatively high-needs student population that the newly created schools have deemed unsuitable and to leave them vulnerable to accountability measures that can result in their closure" (Scott, 2009, p. 130). Scott calls this model "venture philanthropy," through

divide looks rather grim according to sociological analyses. In the absence of employment and career opportunities in increasingly deindustrialized US contexts of racialized capitalism, many authors see a "school-to-prison pipeline" at work. This complex leads to many poor Black and Brown male students ending up in for-profit mass incarceration right from high school (cf. M. L. Hill & Abu-Jamal, 2012; Nocella, 2014; Taylor, 2016). Dimitriadis (2001, p. 11f.) points out how the conservative right uses lyrical analysis of commercial rap music to further draconian public policy, such as the *"increased militarization of public schools (including the proliferation of new and complex security apparatus) and the links between schools and jails."*

Instead of tackling the root causes of underlying social and educational inequalities, the neoliberal answer is further testing and measuring in the spirit of the banking model of education, e.g., via "The No Child Left Behind Act." This US federal education reform introduced in 2001 reinforced annual testing, measurable academic progress, scorecards, and the likes (cf. Emdin & Adjapong, 2018; Viola in: Porfilio & Viola, 2012, p. 145ff.).[111] In the resulting dominant banking model of education, only the teacher has agency, while the students, instead of learning to think for themselves and question their society's forms of oppression, are put into a state of submission in the classroom. Freire thereby criticizes even "leftist" forms of education, where the content might be critical of the status quo but its forms reproduce the larger system's oppressive and authoritarian ways. This differentiation between form and content of teaching is one ordering principle for chapter 5 and 6. Chapter 5 focuses more on the form, i.e., the practices, spaces, and relationships of classroom-based Hip Hop learning, and chapter 6 focuses more on its content, i.e., the "message" and how it is brought across.

Freire's (2000, p. 88) answer to the culture of silence and the banking model's authoritarian teaching style is dialogical education since

> *"dialogue is the encounter between men*[112,] *mediated by the world, in order to name the world. Hence, dialogue cannot occur between those who want to name the world and those who do not wish this naming – between those who deny others the right to speak their word and those whose right to speak has been denied them. Those who have been denied their primordial right to speak their word must first reclaim this right and prevent the continuation of this dehumanizing aggression."*

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which foundations governed by venture capitalists such as Bill Gates, Warren Buffet, etc. evade paying taxes via their large-scale foundations. Instead of this money being directed at general school reform via the state, these foundations channel the billions of dollars through their own spending network at elite charter schools.

[111] Viola (in: Porfilio & Viola, 2012, p. 158) also identifies a direct link between schools and the military, as the No Child Left Behind Act from 2001 contains "a small section [requiring] that schools turn over names, phone numbers, and addresses of all students to the military or risk losing NCLB funding."

[112] bell hooks (1994) criticizes Freire's early, sometimes patriarchal/masculine style of writing from a feminist perspective. At the same time, she is greatly indebted to him and thanks him for living up to his own ideals by accepting her and others' feminist critiques as vital to the pedagogy of the oppressed.

After such a reflection and naming of the oppression, Freire's approach focuses on practical interventions for concrete life situations to develop political agency and transform society, which for him has to be part of education, unless it should become a mere theoretical exercise.

Many Hip Hop teaching artists proclaim to follow Freirean pedagogy. But to what extent does their practice live up to such ideals of dialogical education, and what specific practices, spaces, and relationships of Hip Hop culture do they employ? What are their strategies to try and transform the institutional classroom setting and its banking style of education into more democratic, and fun forms of learning? Do they reproduce hierarchies, bring about new ones, or level them out? What is the role of organizational models and the non-profit realm? Let us find out in the following by looking at three elements of Hip Hop classroom-based learning: *a show and prove*, *the cypher,* and *mentoring*.

5.2. Show and Prove: On the Importance of a Captivating Entrance to the Learning Process

In the following, I argue that Hip Hop teaching artists use their skills as entertainers to ignite and sustain a fun and engaging learning process. Similar to Freire's approach, this process is always practice-based – or in the words of New York-MC KRS-1: *"You can't just observe a Hop, you gotta hop up and do it"* (KRS-1 & Marley Marl, "Hip Hop Lives," *Hip Hop Lives*, Koch Records, 2007). This practical process often begins with an initial showcase of the practices to be taught later on, which some teaching artists call a "show and prove"[113]. Ideally, the teaching centers around the students' interests and is in line with culturally relevant pedagogy (cf. Adjapong, 2017c). In the following, we will look at a different instances of such an initial performance to understand the effects and variations of a show and prove.

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[113] Show and prove, like many Hip Hop phrases, has its origins in the terminology of the Five-Percenter Nation, a small sect offspring of the Nation of Islam. They have celebrated an annual holiday under the "Show and Prove" motto since 1971 to commemorate their founding father. At the same time, many Hip Hop members of the Five Percenters have used this phrase in their lyrics. The most famous is probably Big Daddy Kane's single of the same name, with DJ Premier cutting and mixing a sample of Slick Rick and Doug E. Fresh's song "The Show". The Five-Percenters still celebrate their Show and Prove holiday annually, often cosponsored by some of the many rap celebrity members (such as Wu-Tang Clan, etc.). The phrase is also used outside of Five Percenter circles in HHC more widely to imply that you cannot only talk about Hip Hop but you have to prove your legitimacy in the culture by showing and proving your skill. There is also a Hip Hop studies conference of the same name that took place from 2010 – 2018 at UCLA Riverside. True to the essence of the phrase, the show successfully brought together Hip Hop scholarship and HHC practitioners – a relationship that is often quite conflict-ridden (cf. Chapter 4; Rappe 2010; www.allmusic.com/song/show-prove-mt0012110597; www.thedailybeast.com/word-is-bond-an-ex-con-explains-the-5-percenters last access 1.4.2021)

5.2.1 Hip Hop Herstory: Establishing a Political and Artistic Frame via a Show and Prove

I had entered the first lesson of educational service-providing non-profit Urban Art Beat's "Hip Hop Herstory" program at an all-girl prep school with primarily Black and Brown girls aged 13 to 14 from all different boroughs of New York. DJ, MC, and teaching artist Spiritchild had asked me to join in their initial presentation, which he casually called a "show and prove." For the first lesson, the Black, politically-minded MC from the Bronx had gathered a team of three young Black men and one woman to teach the workshop spanning multiple weeks. Two of the young men had been to jail; all three were part of a local Black Lives Matter chapter and involved in a local "cop-watch" initiative.[114] During the briefing in the teachers' office, Spirit told me we would all perform our art forms during the initial "show and prove". This was no surprise to me since I was familiar with beginning a teaching process with a showcase of your skill.[115]

We moved the chairs into a circle, and around 15 Black and Latinx girls started coming into the space and chatting about their school day and the last lesson just before. Being a teacher at the school, Spiritchild's partner, Rosa, greeted everyone by doing a little call and response of "When I say 'Urban,' you say 'Art Beat,'" and the kids immediately joined in. Thus, she set the tone for HHC interaction, and this practice, usually used within concerts, jams, or cyphers, marked a break with the regular school context and its norms, hierarchies, etc. When some sat in the second row of the circle of chairs we had neatly arranged, Spiritchild opened the session and asked, "What is a cypher?" The kids would respond that it was a rap battle, and Spiritchild, in turn, told everyone that it was actually a specific circle where most of Hip Hop's art forms were practiced. Thus, the girls sitting in the second row had to move to the circle's first row to complete the cypher for introductions. MC Spiritchild started by asking everyone to present themselves with either their government or artist name and let us know what kind of arts they practiced. A few of the 14–15-year-old girls told everyone in a somber and assertive tone that they had been rapping before. Others said that they wrote poetry and loved baking or reading. After all the girls had presented themselves, the round of introductions ended with the teaching artists. Spiritchild introduced the young African-American musicians as BYM (an acronym for "Be Yourself Music"). He said they were "all about the music and all about the movement" as they were out in the street with Black Lives Matter marches[116] and writing music on and from within the protests. The group then performed a song about oppression, cultural heritage, and respect for the elements of Hip Hop, with the two young men performing a part, i.e., a stanza each, and the young woman singing the hook. I did a quick breaking showcase to a James Brown song, and all the artists received much applause. Thus, the teaching artists showcased their skills via the show and prove in a circular format, thereby

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[114] They regularly film the police on patrol in their neighborhood and report racist violent abuses.

[115] I have tried teaching breaking workshops both with and without showcasing something beforehand. When working with school kids who are not yet into learning breaking and do not know what the dance looks like, the showcasing of unusual skill usually sparks an initial interest. Whenever I have done a showcase later during the workshop, the energy would usually shift then, as the students became impressed and followed movement instructions more.

[116] The young mentors are also active in local Copwatch initiatives that document racist police violence.

introducing the learners to the frame of production. Rosa and Spirit referred to the teaching artists as mentors, which established the relationship for the following learning process.

While such an initial performance can lead to some kids paying more attention and engaging the learners, there is the danger of shocking some students into a state of insecurity. However, Spiritchild quickly responded to this: Immediately after the show and prove, the Hip Hop pedagogue asked everyone to raise their hands if they were a little shy, and all the teachers, including myself, admitted to being scared of performing in front of larger crowds. Taking turns, everyone briefly talked about what they would do about stage fright. Thus, the showcasing of skills was immediately followed by showing vulnerability. The young rapper Prince Akeem told the kids, "usually I am a really shy person. So in the street, I might not even talk to you." He then shared that he had, however, overcome his shyness through the hard work of honing his rhyming skills and thereby hinting at Hip Hop's ethos of hard work.

Setting a Frame Concerning Content and Direction of Learning

When Spiritchild asked whether the kids had any questions, one girl asked what struggles had led us to express ourselves in that way. I was surprised that the kids logically and naturally linked up struggle and art. They seemed to be familiar with the historical reality of African-American artistic practices, being born from and as a means to cope with oppression and current discourses around them. (I later learned that Rosa had taught a class on protest poetry the weeks before). The fact that the show and prove had already transported political content also helped to open up a conversation around one's own role within larger power structures. The two younger rappers started explaining their experiences of having been on probation or in jail, getting another chance, and starting out fresh through their art. Prince Akeem said that he had once learned in a program similar to the one they were in and that he had also been in their place. He thereby opened up an avenue of identification for the learners and a way for them to imagine their own path as artists. His friend explained how he had been in jail and then started learning theater and had gotten into the prestigious Carnegie Hall and youth poetry programs.

The rest of the 10-week-long Hip Hop Herstory class focused on the learners' identities as they went on to write and record songs related to their role as young Black women or women of Color, about women in Hip Hop, as well as other social-justice-related issues. The initial show and prove was designed to show their path during the ten weeks. By performing political music, the mentors hinted at the program's artistic outcome and proved their skills and legitimacy as teachers. Since there are no widely accepted Hip Hop diplomas that serve as barriers to entry for teaching, showcasing one's skill takes the place of such institutionalized cultural capital.

With the pedagogical foundation established, the second part of the lesson would begin with the kids being able to respond by showing and proving via reading some of their own written works. Urban Art Beat's founder, Rosa, told me afterward that the girls had already written political poems leading up to the Hip Hop Herstory program. As the introductory performance had already set the tone to include serious issues such as racism and overtly political messages, it seemed more natural for the girls to read spoken-word poetry pieces that touched upon losing relatives to police

violence. Some girls proudly read out their poems, and they all were familiar with spoken-word-specific practices of showing approval. They immediately started snapping their fingers as their co-student read her eloquent piece entitled "I am Black" with simple rhyme patterns and a focus on what it meant for her to be Black.

While the teachers' performance had set the tone for the format and content of the students' written lyrics, my dancing performance had also opened up an inter-personal space in a different direction: *Right after the class, two girls showed me some of their dance moves. One of the girls approached me first and smilingly started performing some grooves that involved a lot of shoulder movement and more hand-focused dance styles. I applauded and encouraged her and she kept showing me an impressive array of different steps and grooves and started teaching me one of the many moves. She and her friend immediately started explaining TikTok and another musical app to me, where they performed specific steps and acted as if dancing in a music video.*[117] *The kids would also invite another Black teacher to dance with them to film and upload it on TikTok. When he declined, they pointed out how nice his Jordans (sneakers) were, which he surely couldn't wear just to sit around in. Instead, he should be using them to dance with the girls.* The fact that the girls approached me with certain dance moves illustrates how a show and prove setup raises interest in the respective art forms performed and opens up a space for particular exchanges. This can also serve different learning types in a setting where kids can choose between different workshops afterwards.

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[117] Through such social media, many of today's kids even in Germany learn dance steps that are either part of a popular music video or have been appropriated and sold through games such as Fortnite, where you can buy in-game dance steps and styles which are most often African-American social dances, which are heavily misrepresented. They are given inaccurate names, and the artists and communities that have developed these dance styles do not get any remuneration for it. There were actually a few legal disputes and petitions around this, and the whole debate on cultural appropriation gets another dimension here, because there is a lot of money being made with these dance styles. At the same time, this also has a positive side to it, as many of the kids I teach during workshops already know how to dance a few quite technical steps and have a basic feeling for certain grooves and movements, which was not the case a few years ago. For the last two years, I have been able to immediately start off a high school workshop with dance moves from the game Fortnite that all the kids knew. By now, though, these moves are played out and kids do not really want to do them anymore. However, there are new popular dances that spread mostly via TikTok.

Tab. 1: The Functions of an initial Show and Prove

Elements of a typical, initial show & prove	Strategic functions of this element
Call & response/HH lingo	Marks a break with schools' regular norms, hierarchies, practices, etc.
Rearranging the classroom into a circle	Establishes the cypher as the primary space for artistic practice, types of interaction, and low-level hierarchies (cf. 5.3)
Showcasing Hip Hop skills	1. Sets the format of the artistic production to be undertaken 2. Proves artists' teaching legitimacy in the absence of diplomas, etc. 3. Awakens learners' interest and enthusiasm for the artistic practice
Showcasing different Hip Hop skills	1. Allows for the learners to connect their own previous knowledge with the various artistic performances 2. Awakening and serving different interests and learning types
Having political lyrics	Sets the tone & frame for content & message for learners' lyrics
"Mentors" introduction and telling their stories	1. Establishes a specific relationship for learning (cf. 5.4) 2. Opens up possibilities for dialogue and identification
Showing vulnerability	1. Opens up further routes of identification 2. Helps learners overcome insecurities and shyness
Letting the learners show and prove	1. Flattens hierarchies 2. Engages dialogical exchange by allowing response

In the following, a few different types of show and prove activities are summarized to give an idea of their shared and varying functions.

5.2.2 Showing and Proving as an Element of Surprise

I learned about another type of showing and proving from MC, DJ, and beatboxer Rabbi Darkside and his students at New York's New School University, where he not only teaches seminars on Hip Hop. He is also the faculty adviser for the "Hip Hop Collective." During this weekly jam session, a diverse group of students play instrumental Hip Hop music, rap, and sing together.

He enacts this practical Hip Hop approach from the beginning with a context-specific show and prove, which he uses during the first seminar session. This show and prove is unique in juxtaposing regular academic approaches and actual Hip Hop cultural learning. In the first lesson of his "Hip Hop Pedagogy and Practice" course, Rabbi puts on an act as a theoretically minded, shy, and nervous academic. He dresses in a shirt and, with a shaking voice, presents a fake syllabus full of impossibly long readings and makes the seminar look like a purely theoretical exercise. After

about 15 minutes of this nervous and nerdy act, some beatboxing friends of his rush into the room, performing a beat while he rips up the fake syllabus and starts rhyming the seminar's actual practical approach. This shows how in its ideal form, actual Hip Hop learning is always practice-based and, according to my informants, should only be taught by HHC practitioners. Rabbi thereby somewhat satirically contrasts the many academic institutional norms with HH-specific learning. When we took the lift together, Max, one of Rabbi's former students – now a teaching assistant and lead pianist of the "New School's Hip Hop Collective" asked his teacher, "*Do you actually still present the fake syllabus and put on the nervous professor act? That was insane!*"

5.2.3 DJing Showcase – An Invitation from Theory to Practice

During one of Rabbi's Hip Hop seminars, I was able witness a show and prove similar to the one used by Spiritchild that was both an artistic performance and set the frame for the future learning process. This also enabled a transition from the theoretical Hip Hop seminars to the practical DJing class he oversees immediately afterwards. During the seminar session, he had Bronx native DJ Perly as a guest teacher – a young and energetic woman dressed in clearly identifiable old-school Hip Hop gear with an Adidas jacket, clean sneakers, and some fancy rings and necklace bearing her name. During this thematic session focused on the element of DJing, Rabbi introduced her as the 2018 US DMC Champion (the largest and most prestigious DJing competition globally). He also informed everyone that she would teach the DJ class at the New School right after this theoretical seminar. After a short question-and-answer session about the readings on the history of DJing within Hip Hop, it was time for Perly's show and prove. She did a six-minute-long showcase including the different DJing techniques of mixing, scratching, and beat juggling (creating a new beat by remixing and cutting the same record on both turntables). She showcased mastery by retaining complete control of the sound setup as she spun around, scratching with her hand behind her back, her elbows, and an entertaining array of body moves. This was followed by a Q&A of the whole class asking her questions, and she shared a lot of insights about the current battle scene and her perspective as a woman winning the US DMC Championships and being in a male-dominated field. This classic type of show and prove practically illustrated the students' theoretical readings from a practitioner's perspective. Since Perly taught the following DJ class, this also functioned as an invitation for all interested students to join the practice.

5.2.4 Showing & Proving the Hard Work Behind Breaking Mastery and Cultural Legitimacy

Rabbi's colleague at their pedagogic service-providing non-profit "the Hip Hop Re:education Project," Farbeon, also teaches in New York academic settings with a focus on Hip Hop theater. He summarizes his pedagogical approach as a practical one: *"you can't study Hip Hop as a theoretical exercise, so like in the class, we're studying the Hip Hop theater tradition, like pieces and just sort of like the approach to what Hip Hop theater is, but I also have them like writing, they also have a b-boy workshop."* While the students also have to practice the different elements themselves, the takeaways differ for

each dance teacher. Farbeon either invites old school b-girl pioneer Rocafella, or Ken Fury, a competitively successful b-boy of a later generation. *"But their approaches are very different 'cause Roca would have been in there and they would definitely have fun, but Ken had them like sweating within like 10, 15 minutes they were just on the ground."* While b-girl Rocafella focuses on creating an easy and fun access to Hip Hop dance styles and a quickly successful learning experience by focusing more on social and party dances, the lesson with Ken Fury is that *"you really have to do the physical work to get even a slight sense of what is happening as a b-boy"*. Thus, the message of the latter approach is one of frustration, which Farbeon consciously puts his students through: The practice leading to Hip Hop mastery (especially in breaking) is hard work and demands an equal or even greater respect than other art forms in the theater realm. This battle for legitimacy in the face of so-called "high culture" and proving HHC's value is a recurring theme in the institutionalization of HHC and its learning practices.

5.2.5 Ownership of Hip Hop and a Show and Prove of the 5th Element

New York b-boy and aerosol artist Waaak-1 uses practice-based show and proves as entries to practical courses but also has a different approach when teaching more theoretical classes drawing from Hip Hop as a large pedagogical toolbox. The show and prove described in the following uses the generational difference and the perceived gap between mainstream rap highly influenced by corporations and the "underground" sort of Hip Hop as a culture of face to face practice. Waaak is not only versed in the culture's history and the music but also in different Hip Hop-related dance styles as well as the visual art of style writing. He can thus draw on a vast knowledge base to cater to learners: *"So even outside of the dance, like, you know, just as a practitioner, just as being someone who loves and enjoys the culture, I'm able to use kind of different elements to, you know, reach young people and kind of, you know, educate them and [knowing] that they're not all going to want to do art, they're not all going to want to dance. You got to meet them where they're at."* The multi-elemental Hip Hop artist states flexibility and orientation toward the learners' interests as his baseline principles. These align with culturally relevant and Hip Hop pedagogy (cf. Adjapong, 2017; Akom, 2009) and his own learning process guided by intrinsic motivation and interest.

While Waaak teaches kids and adult students both breaking and style writing (more under 5.3), he also teaches what he calls leadership classes. When I met him for the second time in 2019, he was co-teaching a "reintroduction to Hip Hop class" at a high school in Hell's Kitchen in Manhattan together with an English teacher. The show and prove he employed during their first lesson is based on the 5th element of Hip Hop: Knowledge of self and community (cf. Love, 2016) and focuses on the youth's identities and their relationship with Hip Hop. Like many Hip Hop educators' base for lesson plans, he used rap lyrics. Waaak based the entire first session around listening to and discussing the song "I used to love HER" by US conscious rap artist Common. In the first part of the song, Common talks about "HER" – what, on first hearing, seems to be a woman. Waaak starts the lesson by

playing only this first part and hands out copies of the lyrics for the kids to read along. He then asks them what they think, taking notes: *"whatever pops up, you know, thoughts, emotions, concerns, whatever. We have a discussion about it. Usually, the young ladies are like, [...] 'Oh, that's messed up. He's disrespecting women.' [...] And the boys are like 'no she was a ho, did you hear what he was saying? she did this and that... dadada.'"* After this short discussion, he plays the entire song, where Common reveals in the second part that he was not talking about a woman, but about Hip Hop, which – under the control of corporations – has lost its wit and its lyrical integrity: *"And it's always like, Booom – mind blown."* After this moment of realization, Waaak delves further into the song's meaning and tells them that HER, in the song's title "I used to love HER," is an acronym for

> *"Hearing Every Rhyme. He's talking about how in his generation, how when he grew up, everything was lyrical and was stimulating and it's been going downhill. And this is a song that came out almost like 20 years ago and shit [...]. And it's still kind of relevant in our scene today. Why is that? So now [...] we have conversations about women's roles in Hip Hop, about sexism. You know, there's so many conversations we could have."*

With this more theoretical show and prove, Waaak can focus on cultural history and open a space for dialog instead of artistic practice. In addition to gender roles and sexism, he aims to open up a dialog on art, the messages in popular culture, and the influence of commercialized music industries on this ideological content. In contrast to Banking style education, such conversations around popular culture and the questioning of song lyrics can be a starting point to develop moral judgment and critical thinking about the learners' own lifeworlds and what they listen to. Waaak-1 intends to show the youth that *"you're already Hip Hop, I'm just gonna, like, make you aware of that and then show you how to use Hip Hop, because it is yours to use."* Many Hip Hop pedagogues share this goal of letting the youth understand Hip Hop as a do-it-yourself culture of participation instead of a corrupted corporate media product to only be consumed.[118]

5.2.6 Freestyle Show and Prove as Response to Conflicts

While these are all strategies to open up a learning process, this process naturally also contains conflicts. Rabbi Darkside described instances seldom shared by

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[118] Hip Hop scholar Christopher Emdin (2018, p. 1f.) from the #HipHopEd collective writes *that "#HipHopEd acknowledges the need to reintroduce hip-hop to a generation of youth who have had their culture stolen, repackaged and sold back to them by the power wielders of the entertainment industry. We recognize the 3 P's of corporate hip-hop (purloin/package/profit) and the effect it has on socioeconomically deprived youth enveloped in a culture of capitalism. We see the ways that corporate hip-hop has led our artists to intentionally engage in and with content that does not reflect the culture in an attempt to sell and profit from images that have been constructed by media. We do not draw a line in the sand against artists that many of our youth admire and aspire to live like. Instead, we shed light on the ways that many artists have been shaped by an industry that stifles creativity and artistry by forcing young people to exist within very narrow parameters in order to be commercially successful. We see how this is correlated to the ways that hip-hop youth are shaped by schools to be less than who they are in order to be academically successful."*

teaching artists, since they have to rely on advertised success stories of their work to continue to be hired and get contracts. A good friend of his, who was teaching an MCing class at a public high school in New York, was confronted with students almost half his age *"being like, 'Fuck you!' to your face. It's like 'Ahhh' like you almost have to laugh at it because it's like,[...] 'Oh man, yeah, I paid my dues doing this already.'"* Thus, the school setting and the rebellion of adolescents against instructors can complicate teaching rap. Often, young people are not in a classroom setting on a consensual agreement and out of intrinsic interest, but they are forced to. Rabbi stated that in extreme cases this is tied to the learners parole mandates and the ramifications of legal run-ins. In addition, there is often also a generational gap between older teaching artists and young learners, which can play out in differences in taste and result in conflict. Most teaching artists I met and interviewed were in their 30s or even their 40s. Style in Hip Hop differs according to subgenres and pop-cultural trends and most teaching artists I met are well in their 30s and prefer the "boom-bap/golden era" aesthetic of 1990s rap and will not necessarily like newer subgenres with a different aesthetic and lacking a cultural understanding of Hip Hop. Similar generational and aesthetic conflicts abound in HH's other elements as well (for a response to generational conflicts cf. 5.4.4).

Due to more institutional conflicts, Rabbi already had to show and prove his skills 20 years earlier in his first teaching position. After his bachelor's degree and having moved to New York for its vibrant cypher culture, he worked as a social science teacher at a public high school in 2000 at the age of 22. The school had a majority of Black and Brown students from lower-class backgrounds, and he had to teach English Language Arts and Humanities to *"the 30 students that none of the other teachers wanted in their classes. […] and it was a very hard, very miserable first year."* While the whole school environment and the students barely younger than him put the Hip Hop artist to the test, one strategy that naturally entered his teaching was showing and proving:

> *"I was teaching sixth grade, eighth grade, and I was bringing Hip Hop into the classroom […] we would do like a rap unit while we're doing our study of poetry. I was so desperate for classroom management strategies that I would like just freestyle for the students or you know, once students knew that I rapped […] I'd battle the best rapper in eighth grade, and, you know, I'd have to serve them, and that would like boost my rep for the year."*

To *boost his rep*, i.e. to gain the respect of his mostly Black and Brown students, the talented white MC had to show off his rhyming skills.[119]

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[119] During my time in NYC I witnessed Sam freestyle at a local beatboxing jam in a club, with the New School's Hip Hop Collective at their regular jam session, and I saw him take a close second place in the End of the Weak MC Battle US Finals. During this traditional and prestigious underground rap battle, he navigated freestyle-related challenges with ease and finesse: He rhymed about different objects being pulled from a sack, freestyled on three beats provided by DJ Scram Jones with different moods and bpm and performed written lyrics. It was such rap skills that earned him the respect of his rebellious students, i.e., boosted his rep.

   This effect of an MC instructor showing and proving his freestyle abilities to invite students back into the process was similarly described by a group of young men who had learned with New York teaching artist, rapper, and producer Y?. These participants of one of BEATGlobal's programs at a Manhattan high school describe their former teacher's technique of showing and proving:

> **Jabir Farooq:** *"Yo, he would even freestyle like he would freestyle, so he would tell people like he mentioned you looking off, and I'm like, 'Oh shit, he's talking about me.' And then you know, he would try to incorporate you. Even if you wrote some whack shit […]*
> **Daniel:** *He was freestyling, I'm like 'Ohhhh fucking shiiiiit' […] [and] it's not like he only amazes me back then. Like he freestyled to me last month and I was just like, 'Brooo' like, 'Y? this shit crazy!' […]*
> **LJ:** *He's like one of those old men, those old Chinese guys from Chinatown that you don't think that they actually like could whip your ass... till you throw a punch and then you're on the floor crippled."[120]*

Witnessing a Hip Hop art form performed live on a level of mastery, such as quick and witty freestyling, is recognizable and impressive no matter the preferences for rap subgenres and can bridge gaps of ethnicity, class and generation to some extent.

5.2.7 Show and Prove not Always Needed

The instances described above differ from cases outside of state/school institutions. More famous practitioners do not necessarily have to show and prove in front of a community of practice to open up the learning process. They can begin teaching straight away – having proven their talents during multiple competitions. In Dakar, I participated in workshops by two internationally known dancers: trophied French-Senegalese Hip Hop newstyle dancer Gonzy and house dancer Amy Sekada from New York. Like many famous pro b-boys and b-girls (whose workshops I had taken), they began their class by teaching specific techniques and concepts and would only later perform something to illustrate what the task at hand required. These examples from inside a community of practice illustrate what is so specific about the classroom-based instances of showing and proving described earlier. These are necessary to introduce the artists and motivate a group of learners in schools who are not necessarily there by choice.

Conclusion

In this subchapter, we have looked at how Hip Hop pedagogues use different techniques of showing & proving for various purposes. By showcasing their styles, they

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[120] This freestyle show and prove to impress the students and reel them back into the learning process and prevent conflicts by entertaining and impressing them is somewhat similar to the task of the earliest MCs at block parties in the Bronx. Here these entertainers' job was to impress the crowd with lyrical skills and ensure that everyone was enjoying themselves, in part also to prevent fights from breaking out (cf. Chang, 2006; Poschardt, 1997).

introduce themselves, their Hip Hop persona, and their view of and philosophy behind their artistic practice. At the same time, they set the thematic and artistic framework for what will be taught in the course and raise the learners' interest by displaying artistic mastery. In a university setting, a show and prove can illustrate how Hip Hop is not a theoretical exercise and can only be fully understood via practice. Teaching artists employ it not only for a fun learning process but also to show how much hard work is behind Hip Hop mastery. Teachers use the element of surprise to prove their full control of the learning process and their broad cultural knowledge and understanding of the students' interests. Showing and proving can be used in the beginning and middle of the learning process to counter conflicts and arouse the learners' interest. It shows Hip Hop's practical focus, opening up various avenues for dialogic exchange between teachers and learners. The pedagogic message remains clear: You cannot teach (about) Hip Hop without doing it!

5.3 The Cypher as Pedagogical Space, Practice, & Tool for Relationship-Building in Classrooms

In the following subchapter, we will look at how Hip Hop pedagogues incorporate the culture's most central space of practice and learning into classroom settings: the cypher. The vast majority of the artists I met and interviewed described the cypher as a basis and foundation for their pedagogy. Banks (2015, p. 245) defines the cypher as *"a circle formation in which members of Hip Hop culture gather, share, improvise, battle, and negotiate their relationships to both one another and the culture."* The cypher designates a circle of practitioners and represents one of the most easily conceivable forms of bodily and vocal artistic practice: the group of fellow artists take turns performing individually in the cypher (call) and responding to each other in their individual performances (& response). In this dialogical manner, they create a long conversation to which – ideally – everyone adds. The people in the cypher thus switch back and forth between being participants and spectators of the collective practice. Within Hip Hop culture, the cypher is the most basic formula for practicing the elements of MCing/rapping and all Hip Hop-related dance forms, as well as many other Afrodiasporic/indigenous social dances, such as krumping, house dance etc. (cf. Alim et al., 2008; Rappe & Stöger, 2017; Schloss, 2009). In dance, this circle has the most impact on a spatial level, as the size of the cypher determines which movements can be performed and how. Dancers step into the cypher, while MCs and beatboxers remain more on the outside of the circle when performing.[121]

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[121] While the elements of style writing and DJing/beatmaking are usually not practiced in the cypher, they also have formats that come close to this dialogic mode of communication. A sketching session where everyone draws a small draft of a larger picture to be spray-painted later and where everyone communicates as well as tagging battles where every participant has to tag the same word can take

Usually, practitioners entertain a cypher like an ongoing conversation, where you perceive what has been said (danced, painted, etc.) and add to it or even propose a new topic, style, or move for improvisation. Most HH teaching artists are well aware of the pedagogical merits of this learning space, irrespective of their practice element and share some of them within their teaching craft. Before getting into how the cypher is employed in classrooms, let us look at the meaning of a cypher for the practitioners themselves and in their own Hip Hop education.

5.3.1 How Teaching Artists Describe Their Own Cypher-Based Learning Experience

Most teaching artists who use a cypher as the basis for their teaching describe their own learning as rooted within this space of cultural practice. Freestyle MC and beat-maker Y? from Queens developed what he calls a "cypher-based pedagogy" and described his initiation into Hip Hop culture in an interview as the moment he stepped into the cypher. He credits a young man who would become his best friend later for opening *my eyes to something that was lying inside of me […] through him I became a participant versus a spectator, a watcher."* During the early 2000s, Y? went to buy the new underground rap record of political MC Immortal Technique and

> *"there was cyphering in front of the record store … and kind of the first real experience rapping. I'm there watching the cypher, it's a beatboxer, couple of b-boys you know, like the shit, you know, and then a bunch of MCs standing in front of this record store. [...] I see this scruffy-looking half-Black, half-white kid, and he's there like, in the cypher dancing, rapping and there's a beatboxer and I'm just bobbing my head and the beatboxer looks at me and goes [he imitates a scratching sound] like 'Go!', and I'm like, 'No, I don't rap.' And then he just wouldn't let me not go. […] So I had a moment where I was like 'Okay, I'm gonna do it', scared as fuck, you know? Must have been like 17 or 18 at the time there, and then I just said, 'Let me go!' And then I blacked out. I don't know what I said or did, but I shut down the cypher. They're like 'Aaaaaah' And I was like 'holy shit', and it was one of the greatest feelings in my life, you know, almost like better than weed or sex or anything. It was a high that came from unity. And then that was so beautiful to me."*

This story of initiation tells a lot about the role of the cypher in discourses around Hip Hop culture. The importance of entering the culture via this circular portal for Y? is illustrated by the fact that the full-time teaching artist developed his way of teaching around the cypher, which he formalized by writing a complex lesson plan, the "Beat Rhymers Curriculum" (cf. Guyadin, 2017 and chapter 6.2.2). Apart from this *"greatest feeling"* eventually opening up a professional pathway for a teaching artist

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place in a circular format. DJs often animate dance cyphers and even in beatmaking there are certain formats where every practitioner gets a certain amount of time to create a new beat from the same sample. Such formats are close to cypher practices, such as the call and response mechanisms so typical of Afrodiasporic, oral cultural formats (cf. Rappe & Stöger, 2017; Schloss, 2009).

without the credentials of a college education, this short story also hints at many learning elements central to Hip Hop. The *"scruffy looking, half-Black, half-white kid"* in the cypher would later become one of Y?'s best friends and his mentor, and Y? expresses his gratitude towards him for *"introducing me to New York's open mic scene and social activism."* This points to the importance of relationships and mentors (more under 5.4) for becoming a member of the community of practice. In addition, Y?'s story stresses how overcoming one's fears by joining the practice is highly rewarded.[122]

Y? describes the cypher as being multi-elemental (including rap, beatbox, and dance), which reflects the cultural narrative of Hip Hop's different artistic elements belonging together. This story is crucial for many cultural-minded practitioners who take pride in knowing the history.[123] He stresses this HHC ideal when describing his neighborhood of Jamaica, Queens in the 1990s, where *"cypher culture was very alive and well. So it was nothing to see a group of people on a corner, rapping... dancing. And what I loved about it was it was all elements, […] there would be somebody tagging up […] all of that."*

It was in these informal cypher spaces of practice where Y? received his Hip Hop education, which he contrasts with more formal realms: *"I only went to college for one semester, university... I love education, but school isn't the place where I get my education... I learned my learning type […] I'm a very kinesthetic learner. Yeah, I'm very body. I learned with my body a lot. So going in there and nodding my head and tapping the beats is the way I learned, and also, I understand not everybody is like that."*[124] The MC thus juxtaposes the physical element of practicing a craft together in a cypher with the formalized school type of learning, which takes place sitting down and remaining physically still instead of moving and practicing. This opposition between formalized state institutions and Hip Hop spaces of learning is confirmed by other teaching artists. When New York's MC/DJ Farbeon describes his educational service-providing non-profit's early years, he emphasizes the importance of forming a cypher as a safer space for learning that stands in contrast to school:

> *"We were based at the theater. And for me, it was so important in those initial years that it wasn't at a school. Because for a lot of young people, schools carry a negative connotation. They don't like school. So you go to a school and… So being in a theater or in a music studio is very important. […] initial sessions are all about team building. It's about*

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[122] Y? was surely able to "shut down the cypher" because of his talent at freestyle rhyming. Being rewarded for just trying especially holds true for pedagogical settings, while the appreciation in the actual cultural practice also depends on the type of circle and the skills showcased. In many of the more competitive scenes, there is gossiping and disparaging of people with little skills. The appreciation for merely attempting depends on the people in the cypher.

[123] The complications and contradictions of this narrative are discussed under 6.4.

[124] Many alternative/Hip Hop educators refer to Gardner's (2011) multiple intelligences as an inspiration to diversify the learning process. Banks (2015, p. 248) applies these to Hip Hop's different practices, e.g., bodily-kinesthetic intelligence includes "b-boys'/b-girls' physical virtuosity. DJs: dexterity in spinning and grabbing records; fancy moves at turntables," while Gardner's linguistic intelligence accounts for "MCs and spoken-word artists: rap and poetry."

bringing a culture for the group that's coming together… That cypher it's about building
that cypher. And then there's a getting on the same page with historical foundations, with
the codes and what it is we're talking about."

Thus, what Farbeon refers to here as "building that cypher" is a collective space for
cooperative artistic production closely linked to Hip Hop's historical foundations.
It stands in direct contrast to the school's banking model of hierarchical, top-down
modes of teaching. The formation of a cypher can imply a physical set up of putting
everyone into a circle. However, it can also, more abstractly, mean getting into a
state with a group where everyone feels enabled to contribute. The learners' emo-
tional ties to the physical place are essential, whether it is a theater or school. In
after-school programs, it is not always possible to physically move from the class-
room to another space. However, cypher techniques can also transform a learning
space and the learners' attitudes towards it.

To summarize, the cypher is clearly of utmost importance to many teaching
artists and practitioners for their entry into HH and what constitutes the core of the
culture. While a cypher can have dimensions of both dialogue and domina-
tion/competition in cultural practice, teaching artists usually focus on creating a
more cooperative sort of cypher in the classroom for dialogic peer-to-peer learning
and as a safe space for artistic production. But what does such an incorporation into
the classroom look like in practice? To find that out, we will look at different in-
stances of incorporating the cypher into such settings and their pedagogic implica-
tions in the following.

5.3.2 How Y? Bases his Entire Lessons on the Cypher and Scales Them

With his *cypher pedagogy*, MC and teaching artist Y? bases his whole class structure
upon the space of his cultural initiation and education. One instance of my partici-
pant observation in Y?'s rap and beatmaking workshops in New York in 2019 will
illustrate how he uses the cypher and its collective learning mechanisms of dialogue,
call and response, and equal participation of all members:

When I enter the public library in Manhattan, Y? and another Black MC with dreadlocks
are already freestyling to a Dilla-type of instrumental blaring from the small speaker system placed
in the middle of the large room with wooden benches. These two MCs are teaching the Beat Rhymers
workshop today for the educational service-providing non-profit BEATGlobal, and Y? greets me
warmly. Since he knows that I dance, he throws in a few steps to make me feel welcome and open
the space for any artistic contribution. The two continue to freestyle, and the second MC shows Y?
a new rap part he has recently drafted, which we both applaud. Y? has already written out a lesson
plan on a whiteboard (including a list of activities from a round of introduction, to beat production,
freestyling etc.) and asks his partner if he is ok with it. He replies that he is here to learn from Y?
and is ok with anything Y? proposes. Participants gradually enter the room. Among them are a
shy, beardy white guy in his 40s, dressed in 1990s Hip Hop fashion with baggy pants and Tim-
berland boots, and a younger Black girl who explains that she studies psychology and wants to use
rap music for trauma therapy and learn more. During the introduction round, we are joined by two

Black twin brothers in their teens, the librarian, who is also a person of color, and Luigi, a former student of Y? from the Manhattan Community High School now interning at BEATGlobal.

Y? begins the workshop by welcoming everyone and inviting us to form a cypher, i.e., to stand in a circle, which he expands with everyone who arrives late. He first explains what will happen today, that everyone will learn how to count bars (a musical measure), a few basics of beatmaking and writing, and that all contributions are more than welcome. He then explains that the introduction will go in a circular format, in the cypher, where everyone is invited to state three things:

1. a name ("Whomever you want to be today") 2. an answer to the question: "What is a loop?" 3. "One thing about Hip Hop." As the introduction round starts, Y?'s partner shows a loop by curling one of his dreadlocks to form a circle. The psychology student explains that it is a part of a song that is repeated, and when asked to give an example, she starts singing two lines repeatedly in a loop, with everybody else in the circle clapping and dancing to it. The older white guy says he is a beatboxer and talks about Hip Hop history. The librarian tells everyone that he is a part-time English teacher and that no other form of music or poetry is so demanding: "for country [music], it just has to rhyme, and it is always very simple patterns." After sharing that New Yorker MC Lyte was the first woman poet to perform at the prestigious Carnegie Hall, he also mentions that he used to listen to heavy metal but found his love for Hip Hop when he discovered the Wu-Tang Clan. Y? happily shouts: "AAAAH A CONVERT! Welcome, my brother, welcome!". Every story or contribution is embraced enthusiastically by Y? and he asks for applause from the rest of the circle for every shared detail, thereby creating an atmosphere of great appreciation.

When we get to the next section of counting and performing bars, the MC asks what this would mean. The twin brothers explain both a bar and measure and that in rap music, a bar consists of four beats and therefore equals two claps – one on the second beat and the other on the fourth. Y? congratulates them and, as with any contribution, thanks them for it and builds on it to continue. He then introduces a clapping and counting game performed in the cypher. The game consists of a call-and-response pattern while everyone claps in union on each second and fourth count to keep the rhythm. During the first round, each person standing in the cypher raps one bar by simply counting from one to four, and the whole group responds by repeating the count. In the next round, instead of counting to four, each person now says a line of the same length, which the whole group repeats. The mood changes as everyone becomes more engaged, and people say funny and absurd or boasting lines to be repeated by the rest. As we take turns and clap, we not only learn how to count bars, but everyone participates in a cypher both verbally by rapping and repeating a line and physically by clapping and keeping the beat. What strikes me is how fluidly this circular format has changed from a round of introductions and become more and more enthusiastic as Y?, in his role as a facilitator of the process, moves it forward at high speed and asks for applause and appreciation for every contribution. Similar to improvisational theater where you should never answer "No" but always "Yes, and…" to keep the flow of the improvisation, Y? sets up and moderates the lesson to welcome any contribution and heighten the energy in the room.

By the end of the round, Y? asks us to move the cypher around the small tablet computer on a neighboring table, where he already has the interface of a beat-making app open. He stresses that the "Beatmaker" app costs only 5 dollars and that he taught himself and now teaches other people how to use it. He tells the group that to build a beat, everybody will use the app to play one

instrument in a short pattern to lay the basis of four bars, which he will then loop. This loop will provide the basis for us to rhyme on. Y? moves with incredible speed through the program, and everybody gets to edit one part of the song. One of the twin brothers lays the groundwork with some simple drums and already develops a funky and up-tempo pattern. Y? tells him to only record the first part and lays it as the groundwork for the beat. The young woman goes next and puts on a layer of another electronic sound that gives the beat a modern and experimental Hip Hop vibe. The librarian excitedly plays two piano patterns on the touch screen's piano depiction, and Y? easily picks them up and plays them cleanly into the beat structure. The older white guy plays a very complex and quick hi-hat pattern, and I get to play the bass line. Y? welcomes everyone's ideas, gives them a finishing touch, and adds them onto the beat. In about 10 minutes, we have collectively created a funky Hip Hop instrumental, which is now playing for the last part of the lesson: a short phase of freestyling. The twin brothers say they have to go but will definitely return next time.

After thanking them for contributing, Y? opens Rapscript, an online application I showed him two weeks prior, where one can choose a language, and the program displays random words for a few seconds for you to rhyme about. The fact that he incorporated the program so quickly shows how fluid and open his cypher-based class concept is toward new ideas and contributions. Everyone is then invited to freestyle, and except for the older beatboxer, we all try our luck and rap a bit by picking up the words on the screen. Y? himself shows and proves why he is leading the class, as he raps quick and intricate flows with complex multi-syllable rhyme schemes, interweaving them in a short story that makes sense as all the remaining participants applaud. After almost everyone has cyphered properly, we are asked to form a circle again, and everybody shares their takeaways from the class. Y?'s former student Luigi mentions how impressed he is with the different backgrounds coming together and that he not only means where we are from but also the different generations. The older beatboxer tells us how he got really hyped about the class and is so motivated to pick up the learned techniques, and the psychology student says she would like to use this for a therapeutic setting she already works in. I share how amazed I was at how quickly the jam went from nothing to creating a beat and rhyming on it and that this motivated me to work on my rap skills in English, and the librarian jokingly invites me to the library's English classes. Y? responds directly to every compliment by saying how he learned more from us than we from him and by thanking everyone for their contribution.

In conclusion, it becomes clear that Y? builds his entire lessons around this circular format of collective participation, about which he has written semester-long *cypher pedagogy* rap curricula (cf.6.2.2). The class described above differed from more top-down rap workshops I had taken in the past, where everyone has to step forward only when courageous enough to present something. Here, the participation was equal, as we just followed the order of the circle and heard everyone every round. At the same time, Y? scaled the participatory games built around the cypher in a gradually escalating progression: we had started with the straightforward exercise of presenting ourselves in the circle, then moved on to clapping, keeping the beat, and verbally counting to four, towards rapping one bar, playing one instrument for a rap beat, attempting to freestyle, and even giving feedback in the circle. By starting with easy but versatile participatory games and then gradually but swiftly

increasing the difficulty, Y? took the group of learners along with no room for doubts or concerns. This scaling of exercises according to difficulty and pedagogic flow marks mastery of the taught material. At the same time, Y? built a mode of collective appreciation, which enforced the cypher as a safe space to try out something new. He thus established a cooperative cypher with almost no more competitive elements. While usually such beginner workshops are full of people voicing their doubts and concerns, there simply was no time in the fluid dynamic of the pedagogical set up to even think about my inner doubts, let alone voice them. By stressing how he is learning from everybody, the Hip Hop pedagogue created an atmosphere where everybody felt they contributed something valuable.

Y?'s long-time students at the Eastside Community High School, whom I had interviewed three weeks earlier, told me a similar story. When I asked whether they were cyphering a lot in class, they replied that this happened every morning for at least 10 minutes as a warm-up. One of them brought up a chant and was immediately joined by the rest of the group: *"Two bars and pass, two bars and pass, two bars and pass, make the cypher last."* They had been taking turns and rhyming this over a Hip Hop beat and thereby playfully learning precisely the musical measure of two bars. Apart from such exercises, they had started off each lesson by freestyling or doing non-verbal cypher exercises with call and response components. One of them was creating imaginary objects, such as pulling a baseball bat out of thin air and swinging it, then passing it on for the next person to continue the story by transforming the object or using it in another way. This is in line with Banks' (2015, p. 250) prescription for educators to transform oppressive learning spaces via cyphers: *"Distinction: Make the space look and feel like a Hip Hop space. Suggested practice: Meet in a circle, even if it means reorganizing the whole space every class – the effort will pay off. This formation breaks down traditional classroom or group hierarchies and makes it easier for all to connect on an equal plane"*

In addition to marking a difference from traditional top-down learning spaces, the students confirmed that such participatory methods gave them a passion for performing and showing and proving the craft they were learning. Edwin, a young Black man of Puerto Rican descent in his early twenties who acts and raps in theater shows, movies and musicals, stated, *"I feel like he [Y?] just gave me the confidence to just escape my shell, do what I want and focus on music […] I went into 'Beat Rhymers' [program] like 'I didn't even really want to do this!' Like I knew I wanted to write, but I didn't want to perform. And then from […] working with Y? that love for music and performing grew to a point where it's like 'this is something I want to do for the rest of my life.'"* His former co-student Daniel agrees that *"it didn't feel like a discipline."* Almost all students described this highly interactive way of teaching and performing every lesson as the fun exception to an otherwise dull learning path at their high school. Such scene-based learning practices as cyphering can thus transform spaces of learning, make them more participatory, and instill a passion for collective modes of performance into the learners.

5.3.3 How B-boy Seska Introduces Cyphers into Dance Schools

Another instance of transforming a space's regular mode of teaching and learning through a cypher was used by b-boy Seska from Dakar when teaching a workshop about various current African dance styles at a dance school in Berlin. Usually, the participants of such classes at more commercialized dance schools differ from the scene and its practitioners regarding the physical arrangement and the mode of learning and practicing. The more commercial dance school realm is often dominated by choreography dancing. Here, the students are supposed to learn by heart and perfect a choreography entirely proposed by the teacher. The centralized, top-down mode of learning is visible in the physical set up of the class itself: the students stand in multiple lines, all facing toward the mirror and toward the dance teacher, who instructs steps following a set choreography. The goal is that the students have learned the order of the steps by heart and can perform them all together at the end of the class – a mode similar to the banking model of education. Many practitioners see this top-down mode of learning another's creation as the opposite of the cypher practices that they perform. I have often witnessed experienced students of choreography classes lose their entire confidence when asked to enter a circle to improvise and express themselves freely according to the music. Conversely, many experienced freestyle dancers fail horribly when they are supposed to quickly learn and perform choreography, which is necessary when they are booked for either commercial shows or want to prepare dance routines for a competition. Without value judgment, it is safe to say that the two are different but interrelated skill sets. While they are often conflicting orientations for dance school students and practitioners, it is possible to learn both skills, and some teachers emphasize being balanced in that way.[125]

Versatile dancer Seska from Senegal, who has a scene background, sometimes introduces the mode of the cypher into choreography classes at dance schools in an easy and accessible manner: by progressively scaling it, i.e., gradually increasing the challenging tasks: *During a workshop on contemporary African/Afrodiasporic dances, he introduced a few steps from different styles, such as the coupé-décalé developed between Paris and Côte D'Ivoire (cf. Wittmann, 2006). After teaching them in the regular top-down manner typical of dance schools, he called all 30 participants to form a large circle. Many of the dance school crowd seemed scared at first, but Seska calmly explained that all they had to do now was to step in for two counts in the music and then rush back out again upon his call to switch. Everybody was welcome to perform the steps they had just learned or anything else they felt like doing. He put on some house music and let everyone go one after the other, following the order of the large circle. After each round, the teacher gradually extended the time spent in the circle until we reached one and then two eight counts. A friend of mine, who usually tells me she could never enter a cypher but loves taking choreography classes, ended up dancing freely inside the circle without hesitation. Setting*

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[125] When applying Freirian pedagogy or an underground Hip Hop mindset a moral judgment is passed, however.

the bar low and then gradually raising it enables one to lower the threshold for cypher participation. Seska also created a safer space by assuring everyone that they did not have to perform anything special but just what they felt like. After the class, some students conveyed a rush of enthusiasm, since it had been their first time entering a cypher. By thus scaling a cypher, this mode of practice and learning can be introduced into different classroom settings and adds a dialogical element to more banking-style teaching spaces. In addition, Seska also danced in the cypher himself. He thus enabled mimetic learning based on repetition and inspiration, where learners can emulate each other and their teacher.[126]

5.3.4 Limiting a Cypher for a Safe Practice and Mastery

B-boy Waaak One uses cypher limitations when teaching breaking in BEATGlobal's after-school programs to make the learners practice specific movements and ensure their safety. Breaking is an athletic dance and learners can injure themselves if they unadvisedly try difficult moves such as headspins.

I joined Waaak One for his breaking class at a community high school in Brooklyn, where he taught the breaking class twice a week in the after-school program to around 15–20 very young participants. The workshop took place on stage in the school's assembly hall, and he called all the participants to form a big cypher on stage and emphasized safety and health. The whole class was held in a circular format, beginning with a collective warm-up and then the b-boy teaching an array of easy breaking basics. Waaak instructed these elements by stressing precise and safe movements to be learned and mastered before performing any advanced skills. When one of the kids wanted to try a backflip Waaak halted him, telling him that he would have to prove to being fit enough first.[127]

The kids all learned a few breaking basics, such as "kickouts" performed on the floor, a "cross step" performed in a standing position and a "corkscrew," which is a "godown", i.e. a transition between the two levels. They were given a few minutes to practice and then performed the moves one after another, while remaining in their position at the outside of the circle. Waaak emphasized multiple times that he would leave no one behind and that they would all learn these movements soon enough. Having served as a teaching tool, the cypher was finally used for a show and prove, as all kids performed the learned steps. The limitation also meant taking a step back for some more advanced participants. One girl who had shown me a small combination of quite difficult moves and transitions in the cafeteria earlier (including back-handsprings and a trick with her feet behind her head), performed only the basic movements allowed by the instructor. Safety and

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[126] Rappe and Stöger (2017, p. 153) explain how mimesis, i.e., learning via imitation is one of the most central learning practices in Hip Hop culture. However, this always comes with the ethical obligation not to repeat something exactly the same way but to change it (i.e. "flipping") and adapt it to match one's own style, thus preventing the taboo of "biting," i.e., copying someone's style, move, phrase, or other Hip Hop technique.

[127] Waaak used two rhetorical tools to get everyone's attention: "eyes and ears" ensured the kids watched what he showed and listened to him. Secondly, he would raise one hand as a fist and place the index finger of the other hand over his mouth by saying "One Mic." This quote from the classic Nas song clearly meant that only one person was allowed to speak at a time. He repeated these rules at the beginning of the class to make sure everyone understood them.

welcoming every individual contribution is thus a trade-off in such classroom settings. With just one teacher and such a large group, it is hard to cater to more and less capable students at once. Showing complex movement to advanced students usually means the rest will also try it and might endanger themselves. Cypher limitations can thus ensure their safety.

5.3.5 Theme-Based Limitations for Creativity in Dance

Different, more thematic limitations to the cypher are usually used by master teachers when working with more advanced students.[128] Specific versions include the "cypher of death" used by US b-boy pioneer and influential teacher Poe One. This cypher game means that each participant has to go one round of "chasing" the other dancers in the circle, thus training one's stamina when having to answer to four rounds of breaking in a cypher of five people. The topical limitations I have witnessed Poe One use include the breaking elements of footworks (rhythmic steps performed on a squat level) and backrocks (steps performed lying on your back, with weight on your shoulders, back, and feet). In addition to these thematic limitations, one should not repeat steps – similar to a breaking jam/competition. When running out of moves, Poe thus advised looking at the other dancers to study their movements, which could be picked up and flipped, i.e., changed into a variation of one's own.[129] Students thus train not only their stamina and creativity but also the call and response, dialogic cypher skills.

Poe One uses another topical limitation of the cypher for students to better understand the music: assigning everyone a different instrument of a funk song, such as the bass line, the horns, etc. One is then supposed to isolate and dance only to this part of the music. US b-boy Roxrite teaches freestyle using bodily limitations, such as being allowed to place only one hand or one foot on the ground during an entire round. This technique sparks new movements since one cannot resort to one's existing patterns. One can find almost endless topical limitations, such as jumping on a specific count in the music, moving like a specific animal, or superhero, as if underwater, switching tempos, or size, etc. Afro-Swedish dancer Niki uses a topical cypher by building on a particular pose proposed by one's partners. One then creates by leaving and returning to this pose and using it rhythmically and to, in turn, propose a new pose for the next dancer. Such games build on call and response as the basis of cypher learning and open many creative doors in teaching and dancing.

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[128] I have taken part in multiple professional workshops in various dance styles both in and outside of my PhD research.

[129] After eight rounds of footwork, I still had some steps left. However, I failed horribly during the backrock task. Feeling utterly helpless on my back, I understood that I had neglected this element of breaking entirely. In the following months, I trained a lot of basic and original backrocks to be able to survive such a "cypher of death."

Half-French, half-Senegalese Hip Hop dancer Gonzy taught a workshop in Dakar by focusing mostly on one basic Hip Hop step pattern for the legs. At the end of the class, he encouraged us to dance in the cypher using only this step and adding different arm patterns, speeds, levels, and techniques for making the step smaller or larger, but always only limiting ourselves to the same leg pattern. The trophied dancer told us he usually trained like this on his own, limiting himself to one movement and creating many different variations from it, dancing it to different types of music, with different arm patterns, etc.

Teaching artists who limit a cypher thematically thus enable a collective and practical learning experience where the group can expand the many ways to develop a theme, flip it, and freestyle. I argue that this is comparable to improvisations in jazz music, where a basis of a few tones or a short melodic sequence often serves as a base for improvisation(cf. Floyd, 1995). The musicians then create many versions of this basic melody, briefly leave it to explore further variations, and return to the original sequence. Scaling makes this way of learning accessible to everyone, but it makes more sense for learners who have already mastered the basics of an art form to be able to fulfill Hip Hop's own aesthetic norms.

Concluding Perspectives on the Cypher as a Classroom Tool:

It becomes clear that the cypher, as a Hip Hop-specific space for artistic practice, can be employed in manifold ways for teaching Hip Hop-related skills. Hip Hop pedagogues use it to model classroom learning environments according to their culture-specific way of learning and initiation into the culture. Dance instructors use thematic cyphers as a culture-specific tool for teaching particular techniques, improvisation, understanding the music, or highlighting the significance of neglected elements (such as backrocks). Cypher games can teach how to count bars and create a safer space for peer-to-peer learning. Pedagogues can introduce more cooperative cyphers to create a specific learning atmosphere, transform classrooms, and base them more on dialogue than the standard banking education model. The cypher thus opens up various educational applications that could be used beyond HHC.

Tab. 2: Cypher Actions and Functions:

Cypher-based Teaching Aspects	How? / Examples	Function
Cypher as a basic space of interaction	Introductions, feedback, and all contributions take place as a performance in a cypher format Everybody contributes every round	> Students get to know cypher, its basic forms of cooperation, and build confidence > Counters banking model with inclusive classrooms
Linking the cypher to Hip Hop culture	Give people the opportunity to state their relation to Hip Hop in the introductions Explain cypher as the basis of the culture	Teachers get a feel for prior knowledge of Hip Hop, without forcing it Enables connection between cypher learning, Hip Hop history, and social justice issues
Instructors rock the cypher, too	Teachers practice the skill themselves and are equal participants in the cypher	> Enables peer-to-peer, dialogic learning (mimetic/oral culture) > Instructors show and prove their legitimacy
Welcoming all contributions	> Saying it initially > Enthusiastic appreciation by giving praise and thanking people for every contribution	> Builds confidence > Welcomes learners in cypher as safer space > Counters competitive set ups
Cypher conversation is central	Every contribution is the basis for the following contribution ("yes, and")	> There are no mistakes and everybody feels seen for contributing to the collective process > Builds confidence
Scaling difficulty / raising the bar slowly and remaining accessible	Switching between re-/progressions of activities to match the group's skill level (e.g. easy counting games, slowly increasing the allowed time in a dance cypher, etc.)	Gets the students out of their comfort and into the learning zone without frustrating them with too difficult tasks
Incorporating new tools and input instantly	E.g. using word-generator Rap-script to freestyle	Keeps the process stimulating to instructors & creates enthusiasm for the practice
Limiting the cypher	> Allowing only certain basic moves > Allowing only certain themes	> Ensures safety and level hierarchies of skill > Encourages improvisation, creativity, and communication

5.4. Each One Mentor One: How Hip Hop-Style Mentoring Enters Classrooms

In the following subchapter, we will look at different types of Hip Hop mentoring in classroom settings. While mentoring is a fundamental form of relationship-based learning in Hip Hop culture, it is not apparent how such a practice translates into classrooms. To grasp the phenomenon, let us take a quick look at how mentoring works in HHC (5.4.1). In turn, I will present three different types and settings of mentoring inside the classroom: Rapper Y?'s egalitarian mentoring (5.4.2) will be followed by the more standardized hierarchical mentoring of the Senegalese reintegration program YUMA for formerly convicted adolescents (5.4.3). The third example is the common strategy of employing former mentees to maintain the mentoring relationship (5.4.4). These types of mentoring highly depend on the organizational type and institutional setup, which constitutes a focus of the later part of this subchapter.

But what exactly is a mentor in Hip Hop culture, and what marks the difference from a teacher?

5.4.1 Mentors in Hip Hop vs. "Just Teachers"

Highly versatile dancer Junious Brickhouse constantly references and thanks his multiple mentors in Europe. During an interview, the African-American teaching artist made a telling statement about the role of mentoring in his one-element-based organization for professionalization, Urban Artistry: *"In our company everybody gets to mentor, and like mentors are for life. You don't shake 'em. They stick with you, they teach you things, they tell you when you can do better, you know and they check you when you're wrong and then they build you up."*

Many of Urban Artistry's members refer to Junious as their mentor, and a few of his mentees told me that they regularly have lengthy conversations revolving around their relationships, their career plans, and how to incorporate the artistic practice into their life (cf. 7.3). There are thus stark differences between a classroom teacher who only temporarily teaches you in one artistic discipline and a mentor who interacts with you way beyond the classroom and, according to Junious, is "for life." A mentor's lessons exceed simple tips and tricks on the artistic practice itself and encompass many different aspects of life and the skills of HHC. A mentor being able to *"check you when you're wrong"* requires an emotionally deeper bond than with your average school teacher. A teacher can be appointed by force, while a mentoring relationship has to be agreed upon by both sides and the initiative has to mostly come from the aspiring mentee. Hip Hop mentoring aims at the mentee's long-term artistic, professional, personal, and emotional growth. A teacher, on the other hand, may only teach skills or knowledge. Thus, a mentor's role is larger and usually encompasses that of a teacher.

When asked whether he had any mentors, New York Hip Hop artist Waaak One, who not only dances breaking and rock dance, but has been an active style writer since the 1990s, told me that his mentoring was mainly peer-to-peer learning: *"I've had people I looked up to. It was really kind of each one teach one like to the fullest, you know […] most of my mentors or people who showed me the most and taught me the most in the dance and in graff were people my age, or slightly older than me, that I looked up to and they just, you know, they gave me jewels along the way."* Waaak uses the term of a mentor more lightly than Junious and states that his beginnings were marked by the collective learning processes of the culture and just learning from people in the neighborhood who had been breaking or painting a little longer than him. He here implies a model of collective peer-to-peer mentoring that is more on an eye-to-eye level with less emotional depth. However, he also describes specific mentors who helped him further his understanding of certain skills, trusted him with specific tasks, and believed in him and his abilities. For example, he describes having had

> *"many mentors that have come out of El Puente [neighborhood cultural center]. And one of my mentors who became like a creative partner of mine, she goes by the name of Jlove Calderon and [she] is a co-founder of Bboy Summit [i.e. an important breaking event / Hip Hop jam]. She's Asia One's best friend [Asia One being a b-girl pioneer from the 1990s, who today runs a Hip Hop non-profit on the Westcoast]. Asia One and JLove are Bboy Summit and she's one of the first people that brought me out to be on a panel discussion at Bboy Summit as a young artist and educator, you know. So I've gotten a lot of opportunities through her […] again, I'm a young dude with no really formal education, I'm dancing I'm kind of making everything up along the way."*

Thus Waaak's mentors could make up for what upper/middle-class kids receive from their families: cultural and social capital and a belief in their abilities, i.e., aspirational capital (cf. Yosso *, 2005, p. 77).

Waaak also mentioned other Hip Hop mentors, such as New York breaking pioneer Ken Swift, who had taught him and his crew certain tricks of the artistic trade, how to teach, and other aspects of life (including business, finances, and career planning). Waaak recounts that Ken Swift, who has been named the 2nd most influential dancer of the 20th Century by CNN's Icon Series (CNN, 2011), had been idolized by many of his peers. However, b-boy Waaak explains that he did not really appreciate him until *"I was an adult and as an adult, he would sit down and tell me like 'Yo boom' like school me towards business and all types of shit, you know? And like, I was like, 'Wow,' I got a great appreciation for him. And then started seeing him as a mentor later on in life."* This confirms how a mentoring relationship requires consent from both sides. Thus, it directly opposes appointed school teachers in a mandatory state school system. Waaak could accept or reject Ken Swift's advice on generating income via breaking or his dance-specific feedback. As an example, Waaak states that Kenny *"just changed the way I moved: 'kill em with kindness!' he would be like 'You're way too aggressive sometimes, you gotta learn how to like dial back and do less because you could beat them with*

less.'" Such mentoring advice means passing on a form of Hip Hop-specific sub-cultural capital.

Concerning careers, Hip Hop mentors share some of their social and aspirational capital with their mentees. One example is that Ken Swift had asked Waaak to substitute for him at a larger dance school in New York, giving him his first instance of professional teaching outside of after-school programs. Waaak's first reaction was,

> *"'Oh, shit, I gotta like substitute for Ken Swift, that's hard shoes to fill' […] He was like 'Nah, I want you to do a swipe [acrobatic powermove in breaking] class. Cause you got dope swipes, I see you have mad variations of swipes, teach us a swipe class.' And he taught me a little something about like my own mastery and my kind of like focus and understanding of the dance. That's like, 'Okay, what is he seeing in my swipes that I'm not seeing? What's the swipe class going to look like?' And again, that was enlightenment. And he was like 'Okay, now do a backspin class next class.'"*

Believing in their mentees' abilities and giving them challenges, the mentor instills them with aspirations and expectations. A skilled mentor supervises the process of growth and learning, scales and gradually increases such challenges to not overwhelm the mentee. By asking Waaak to teach a class on a specific breaking topic, Ken Swift thus instilled a belief in the young artist that he could not only handle such a task but even make a living off of his artistic practice in the long run. Waaak has accomplished both goals: As a full-time teaching artist he teaches in high schools, after-school and vacation programs, cultural centers, dance studios, and during international cultural exchanges, and he is invited as a guest lecturer to universities.

Of course, such mentoring remains limited to individual success stories if no collective action is undertaken to structurally change an unjust, stratified society where upward social mobility is not available to everyone and is in fact statistically very unlikely. At the same time, this kind of mentoring does work for the teaching artists I have met who are sharing or redistributing social and cultural as well as aspirational forms of capital, all of which can be transformed into economic capital and income (cf. Bourdieu, 2012; Yosso, 2005). But how do such forms of scene-based mentoring enter classroom-based settings of Hip Hop learning and become institutionalized? Let us find out by looking at three different types of classroom-based Hip Hop in different institutional set-ups.

5.4.2 Why a Mentor Should not be a Mentor – Y?`s Egalitarian and Dialogic Model of Mentoring

> **Y?:** *"Because though I have my era – as an 1980s baby – I'm fully open-minded, and when we do workshops, I want leadership and autonomy given to our youth. So I always say they are student-led practices […] I prefer the term facilitator versus a mentor because*

*I'm there just as much as a student as I'm an educator. So when you go in with a willingness
to learn, you allow yourself to be malleable."*[130]

MC, beatmaker, and all-round musician Y? thus describes his very egalitarian form
of mentoring, which he employed inter alia during the Beat Explorers program at
the educational service-providing non-profit BEATGlobal. This program focused
mostly on rap, beatmaking, and a plethora of musical influences, which Y? and his
guest teachers taught to a group of around 20 high school students at a Manhattan
high school for four years. As detailed in chapter 4, this institutional cooperation
was designed to counter the limited time frame of after-school workshops, which
mostly lasted one semester and thus did not allow for Hip Hop culture's long-term
learning and mentoring processes. To ensure the goal of bringing the learners from
school settings into the scene as actual practitioners and build long-lasting relation-
ships of mentoring, the non-profit arranged to include Y? in the day school program
for two years. And finally switched back to after school programming in the last of
the four years to have only students in the class, who were there by their own choice.

   Caring, giving advice, and challenging each other during these four years worked
both ways between instructor and students. Like Waaak's experience, Y? had wit-
nessed the Hip Hop skills of MCing and later beatmaking in a peer-to-peer setting
in New York's cypher and open mic cultures of the 1990s and started learning and
practicing in this setting during the early 2000s. He has since then emulated and
formalized such egalitarian learning relationships inside the classroom. During this
teaching and when I spent time with him generally, he was constantly telling others
how much he learned from them. This two-way, dialogic learning rooted in cypher
is also the basis for his way of mentoring and providing guidance and challenges for
his mentees. He referred to his former students in this program as his "mentors"
and thereby reversed the learning hierarchies. This is in line with the above quote
and his preference of the term "facilitator" over "mentor." I thought of this as a
mainly verbal reversal of roles until I experienced his anti-hierarchical pedagogy and
student relationships in practice. Let us now hear from his learners to find out how
his pedagogy and these relationships are interconnected.

Relationship-Based Learning goes Both Ways

I met five of the energetic MC's former students and current "mentors" for a group
discussion at the restaurant area of a supermarket close to their old Manhattan high
school.[131] The young men were happy to see each other; some were still close

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[130] This approach is in line with Banks' (2015, p. 251) third prescription when introducing Hip Hop
pedagogy: "Distinction: The leader does not need to be an expert on the material, only a thoughtful
moderator of a group-learning process." Y? here can be seen as being both a "thoughtful moderator"
as well as an "expert on the material."
[131] Y? had put 10 young adults including 3 women in the Facebook planning chat who did not make
the meeting. The 5 young men were only 1/4th of his students at this high school. (For gender
implications of mentoring cf. chapter 7).

friends and others had not met in a long time. When asked if they still saw Y? regularly, the way they related to their former teacher became clear:

> **Saman:** *You guys see Y? on a regular basis, or ...?*
> **Daniel:** *When I hit rock bottom (laughs). When I go crazy, I go to his crib.*
> **Edwin:** *When I feel like I'm at a low*
> **Matthew:** *He's really like the guru*
> **Daniel:** *You know what's crazy, he don't even tell me what to do. He just give me hints.*
> **Edwin:** *He just listens*
> **Daniel:** *We talk about what's going on in his life…*
> **LJ:** *You know what's weird is that I've kind of reached this point with what I do, that when I go to talk to Y? and it's not really as like a sort of like, 'bro' you know I'm looking up at this guy. It's like more an even playing field... it's more like 'What do you need from me? How can I help you? What's your plan with this? Does this make sense?' Like, 'I don't know about all that,' you know*
> **Saman:** *There's no hierarchies, nothing like that?*
> **LJ:** *Yeah, it's like because I'm not fucking young anymore. I'll hit him up and he'll ask me questions and I'll ask him questions and whatever, we're all homies now.*
> **Edwin:** *And it's funny, cause he always like he always thinks... because I posted something like a while, like two days ago and like I legit almost cried because like he was like, 'Yo, Hamilton [famous Broadway musical with Hip Hop elements] deserves real MCs like you on there, because like [...] when you audition you're not auditioning as an actor who can rap. You're more of a rapper who can act' […] And they don't show stuff for us like actual people who are involved in the Hip Hop community and know what it is on stage or on screen, right? It's all this flashy bullshit. And I feel like I've always seen him so much as a mentor that I've never thought I can have, like, I would say like, a human conversation, like a heart-to-heart conversation where like, I don't have to look at him as a, as a higher but like someone who understands me as well. And we kind of share […] what's going on in our lives.*

There is a gap in age and experience between Y?, who is in his 30s and his former students in their early 20s. However, how both sides frame their relationship today is not solely defined by this gap anymore. Instead, the way Y? wants to transmit knowledge and advice is more indirect and built upon the self-reflection of his students, as their former instructor "just listens" and "doesn't even tell me what to do." In contrast to telling them what to do, the dialogic way of giving emotional support, orientation, and moderating a learning process while also talking "about what's going on in his life" shows how the mentoring relationship is not a one-way street. Y?, who often credits Brazilian thinker Paulo Freire for having heavily informed his pedagogy, thus stays open to lessons from his students. While the relationship is never fully without hierarchies, the active downplaying of these and the cypher-based, dialogic mode of learning enable the students to feel more entitled and in charge of their own progress in education and personal growth. Being in charge of one's own education is a necessary component of Hip Hop cultural

learning, which highly values self-reliant forms of developing one's original style, flow, and identity (cf. Rappe & Stöger, 2017; Rose, 1994; Schloss, 2009).

Around three years after their graduation, their relationship has transformed along with their growth in artistry and age as his students characterize it through trust and understanding. By entering Hip Hop cultural practices and gaining skills, or as their former teacher said "even outrapping some of my adult friends," they have somewhat leveled the playing field. This is typical of Hip Hop education, where in contrast to school education, teachers and learners continuously participate in collective cultural practices and quickly become part of the same scene. Y? countered teaching hierarchies by recognizing Edwin as a Hip Hop practitioner, i.e., "a rapper who can act." Y? thus transforms relationships and enables "a human conversation," which had been impossible earlier, since Edwin had seen him as "a mentor"/"a higher" instead of another practitioner. It is Y?'s proclaimed goal to transcend such hierarchies in the mentor-mentee relationship:

> *"So what I help newer instructors understand is 'don't be so married to showing them 73 and this but be married to the concept of sampling.' But we might be sampling this and just be married to the idea of creating something from nothing, be connected to the idea of creating empty space to allow the group to have leadership, no hierarchy. I use the term cypher pedagogy. It's the idea that everybody in the group is both a student and teacher."*

In the spirit of Freire's Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Y? constantly aims to level the playing field between him and the students by referring to them as his mentors, by creating a teaching space that is not hierarchical in itself, and by asking for their advice. This is in line with Freire's (2000, p. 79) teacher-students and student-teachers, who through dialog "*become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow. In this process, arguments based on 'authority' are no longer valid.*" For Y? this two-way teaching process not only plays out in him learning about current forms of rap music through his students but also in terms of guidance and life advice. He recounts having quit his job at Eastside Community High:

> **Y?:** *"listening to my students who fired me. Shout out to Daniel, Matthew, and the Eastside community crew class of 2016 that fucking gave me the good boot and made sure that I am now what I refer to myself as, an artist and educator. Yeah, they gave me a good kick in the ass, so just like I was telling them, 'get your songs done, get ready!'"*

Y? had constantly told his students that they were artists and could achieve whatever they wanted as long as they followed their creative vision. In response, a few of them had mentioned in their graduation speeches that he was supposed to listen to his own advice, stand up for his vision, and accept himself more as an artist instead of an educator. Y? thus quit his comparatively secure and stable post at the school and listened to his mentees' mentoring. Focusing on his artistic growth, he thus produced more music, created a theater piece, and later opened up a cultural community space.

Approaching the Scene from Inside the Classroom

Apart from this form of mentoring, which revolves around relationships of mutual trust, caring, and understanding, it is also somewhat of a borderline case between classroom-based and scene-based learning and mentorship, as their relationships still continue long after the class is officially over. This is also thanks to Y? inviting his mentees into scene-like settings: Firstly, he created a weekly jam session in a cypher format with live music by some adult musicians. Here, he and his students would make music in a live jam format, which, in the sense of Hip Hop's collective cultural practices, levels the pedagogical playing field with cypher forms of experiential learning. On the other hand, he invited his students to perform in scene-type venues and open mic events, such as the Nuyoricans Poetry Cafe. By extending the learning process from the classroom to such Hip Hop cultural events, Y? blurred the hierarchical roles of classroom-based learning, replacing them with practitioner relations.[132]

This type of bonding through Hip Hop cultural activities forges relationships, which was also the number one priority for Y? when handling topics and censorship in his class. The MC, who clearly opposes violence, nevertheless initially accepts his students' violent lyrics to build a relationship first.

> **Luigi:** *"when I first started in like, Beat Rhymers I used to be like 'I'm a shoot you!!' and I'm like a little scrawny kid. 13 years old [...] with long ass hair like him (pointing to LJ). Talking about like 'Yo, step to me I'm a punch you in your face. I got a million dollars' […] And it amazed me how like he, he was never like, 'Don't rap about that! […]' He, like, opened up the floor for us to express that side of us at that point. So that eventually, we could end up saying that that isn't what we are. […]*
> **LJ:** *There was no censorship. Yeah. It was cool because every other fucking class, like you do some out of, you know, out of character, and everyone freaks out."*

Building a sense of community and relationships was more important to Y? than instantly achieving "clean," politically correct lyrics, which is in line with Banks' (2015, p. 250) second Hip Hop pedagogical prescription: *"Distinction: Community is the first priority."* Thus, instead of correcting the students directly, as would have happened in a more hierarchical setting, Y? focuses on gaining his learners' trust first, in order to provoke reflection later. He has enabled such subsequent reflection, e.g., by hiring LJ to film his theater play "Shooter" and inviting his other students to see this theater piece on gun violence and by, more generally, inviting open discussion

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[132] The relations between practitioners are also full of hierarchies. Positioning and subjectivation along lines of ethnicity, gender, class, and age still play a role. During the practice itself, Hip Hop skills mostly determine one's standing as a practitioner. This more meritocratic approach also plays out in the pedagogic authority of the most skilled, which could be referred to as "rational authority." According to Fromm (1947, p. 9f.) "rational authority is based upon the equality of both authority and subject, which differs only with respect to the degree of knowledge or skill in a particular field. Irrational authority is by its very nature based upon inequality, implying difference in value."

with his students. Another central aspect is leading by example. Y?'s topical approach to rap music is characterized by emotional honesty and addressing his weaknesses in his intricate lyrics. This starkly contrasts the toxic masculinity of large parts of mainstream rap music (cf. Kitwana, 2002; Love, 2012; Rose, 2008).[133]

In conclusion, Y?'s relationship-based way of dialogical mentoring through Hip Hop art forms is informed by Freire and reverses the roles of mentors and mentees playfully in the moment of collective practices. He thus creates pathways into communities of practice and creates relationships of trust.

5.4.3 Mentoring for Reintegration and Community Building: The Case of Africulturban's YUMA

The second case of classroom-based mentoring, the Youth Urban Media Academy (YUMA), is more formalized institutionally and focuses on a specific social goal of reintegrating formerly convicted youth into Hip Hop culture and society. Africulturban's organizational type of a Hip Hop hub/cultural center played a specific role in the complex program, allowing the mentors to accompany their mentees into different professional and scene realms. This setting and the program's complex establishment will thus constitute a focus in the following subchapter. Similar to Y?'s BEAT Explorer program, the YUMA teaching and mentoring project was initially created to counter the problem of time spans that are too short for actual relationship-based learning. Africulturban's staff founded the program after having carried out multiple "one-shot" Hip Hop workshops for youth in prison, which had lasted just a few days. The instructors and organizers felt these rap and beatmaking workshops benefited the participating adolescents. However, they also felt that the impact would be far more significant if they could enable longer-lasting relationships over a few years to work towards the youth's reintegration into society after leaving prison.[134] The morally loaded stigma of having been to prison in religious Senegal is enormous. While the situation of youth unemployment is already drastic (cf. Wienkoop, 2020), having been to prison lowers one's chances of finding a legal working position within the West African country's formal and its larger informal employment sector. To counter this, Africulturban's team thus arranged for a selection process where formerly incarcerated youth could apply for YUMA's 3-year-long educational program. This program consisted of 8 hours of daily classes six days a week, posing a practical alternative to high school education in a

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[133] Additionally, his lack of censorship works against what Alim calls "standard language hegemony," which devalues the ways of speaking and being of poor Black youth. According to Alim (2008, p. 217) school is *"a primary site of language ideological combat […] [where]teachers consistently engage in behaviors that aim to produce a homogenous 'academic language,' while many students are busy celebrating […] and consciously manipulating 'diverse language varieties.'"*

[134] At the same time, the official funding mainly received through George Soros' Open Society Initiative for West Africa created employment and a prestigious project for the organizers and can be seen as a direct and focused extension of their earlier 3-month-long Hip Hop Akademy (teaching media and photography skills, rapping, DJing, and beatmaking).

neighborhood with many school dropouts. After talking to the young men and their parents, the team chose 15 youths to initiate the collective learning program. Via such application processes, Hip Hop pedagogues achieve more commitment from their participants, and the participants value the project and their participation more. Both organizers and participants frame the YUMA as an alternative to an under-funded and in many respects disastrous educational system in Senegal, where only 52 percent of the men and 40 percent of the women of the country's adult (older than 15) population are literate (UNESCO, 2022).

During the three years of its existence, the program taught the 15 young men in mandatory daily classes at Africulturban's facilities. The education consisted of clas-ses in English, French, mentoring, and social living (discussing values and respectful behavior), IT, as well as video filming and editing. English was dropped as a subject after a while, as many participants already struggled with speaking and writing French. While almost all teachers acted as mentors to the youth, the installation of a mentoring and social living class was an exceptional feature. Entrepreneurship was another topic taught by a young academic to encourage the youth to use the skills learned at the YUMA to start their own businesses afterward and to create opportunities for self-employment. In addition, the 15 participants chose one of three possible specializations, such as video production and photography – both taught by award-winning female artists: video production by the director and filmmaker Fatou Kande Senghor, who has her own production studio and does international film cooperations (e.g., with Wim Wenders). Photography was taught by the creator of the Urban Woman Week festival, Ina Thiam, who also exhibits her photography internationally.[135] Secondly, rapping and beatmaking – as the only Hip Hop-specific subject – was taught by rap pioneer Matador, while the third op-tion was graphic design. All three of these classes were geared towards producing sound, moving images, or still images, which could be useful within the organization of Africulturban, in the larger sector of "cultures urbaines" and beyond. This or-ganizational need and the Hip Hop approach of putting practice first led to the fact that all of these more technical classes focused on hard skills with a simple baseline: practice as described by YUMA graduate Am Kana:

> **Am Kana:** *"right here, we didn't do just theory. We did theory and practice. Ok, there are many schools, but you have to pay. And when you pay, you don't practice. And then when you're in the field, you don't know how to do anything, you know? […] Because here you learn on the computers. When we're finished with the computers, in the evening, we go out with the cameras to practice. Like that, you learn quickly."*

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[135] Ina said she had to put up with the male students' machismo, but "through teaching them, I learn to calm down and I learn from them! Because I always put pressure on others, so I learn patience. And I learn to not listen when they say something stupid and work with them on an eye-to-eye level, as a woman!" For counter strategies to machismo, cf. 6.4.

The fact that the neighborhood-based cultural center Africulturban is technically well equipped meant the youth could work with Mac computers and high-end cameras. This not only enables practice but also marks a point of status for the youth. Organizer Amadou Fall Ba reported that many youths in the neighborhood envied the YUMA participants, who carried a Macbook, a highly exceptional status symbol in Dakar's banlieue.

In addition to the prestigious equipment, the participants' relations with their mentors were a sign of privilege. In addition to rap teacher (and founder of Africulturban) Matador, the YUMA's language teacher Keyti is also a famous rapper of the 1990s generation. The latter is not only an honorary member of the Y'en a Marre movement but also weekly rapped the news in the "Journal Rappé," a show broadcasted nationwide on TV that received hundreds of thousands of weekly views on YouTube (cf. chapter 8.6). These two popular MCs, Matador and Keyti, take highly critical stances towards (neo-)colonial exploitation, global economic injustice, and systemic racism. The two internationally recognized female teaching artists Ina and Fatou share some of these critiques and are outspoken against patriarchal dominance in Hip Hop and beyond. The youth thus got an education in languages and artistic skills, i.e., (sub-) cultural capital, and critical thinking (cf. chapters 6 and 8). Almost all teachers were accomplished and influential artists or part of Senegal's largest Hip Hop organization, Africulturban. The social and cultural capital the mentees thus received is high compared to a regular underfunded public school. The program's goal was to balance out the disadvantages of a small number of youth, most of whom came from broken homes of Dakar's immensely impoverished suburbs, carried the stigma of having been to prison, and lacked the cultural and social capital of middle- and upper-class kids.

The "Mentoring and Social Living" Class and Community-Building

The YUMA's mentoring was explicitly institutionalized in a class called "Mentoring and Social Living." Instead of focusing solely on Hip Hop skills, the goal was to teach the formerly incarcerated youth how to interact with others and manage their emotions and anger in their everyday lives. In the words of YUMA participant Amadou Ba, *"Social living taught us how to behave with people you know. When you are young, you stress too much. You wanna deal with it alone, but that doesn't work."* According to illiterate freestyle MC and YUMA graduate Am Kana, they did so by choosing an everyday situation as a topic: *"everybody would write, or like me, I don't write, in my head, I'd try to compose a standpoint on the topic, and when I come, I present my views. And sometimes we would do teams, three or four people together to talk. Then everybody comes and would do a short presentation in front of the class, in front of everybody, what he had written, or what he had thought of,*

and this allowed us to express what we have in ourselves."[136] Class-specific habitus and the ways of interacting are usually already learned within one's family. As the students' habitus and behavior were revisited here via a collective reflection and re-learning inside the classroom, this helped to forge a group spirit and peer-to-peer learning. Am Kana, who had left his family during his youth and lived in the streets for a few years describes the class:

> **Am Kana:** *"when we did the mentoring class, everybody was in it together. Because it was what helped us to better get to know ourselves.. [...] Yeah, social living and mentoring, because there were people... I didn't do a long time in prison. It was just one month. There were some who did three years, there were some who did two years or one year, and there were some who did just one week. And here, the mentoring helped us to channel and let out our anger and stress, and it allowed us to have confidence and to better know how to behave in society with the people, you see."*[137]

The youth thus reflected affect and practiced emotional and behavioral self-regulation in a classroom setting by discussing their usual reactions and hearing how others would react in similar situations.

When I asked participant Amadou Ba about his peer relations and whether he had befriended some of his co-students, he responded, *"No no, with everybody, because in class we are all brothers. You see someone who has a problem with their girlfriend, he will call you, you know."* Am Kana and Amadou Ba told me that they were still in contact with all of their colleagues almost two years after graduation. This is partly due to the YUMA mentors focus on creating relationships in the three-year-long, time-intensive practical education. These relations happened between the youth and some of the teachers. IT and video editing teacher Daouda Fall describes that, in addition to the hardware skills for his class, community management always took up an equal share of the work:

> **Daouda Fall:** *"Me, I am of the same generation as them, even if I'm a few years older. When I talk to them, then I see them as friends, as brothers. I have also learned a lot from them because I have never lived in this world of prisons. For me, this was an opportunity to discover another universe […] I can now give them advice. Of course, I am their teacher, but I am also their friend and their trusted peer."*

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[136] When asked about an example of such a situation, the two explained: *AB: "Yes, so at the time, he gave us a topic we called Wayadi. Wayadi, we call a person a Wayadi.... Am Kana: Somebody who's crazy man. AB: Yeah someone crazy. If somebody is nice to you, who brings you gifts to surprise you, he tells you things to make you laugh. And you think that 'that guy, he is crazy.' Am Kana: Yeah you think he's mad. AB: Even though he is not crazy. He is just generous. And you think that that person is crazy and you take advantage of them even though they are not really crazy."*

[137] Such statements have to be seen as being colored in a beneficial way for me, the Western researcher. However, this matched the polite and humorous way they interacted with Africulturban's team during the festivals and everyday activities. Another factor that affirms this narrative is their employment discussed in the next section (5.4.4).

(Fall in: Niederhuber, 2015, p. 39 transl. S.H.) While this is somewhat advertising the project, the youth confirmed that this was true for almost all of them.

The Hip Hop setting and the organization's and teachers' prestige thus worked as motivating factors for the troublesome youth in mentoring. The redistribution of social and cultural capital and community-building were central to the explicit mentoring class. But what about Hip Hop-specific mentoring?

Sharing Africulturban's Reputation and More Hierarchical Mentorship

We are sitting on the porch outside of the MCU cultural center just before the Mix Up DJ battle, where my company, young MC, Am Kana, will do a short rap showcase. Everybody passing by seems to know the upcoming practitioner. After greeting him, one group of Hip Hop heads tells me I am hanging out with the most accomplished freestyle champion in Senegal. Am Kana has won countless rap battles despite (or maybe just because) being illiterate and thus unable to write his lyrics down. Even though he does not know how to read and write, he graduated from YUMA and was included in all of the classes according to his abilities. Am Kana is now working for Africulturban, and I met him almost every day during the festival-packed two months of my field-work in 2019. He has clearly found a place of belonging here, and even though he has not yet released an album, Africulturban's prestige helps him with his rap career. As within all Hip Hop scenes, there are people who criticize the country's largest Hip Hop non-profit for taking government and foreign funding and some say it no longer qualifies as "real." Africulturban nevertheless has a high reputation with many youths:

> **Am Kana:** *"You see, bro, people often ask me to help organize cyphers or events like concerts, you see, because they know I can do it. They know I am working with Africulturban, so they know I have the capacity and knowledge to do it.*
> **Saman:** *Like the technical side?*
> **Am Kana:** *Yeah, technical side, promotion, all of it, you see."*

Our talk moves on to his YUMA experience and Am Kana explains that Matador's strict and hierarchical mentoring was tough for him and the two other participants of YUMA's rap branch, due to the strong and assertive personality of the MC, who is more than 20 years older. Am Kana also relates the rigor with which they were taught to Matador being a pioneer of Senegalese rap's overtly political hardcore genre (to see how Am Kana resisted Matador's mentoring, cf. 6.1.1).

When teaching rapping in YUMA and elsewhere, Matador can be seen as somewhat of a counterpoint to Y?'s very open and egalitarian approach to mentoring.[138] Y? does not always have an overt political message, but his methods question hierarchies of learning through the cypher format and ensuing relationships. In contrast, Matador highly focuses his teaching on maintaining a professional and rebellious political stance in the writing, recording, and performance of rap lyrics. When asked

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[138] I did not have the chance to participate in one of Matador's workshops, as the ones on stage presence and performance were mostly in Wolof. So I draw most of my insight from the interviews and talks with him and the participants.

about it in an interview, Matador distanced himself from the cypher as a teaching tool:

> **Matador:** *"Well no, we don't do cyphers. We rather do workshops. They [the students] produce features and songs and everything."*
> **Saman:** *"And aside from writing and all of that, the mastery of rapping, and improvising, does that play a role as well, like freestyling?"*
> **Matador:** *"Yeaaah, they are all doing cyphers and freestyle and whatnot, but me, I coach them so that they become professional musicians. So, a professional musician, what is that? That goes from writing to the studio, to the technical sides of recording, the mastery of your voice. And on stage: how do you hold a microphone? How do you act on stage when performing? I'm working on these fields with them. Cause when you freestyle, you no longer respect any norm, and that becomes dangerous for a professional. Cause there is professional language when you're in music, you know."*

Matador sees the value he can add to youth's education as being outside of the improvisational space of the cypher, in which he says the youth are already practicing on their own without his interference. For him, this carries the danger of losing one's professional stance and political message. As one of the first highly political MCs of a whole generation of Senegalese rappers, Matador's approach is closer to a banking model teaching style with a clear goal: his students becoming professional, conscious, and activist MCs. This goes against Freire's dialogic method but brings quick results for some students and lets them use rap to transport critical messages. Matador supported his mentees in writing texts, recording, and working on their stage performance. Am Kana's colleagues could make use of Africulturban's own recording studio, label structures, and festivals (cf. 7.1.1) to release their albums, record music videos, and play concerts. The organizational setup of the Hip Hop hub thus allows for such mentoring, professionalization, and for the mentees to enter the rap scene. However, the YUMA graduates' involvement in Hip Hop went beyond rap.

Involving the Mentees in Scene Activities aside from Practicing Hip Hop Crafts

Most of Africulturban's organizers named YUMA one of their dearest projects. However, it did not work for all participants, as two or three of the first cohort's 15 (numbers varied during the interviews) dropped out of the program during the first year.[139]

I had already met Amadou Ba, who replaced one of the dropouts, upon my first visit to Dakar in early 2015 when he and Am Kana were still in the middle of taking the YUMA's daily and

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[139] They were often absent from class and had stayed among their former circle of criminal friends. Even communication attempts between Africulturban's staff and their families did not resolve this. Three other young people, who had not been to prison but had trouble in school, were chosen to fill this gap in YUMA's remaining two years.

day-long classes. Their co-students had been filming a vast show night and concert of Africul-turban's 10th anniversary with some of Senegal's most famous rap artists as headliners and a few DJing and dance showcases. I had performed there together with some friends from Dakar's dance scene, and I met Amadou Ba and two other YUMA participants when asking for the video they had shot of our showcase. They were initially timid when confronted with a Toubab (a more or less white Westerner), but were happy and eager to help and proudly showed me different videos and photos of one of the largest concerts of the whole year they had filmed and documented on their own. The combination of language barriers and shyness made an interview with these students almost impossible in 2015. When I meet Amadou Ba again in 2019, he is at Africulturban's head-quarters designing fliers for an upcoming event and happily agrees to the opportunity of an interview. In the meantime, he has gotten used to having Toubabs interested in the organization and has gained more confidence in interview situations. Amadou Ba has taken the graphic design speciali-zation within the YUMA and happily shows me some of the fliers and event ads for social media, which he has designed. Like this, almost all of the topics taught at YUMA were practically relevant to the mentees' future professional and scene endeavors.

To summarize, the different forms of mentoring by the many mentors in the YUMA were more institutionalized and tied to the hub organization's different branches. Some of these instances of mentoring, such as Matador's, were more hi-erarchical than the cypher-based type of mentoring practiced by Y?. This is some-what leveled out by there being multiple mentors/teachers in the YUMA. While cypher and Hip Hop craft-related teaching was rare within the YUMA's mentoring model, this program was designed to reintegrate stigmatized youth into society and the scene by teaching them practical skills relevant to their professional future. This factor is essential in the Senegalese context of austerity, large-scale youth unemploy-ment, and poverty. The organizers chose the classes according to the needs and demands of Dakar's sector of "cultures urbaines." This brings us to a strategy shared by many Hip Hop nonprofits: maintaining relationships with mentees by employing them.

5.4.4 Employment as an Extension of Mentoring Relationships and its Limits

According to Amadou Ba, Africulturban's employment rate of his 15 men YUMA cohort is high: *"it's like eight you know. There are two who do graphic design: me and the other guy. There are two who do beatmaking. There are like four who do photo and video now."* The young Amadou earns enough money to make a living off his job at Africulturban alone. The comparatively high funding (by Senegalese standards, the organizers are still constantly struggling) of the established neighborhood-based cultural hub or-ganization thus enables the possibility of maintaining the relationships and mentor-ing processes for longer periods of time, even after the classroom-based learning is over. This third type of continuing the mentorship relation through employment is quite common among Hip Hop non-profits and takes different forms. At Africul-turban, with its many festivals and activities around the year, the teaching artists

were able to transfer cultural and social capital to their mentees first. The YUMA participants were compensated financially only after having acquired the necessary education. By now, photography teacher Ina and her former YUMA students handle most of the social media activities. In addition to this, a few of the youth specialized in video production have founded their own company. According to one of the organizers, they are often hired to film weddings, religious and family ceremonies, and shoot documentary movies. To do the latter, they are also employed by their former teacher and mentor, filmmaker Fatou Kandé Senghor in her production studio, which cooperates not only with the likes of famous Senegalese filmmaker Sembene but also shoots independent productions, such as a documentary on Senegalese Hip Hop ("Wala Bok"). By choosing influential and established mentors, the organizers behind the YUMA thus ensured future perspectives for the graduates even after the official programming, which opened up career opportunities and pathways for many of the participating youth. Thus, the mentoring relationship extended beyond the three years of the YUMA's programming.

Y? with his more open and dialogic, Freirian way of mentoring also greatly impacted the career choices of his *"mentor-mentees"*. One of them now works for service providing Hip Hop non-profit BEATGlobal, while another teaches MCing to younger kids as an afterschool activity in a New York University Settlement. Two of them got an official role in a rap-based performance piece by the infamous underground New York event (and album series) *"Lyricist Lounge."* Being recognized by movie producers as *"that kid from the BEAT-Rhymers program,"* one of the youths was offered a lead role in a movie. In 2020 during the Corona Pandemic, Y? started renting out a performance space in New York through his newly founded non-profit "Creative Expressions." Here, his former mentee, beat- and filmmaker LJ (who also works in sound recording thanks to his mentor's network) and him were doing artistic programming. Sharing a portion of his income and further perfecting the skills they had learned with him, Y? has brought many of his former students as mentors into his own classes. Such employment, however, highly depends on the financing and wages of a particular organization.

The mentoring technique of employing the former mentees as mentors or in non-teaching positions is also practiced by the neighborhood-based cultural center of El Puente, and all of New York's service-providing non-profits. Rabbi Darkside says, *"one thing that's really amazing about the Hip Hop Re:education Project is that all of the young people that have touched us and we've touched are like working artists and artist-educators on the scene right now. And, you know, cats, we've had, like, 10-year long relationships with."* The fact of employing their former students enables them to firstly maintain the long relationships and secondly bridge the age divide between the older teaching artists and the students: "we're like getting a little more distant in age from the young people, so it becomes a little bit harder to be that cool teaching artist coming in. It's like, they, you know, these like 10 year-olds wanna see someone they can really relate to." By employing their former students, they achieve more of a peer-to-peer

learning, since the former students now turned teachers are closer to the youth's life worlds, musical taste, and pop culture knowledge.

Spiritchild and Rosa from Urban Art Beat are organizing Hip Hop-based workshops on Riker's island, i.e., New York's infamous prison island. They also employ their former students as mentors and thus resolve the issue of limited time frames of the after-school sector and workshops in prison. According to Rosa, these employment choices are political.

> **Rosa:** *"[these choices] were mostly made by Spirit, who is a lead mentor at many of our projects. He has the experience, and also he is able to mentor the mentors. […] We're also looking to create spaces where Maroon leadership is able to flourish... and by Maroon people that are outside the system you know? […] So we look for Black and Brown, we look for women formerly incarcerated. So this team's mentors [in the Hip Hop Herstory program] I know have spent time in jail. [...] And I think that like if [the school] knew that, like, they haven't asked yet for fingerprints or anything. […] that might get us kicked out. So they want us to talk about Black Lives Matter. They don't always want us to enact it"*

Even though Urban Art Beat as Africulturban employs formerly incarcerated people as facilitators, they do not have the same resources as the large cultural hub organization in Dakar. While the small, politically radical non-profit from NYC cannot provide the YUMA's full-time employment, they have nevertheless found ways to keep the relationships and the mentorship intact, even after their mentees get out of prison.

One of those strategies was to set up home studios and invite the young men and women there to record once they had left prison. Another strategy are their events, *"Open Mic Soul Shares,"* where they provide an open stage for anyone to express themselves through their art forms, or *"Communiversities,"* where they watch movies and discuss political and personal issues. Thanks to Spiritchild's political orientation, the young mentors and mentees are invited to join movement activities, such as reading groups on the prison industrial complex or entire books, such as *"Maroon the Implacable"* by political prisoner Russell Maroon Shoatz[140]. The organizers maintain direct contact with Shoatz and have – with their young mentees and mentors – collectively written collective letters to him and other political prisoners. They have been taking part in marches for the liberation of all political prisoners, as well as in Black Lives Matter protests. Through the organizing with former Black Panthers, Urban Art Beat also involves the mentors in free food kitchens and other remnants of the Panther's original survival programs, homeless relief activities, and trainings against racialized police violence.

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[140] This collection was compiled and edited by Spiritchild's Asian American political mentor, community activist, organizer, and artist Fred Ho. The book combines Marxist, feminist, indigenous, ecological, and anarchist perspectives.

The mentoring here contains more explicit political education and organizing, and as a multi-tiered program, the mentees who get to mentor also have to undergo such a formative process. The organization's reach is smaller than with Africulturban's mentoring programs. In terms of personal involvement and depth of political education, however, Urban Art Beat carries an immense meaning to those involved, and their relative financial independence enables a more radical positioning.

The employment strategies of the various non-profits do offer job opportunities for some participants. However, their generation's perspectives are not looking as great. I asked Y?'s mentees what they were doing now 3-4 years after their class with him. They responded that:

> **Daniel:** *Shit, I'm surviving...*
> **LJ:** *we're all surviving.. that's the New York shit. it's like. You... what are you supposed to do in this city? You're going to get like a 9–5 job working at like a fucking deli, or some corporate office? Or you wanna be an artist? They push that so far away, like, with the gentrification, especially like this area […] It was fucking hooded out and scary to be there […] now it's expensive over here. It's just everyone's getting pushed east, and we're still living here in the shit of it. […] Don't get me started bro.*
> **Daniel:** *You worded it right. […] I don't know if I speak for all of us sitting here when I say, like, you know what's going on around the city, you know, it's just… it's overwhelming.*

Being mentored by Y? instilled a deep yearning for the young men to become full-time artists. They are, however, very conscious of the lack of economic opportunities to practice their art in one of the most expensive cities on the globe. The employment opportunities in the non-profit realm mentioned above are real but precarious. They remain exceptional, individual solutions to larger macroeconomic problems of a growing wealth divide, gentrification, climate, housing and employment crises. None of the young men saw a real solution in college education either, because of the fees and resulting debt, which as Daniel put it: "shit ruins lives. for real tho like that's a real trap [agreement by all others]." The mentees I have met, however, were all highly grateful to their mentors, who had enabled their Hip Hop learning.

> **Daniel:** *"in the most literal sense, I think, like, I'll state like to this day like Y? really saved my life, […] the love and passion I have for music, like I really don't know if I'd find it the way I did without him. […] he just gave me a path. And I just figured it out. Like I was like 'This is it!' And I just really appreciate that. Because to this day I still write, I record, I plan on doing this as like a long term career!"*

In a state of capitalism in the US, where many career options are either unavailable or devoid of meaning and alienating to a generation with declining socioeconomic perspectives, becoming a Hip Hop practitioner can provide guidance, meaning, and purpose in life. This individual perspective holds especially true as long as no

collective perspective of transforming society and creating meaningful change is available. Thus, while the "life-saving" might not be taken literally in a material sense, it shows the emotional and spiritual meaning of the craft and the personal growth for the young artist.[141]

Conclusion & Perspectives of Hip Hop Mentoring in Classrooms

In this subchapter, we have looked at different types of mentoring and the institutional setups. Overall, Hip Hop education and mentoring need long periods of time – not always a given in classroom-based settings. The non-profit organizers find different institutional solutions, such as long-term cooperation with high schools or securing funding for the three-year-long YUMA. Many HH non-profits employ former mentees as mentors to guide new students. Hierarchies and formats of mentoring differ from more egalitarian ones towards more hierarchical formats and sometimes can be institutionalized in fixed programs and even serve resocialization purposes after prison. They redistribute different forms of Hip Hop specific capital and open job opportunities for some. Most of these mentoring instances remain exceptional, individual solutions to structural problems. They, however, can provide meaningful relationships of learning, new identities, and collective practices for the participating youth and teachers.

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[141] Dimitriadis (2001) in his ethnographic study of the reception of Hip Hop (rap music, Hip Hop influenced movies) by poor Black youth in came to the conclusion – against his own assumption – that their class position plaid a far larger role of the everyday lives, problems and identities of the young people than Hip Hop. I argue, however, that the meaning of Hip Hop is considerably higher for young people who via their Hip Hop education have become active practitioners instead of only fans of the music and identify as active parts of the culture.

Tab. 3: Hip Hop Mentoring in Classrooms

Aspect	Mentoring Institutionalization/Conversion into Classroom
Mentor is for life (ideal), accompanies mentees in emotional depth/life advice	I. Y?: > cooperation with BEATGlobal/high school for 4-year- relationship II. YUMA: > daily school setting enabled a 3-year-long relation with mentees III. Employment of mentees: > Employment enables relationship beyond the program
Peer2Peer mentoring on an eye to eye level > those who have more experience, share it	I. Y?: > cypher dialogical tool reverses roles of mentor-mentees, empowers > Introduces mentees into scene settings & levels out hierarchies II. YUMA: > "Mentoring & Social Living" learning from others' problem-solving III. Employment of mentees: > levels out hierarchies and ensures more of a peer-to-peer teaching
Mentor shares social & (sub-) cultural capital/Mentor as role model for artistry & career	I. Y?: > former mentees invited as mentors (shares income and contacts) > connects them with recording studios and scene contacts/shows II. YUMA: > only professionals as teachers for networking and reasons III. Employment of mentees: > Africulturban: Hip Hop hub = work for YUMA graduates > mentors in educational service providers employ former mentees
Sharing aspirational capital > Believing in mentees' abilities/challenge them	I.Y?: > jam sessions with professional musicians + scene performances. II: YUMA: > photography teacher Ina organizes exhibition with her students; >Rap mentees record and perform III. Employment of mentees: > After few years, the mentees are trusted enough to teach others
Mentor shares sub-cultural knowledge: concerning artistic craft and Hip Hop culture	I. Y?: > practices with his mentees on eye-to-eye level, > invites peers > cooperation with other orgs for Hip Hop history (cf. Chapter 6) II. YUMA: > MC Matador shares rap & HH knowledge (cf. Chapter 6) III. Employment of mentees as teachers
Consensual, learning, both sides have to agree on Mentoring	I. Y?: > focus on relationship first; no censoring of rap lyrics; small hierarchy II. YUMA: > students required to apply; are there on their own will III. Employment of mentees: > more eye-to-eye relationship; both profit from cooperation

6 "Pushin' the Message in Classrooms": Values, Curricula, & Final Performances

After analyzing some of the most important practices and spaces and thus the forms of classroom-based Hip Hop teaching and learning, we will now look at how the pedagogues and their learners transmit content and which type of messages they transport. Such messages include Hip Hop values, such as its hard work and political ethos. The first subchapter analyzes how the pedagogues guide the learning process between the two conflicting values of a strong artistic and political Foundation vs. "welcoming every contribution" (6.1). In addition, institutionalization processes are analyzed by looking at how pedagogues formalize their knowledge in curricula. Thus in 6.2, I will present different types of purely artistic or more theoretical Hip Hop curricula and how they are further developed and put into practice. Next, in 6.3, we will look at how teaching artists develop integrated and social justice curricula and the role that social movements play in this process. The following subsection 6.4 will analyze how teaching artists integrate Hip Hop history into their curricula to tell more of a political story. This section also focuses on the strategies with which pedagogues navigate Hip Hop's many contradictions. Finally, section 6.5 will discuss final shows and proves to round off the learning process and perform what was learned. This will also include a focus on potential instances of censorship. But let us start by looking at how Hip Hop pedagogues balance out the HHC's conservative vs. innovative values in the classroom.

6.1 Conservation vs. Innovations: How Foundation & Political Messages Shape Hip Hop Teaching

Foundation is not moves, people think that 'Oh I got Foundation' and they throw a little sweep and do a swipe and do a little thing, you know, chair freeze [all basic breaking movements] and says 'I got Foundation', but Foundation isn't a move." B-boy pioneer and innovator Ken Swift of New York's second generation is accredited with having created many of today's foundational moves. He goes on to define Foundation instead as *"the combination of the mental approach, philosophies, the attitude, the rhythm, style and character combined with the move."*
(**Bboy Ken Swift on Foundation 2009**).

"Keep the essence that it's about creating something from nothing. […] it's always changed. That's why […] true Hip Hop essence doesn't have one sound. […] a lot of these purists need to get their head out their ass because their time has changed, and they have to allow the young people to teach them. I think why I was blessed is I was taught by a younger generation" **MC Y? on Hip Hop's Essence**

These two statements already illustrate the tension between conservation and innovation within Hip Hop. On the one hand, respecting and building on aesthetic and cultural traditions is a pillar of the culture, as described by Ken Swift for breaking, i.e. mastering Foundation's *"philosophies, the attitude, the rhythm, style and character"* and basic moves. On the other hand, MC Y? states how Hip Hop from the get-go has been about innovation and *"creating something from nothing."* Neither of these two highly creative practitioners ultimately represents only the traditionalist or the innovative side, but – as most Hip Hop pedagogues – combine both approaches in themselves and their teaching. The *"purists"* mentioned by Y? are prevalent not only in Hip Hop music (rap, DJing, beatmaking, etc.) but equally so in style writing, breaking, and other Hip Hop dances. Versatile and innovative dancer and writer Amigo (co-founder of Flying Steps Crew) calls these *"purists"* who only repeat classic steps *"the fundamentalists."* This satirical wordplay critiques their religious rigor as they act as Hip Hop's conservative missionaries by studying, repeating, and preaching the fundamentals, i.e., the "only correct"/old school way of doing things with little to no room for creativity.

When brought into the classroom, the extreme "fundamentalist" case equates to the banking model Hip Hop education.[142] According to Freire (1971, p. 80) such an approach leads to domination instead of freedom, since learners are *"not called upon to know, but to memorize the contents narrated by the teacher. [...] Hence in the name of the 'preservation of culture and knowledge' we have a system which achieves neither true knowledge nor*

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[142] I experienced such a case when visiting an NYC pioneer's breaking class. He asked us to perform a basic toprock step (Indian Crossover). I had worked hard to add a Bounce, similar to Hip Hop standup dancing. He did not let this variation pass ("No, this ain't correct") and only continued on after I removed the bounce and performed the step very stiffly.

true culture." This normative position also somewhat applies to Hip Hop, where personal creations and contributions were required initially to stand out in the scene. I argue that Hip Hop pedagogues' attitudes towards Foundation, mastery, and innovation are always somewhere along a spectrum of "conservation vs. innovation." In the classroom, the value of conservation translates into studying, mastering, and practicing Hip Hop's historical and aesthetic basics. The value of innovation instead translates into expecting above-all honest participation in the cultural formats with new creations. This is expressed in the principle of "every contribution is welcome" regardless of its quality or adherence to classic Hip Hop aesthetics. For most pedagogues, these two poles of conservation and innovation are not a question of either or but one of balance. I argue that their stance depends largely on what they understand as Hip Hop's Foundation. Let us thus take a closer look at this central concept.

After hearing Ken Swift, i.e. a practitioner's view, let us see what Hip Hop scholars have to say about Foundation. Cultural Anthropologist Schloss (2009, p. 12) defines it as *"an almost mythical set of notions about b-boying [breaking] that is passed from teacher to student. In addition to the actual physical movements, it includes the history of the movements and the form in general, strategies for how to improvise, philosophy about dance in general, musical associations and a variety of other subjects"*

Rappe and Stöger (2017, p. 148 ff.) further distinguish three *"fields of competence"* of Foundation:

1. *"Knowledge,"* i.e., the 5th element of Hip Hop culture, which includes *"explicable elements, such as authenticated knowledge about terms, significant actors, places, music, historical events and practices of breaking,"* as well as one's own identity and relation to the culture.

2. *"Strategies of improvisation and, above all, style"* the latter meaning one's personalized expression.

3. The *"ethical dimension of Foundation [which] includes elements, such as respect for the creators of the dance or certain movements, a critical attitude towards the commercialization of Hip Hop, or the principle of 'each one teach one'[all quotes translated by S.H.]."*

While these definitions stem from only one element of breaking, I argue that they can almost entirely be transferred onto Hip Hop's other artistic practices. Whether it is style writing, MCing, DJing, or breaking, all of these elements share the principles of mastering basic techniques, developing an original style and flow, and knowing about and respecting the historical origins and practices of the respective Hip Hop art. In addition, I argue that there are different types of Foundation concerning aesthetic understandings and the third, ethical dimension mentioned by Rappe and Stöger, which are specific to certain subgenres, as well as individual and collective orientations. For example, for a whole generation of Senegalese rappers adhering to the hardcore rap genre, a political message is part of their Foundation.

In the remainder of this subchapter, I will discuss some cases of classroom-based Hip Hop teaching and learning, which illustrate different points on this spectrum of conservation vs. innovation. These range from political rap foundations (6.1.1), a culture of high expectations (6.1.2), welcoming every contribution (6.1.3),

house dance pedagogies (6.1.3/4/5) to DJ foundation (6.1.6). How does the teaching artists' understanding of Foundation influence their classroom teaching? Do the DJs, MCs, dancers, and writers rely more on a traditionalist or innovative understanding of their skill? What are the students' possible reactions? What is the role of basics in teaching and how are they taught in a way that ideally enables an intrinsically motivated learning process, where the learners eventually take charge?

6.1.1 Political Rap Foundation, Freestyle, or How to Resist a Teacher

"Today, I'd say, those who have activism in their music, it is those who are part of the old generation. You can see that with the new generation, the involvement, the activist component is no longer there… They are less and less activist. And activism is political and social, it's the center. They talk about everything and nothing and they are just interested in making money, [...] for themselves and that becomes dangerous because almost everywhere, even where Hip Hop was born, in the United States, they have fallen into the trap of the system. And that's because they prefer the rap which has absolutely nothing to say, which is not activist in any sense. And it is this activism, which makes for the fact that even today people talk about Senegalese Hip Hop. Because economically, we do not carry any weight. And thus, it is the activism for which we are still respected and listened to."
Senegalese MC Matador on Rap Foundation

Being a pioneering political MC from Senegal and the founder of cultural hub organization Africulturban, Matador is a true traditionalist with a specific set of highly political Hip Hop values. He juxtaposes his high moral standards against the new generations' and the US mainstream rap's focus on money and materialist gains. By stating how "they have fallen into the trap of the system," he proudly positions himself as part of a particular Senegalese strand of highly political and activist Hip Hop. His foundation, however, is not only built on these political values alone. Matador has practiced every Hip Hop art form, starting with breaking during the 1980s and more of a focus on style writing and rapping from the 1990s on. Thus, Matador is a defendant of Hip Hop culture for countering societal ills. The MC, who has very animated live performances and whose b-boy roots show in his stage choreography, also teaches MCing regularly within many Hip Hop projects, such as the YUMA's formerly incarcerated youth.

Matador's political and holistic view of Hip Hop, i.e., his Foundation, structures his pedagogy. When teaching rapping at the YUMA and at different institutions, he focuses on professionalization and sincerity. Matador distances himself from the cypher as a teaching tool, since "*[when you are] freestyling, you no longer respect any norm and that becomes dangerous for a professional*". Instead, he has a clear order of teaching foundational aspects of writing, recording, mastering the voice and rhyme schemes, as well as stage performance (cf. 5.4.3). This can be seen to stand either in

opposition to, or complement HHC's autodidactic and collective processes of peer-to-peer scene learning of cyphers, battles, etc.

While Matador's linear and top-down approach can provide a quick path to success and artistic mastery, it also somewhat conflicts with the cultural narrative of Hip Hop artists being fully independent and having made it entirely on their terms. How does this hierarchical approach resonate with the learners?

Some of the students I have met told me that this approach worked very well for them. This does not apply to YUMA graduate Am Kana, however, who had started as a b-boy and then moved on to freestyle rhyming.

He then experienced three years of beatmaking and Matador's rapping. He often mentioned his utmost gratitude, but also pointed toward some of the conflicts with his former rap teacher:

> **Am Kana:** *"the classes were fun. Even though with Matador it's tough a bit, because he is hardcore, as we say [political subgenre of Senegalese rap]. But with time, he understood us, and over time we exchanged and we actually tried a bit, because with his character he is a little tough, but it is not because he is someone bad, but because he wanted us to be able to do what we wanted to do.[...]*
> **Saman:** *And what did you guys do during class?*
> **Am Kana:** *During class, we did texts. We went to the studio and recorded songs. And it included performance: We performed, we wrote texts, and recorded. We just took it like that. At the same time, we also learned how to program beats […] with like the basics."*

Am Kana's description of Matador's tough character and high expectations are somewhat in opposition to the fun of his own freestyle practice. The young practitioner has to a certain extent resisted his teacher's anti-freestyle message of professional writing and sticks to a different Foundation within rap, which mainly rests on incorporating his surroundings, objects, people and self-bravado into his improvised rhymes.[143] Not adhering to Matador's standards of professionalism through writing and always carrying a political message,[144] Am Kana was nevertheless able to accept other lessons from his teacher and reconcile some of Matador's views on Hip Hop with his own abilities.

One such lesson focuses on Hip Hop's cultural narrative, which for Matador always comes first: *"I can tell whether the author [of rap lyrics] is a Hip Hoppa, or whether it's a regular writer because when you have Hip Hop culture, there is a specific way of writing. And that is felt via the culture and when we learn we always begin with the culture, what you have to understand and which sensible points to know."*

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[143] Cf. a freestyle performance of his: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ZdP6z03deA

[144] While he resisted this main message, Am Kana is still highly grateful for the privileged position the YUMA and Matador's training put him in: He had received much social and sub-cultural capital via the organization's network, learning about Hip Hop history and ethics from Matador. Having been to prison, he credits the YUMA for his belief in himself and his ability to "to boost myself," i.e., his aspirational (Yosso, 2005) and psychological capital (Ortner, 2008).

Like Matador, Am Kana takes great pride in his craft and its historical legacies. Sitting in front of the MCU, the MC said he had prepared his mind and body and worked his skills for a long time to arrive at his current state (the fact he had started as a b-boy was one central point in this story). He thus shares not only the hard work ethic of Hip Hop with his former teacher but also the historical founding narrative of Hip Hop. Am Kana told me about the origins of the culture and that the art of freestyling was the only way to perform all of Hip Hop's elements in the beginning before the rap industry existed. He had learned about this history from Matador and the rest of Africulturban's team and said that via his improvisational approach, he was true to Hip Hop's historic essence. This firm orientation towards this cultural narrative is the shared and common ground between Am Kana and Matador. It shows that he did not fully resist Matador's teaching but drew his own conclusions from it. In summary, it can be said teacher and student differ concerning the 2nd craft-related and 3rd ethical dimension of Rap Foundation but share more of the 1st field of competence concerning *"knowledge"* (cf. Rappe & Stöger, 2017, p. 148 f.). The Hip Hop hub Africulturban and its president and teaching artist Matador are thus able to keep Hip Hop's mythologized founding narrative alive and provide young people with more agency via mastering and developing Foundation in the different crafts and gaining recognition for it.

A counterpoint to Am Kana's partial resistance to Matador's Foundation can be seen in the other two YUMA graduates who participated in Matador's rap class. Abdel G and MS Leader have been featured in music videos against child abuse produced by Matador through the non-profit Plan International (which organizes sponsorships (via donations) of children in the global South and educational initiatives). These young MCs have also produced and released political songs and albums via Africulturban's label and booking structures. They regularly perform at the organization's festivals and thus share more along all three dimensions of Rap Foundation with their teacher.[145]

6.1.2 No Checklist: How Y? Welcomes Every Contribution First and Injects Fundamentals Later

Y?'s approach to welcoming every contribution first and injecting fundamentals later is somewhat of a counterpoint to the previous examples. To fully grasp Y?'s pedagogy concerning Foundation in rapping and beatmaking, let us start with another contrasting example. In the following, his former students from the 4-year-long Beat Explorers class at a Manhattan high school describe different art and music programs and criticize the Department of Education, their school, and art teachers:

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[145] Cf. The song against child abuse through Plan International: https://youtu.be/0R55M4Mf7uA and an episode of "Les Rebelles du Micro" with Abdel G and Africulturban's HQ:
https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=5uDiNTwLMqs (last access 04/01/2021).

> **LJ :** *the DOE [Department of Education] didn't want to give enough funding to the school and then the school can't give enough funding to this class[146] cause they would give more attention.. and the school would claim that they cared. but they weren't...*
> **Matthew:** *And they'd rather give money for like err dumb-ass art projects and like bands that cover… And don't get me wrong... Bands are dope, but bands that COVER music...*
> **LJ:** *some bullshit, bro. Remember Olivia [name changed], the arts teacher, she used to make us do fucking bullshit..*
> **Edwin:** *I wouldn't want to knock somebody's arts. […] I mean some people find their way through like drawing and shit but like*
> **LJ:** *Bro fuck that shit... She... brooo, I drew some shit and then she was like, "Oh, that's not it" because she had a checklist of things we had to have in our art.*
> **Edwin:** *Yo for real*
> **LJ:** *And if I didn't meet that checklist, even if I was happy with my thing, I wouldn't get a grade on it. So I'd have to add to it and then fuck it up just like...*
> **Edwin:** *She did that to me and I noticed from jump like when I went to class I knew she didn't like me..*

The young adults describe what they see as a hierarchy established by the school and the funding state structure between other art projects and their Hip Hop class with Y?. This is in line with a racist and classist structuring of so-called high vs. low or popular cultures.[147] The five young artists, except for one, are all Black or of color and are clearly aware of such a societal hierarchy and pressures. They thus perceive such lack of funding as discrimination, which is in line with how they describe they were given the run-down cellar for rehearsals.

At the same time, Y?'s former students establish a clear hierarchy between different art projects, which aligns with Hip Hop cultural values. First of all, when Matthew points out how incredible it is to value the other band and musical projects higher than their Beat Explorer class, he hints at a specific taboo in Hip Hop – i.e. that of "biting." Biting means copying someone's signature moves, bars, scratches, or letters, or even worse, someone else's entire style – i.e., their Hip Hop personality. According to Hip Hop's originality principle, you always have to bring something new and unique to the table stylistically and "be yourself," i.e. "authentically" express (/exaggerate) your personality via your style and art (cf. Chang, 2006; Rappe & Stöger, 2017; Schloss, 2009). Thus, the young artists see a band covering others' songs as absurd compared to their original music.

The second insult they perceive of coming from the school's side is an art teacher telling them what their art should look like by adhering to a "checklist."

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[146] This is not entirely correct, as Y? stated, he had quit his post on his terms.
[147] Hip Hop as a predominantly Black and Brown popular-cultural phenomenon derived from Afrodiasporic practices is seen by state authorities as having a lower worth than European traditional "high" culture, such as opera, theater, classical music etc., which specifically becomes clear when looking at state funding of culture which mostly goes towards such "high" cultural institutions (cf. Dufresne, 1992; Rose, 1994, 2008). This somewhat also holds true for "white" popular culture.

Scharenberg (2001) describes how large parts of Hip Hop's artistic expression stem from the self-positioning of a Black Urban Underclass against the Black and white middle classes in a racially stratified system that marginalizes and discriminates against them in terms of cultural recognition as well as on a socioeconomic level.[148] When the attitude and mindset of such a cultural rebellion meets a strict teacher, who follows a predetermined checklist (which does not represent Hip Hop aesthetical values) and tells the students off, the societal dimension of such corrections by an "irrational authority"[149] reinforces the perceived discrimination. Since in HHC, your art is an expression of your identity, the middle-class teacher does not just criticize their art when following her checklist. Instead, the students of color had to perceive it as negating their life worlds and identities.

In contrast to the checklist and to banking model approaches of Hip Hop learning, teaching artist Y? relies on first affirming learners and their contributions to build relationships. The freestyle MC also has a different understanding of what artistic foundation means and where to find it: *"Okay, so the first fundamental... yeah, the first thing that I do is I let people know that I'm not here to teach them. I'm here to show them something what lies within them."* Again, this understanding of the knowledge already in the learners matches his Freirian cypher-based pedagogy. Congruent with culturally relevant pedagogy (cf. Akom, 2009) Y? always asks *"the students what do they want to do and when they were more into beats I lead the class more to beats."* While Y? follows the learner's interest, his ensuing approach evolved from trial and error. Early during his teaching career, he tried to teach in a top-down and hierarchical manner, presenting the youth with a clear set formula, i.e. a foundation to master. For example in beatmaking, he would instruct the learners to follow the easiest formula of putting the kickdrum on the first and the third count and says he *"failed miserably"*. Instead, he realized that what worked better with the youth was to compose according to their emotions:

> **Y?:** *"I would say 'what do you feel like?' I'd give them like a kick drum on a pad. So 'how do you feel?' and some kid might be like, 'boom, boom, boom, boom,' [imitates an up-tempo techno-like drum pattern] And then some other kid might be like [imitates a slow rhythm], and I would allow them to compose based on feeling... then, later on, I would break down the technicalities., like 'Oh, that's 70 beats per minute, that's 120 beats per minute.' And then I would play songs and references that they connected to, I always sought to find something that they connected to versus me saying this is this."*

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[148] The fact that a lot of Hip Hop music and art forms are so vulgar, their insults, machismo, the bragging and boasting, as well as the playing with criminal images has to be seen as a reaction to a long history of structural racism and exclusion. Thus, Hip Hop's "ghettocentricity" (cf. George, 1994) (i.e. putting the values of the ghetto and its independence at the center of one's worldview) has to be seen as a rebellion against middle class aesthetic and moral preferences.

[149] Erich Fromm defines the difference between rational and irrational authority as the first being grounded in intellectual or skill-based capacities, while the latter is socially predetermined without such legitimization (cf. Fromm, 1998)

Thus, Y? always determines the foundation of his teaching through dialogue with the students. Initially, he welcomes every contribution, and only afterward starts to *"interject fundamentals. With music, the fundamentals are melody, rhythm, pitch, words, and then understanding that and how to compose something based on your feeling."*

Y?'s former students all agreed that the fundamental skill of counting bars has helped them enormously. However, when first confronted with this fundamental according to a right/wrong binary, they perceived it as a break with his otherwise fun and welcoming approach. Mastering Foundation and its fundamentals thus have to be seen as hard work and can endanger the learner's interest if they are too difficult and not scaled in a progressive manner. The fact that Y? only introduces fundamentals later makes for his successful approach and long-term relationships with the young artists.

Instead of focusing too much on the top-down banking model style of teaching fundamentals and a checklist or a limited aesthetic framework, it was one of Y?'s proclaimed goals to create a space where the kids could learn from each other. His students describe the ultimate guiding principle of Y?'s class as enabling them to make their own artistic decisions:

> **Saman:** *And like flow-wise... did he teach you like, did you guys study like some of the masters of the craft and different rhyme patterns or stuff like that?*
> **Daniel:** *we just brought in like... He would just like ask us what we listening to on our free time [...]*
> **Edwin:** *he wasn't trying to create artists that sound a certain way. [...] he was creating artists that sound their way. … We're not gonna force you to.. here's a thing that helps you, I'm not gonna force you to spit like this, if you this or like that. here's what I know, is what err... what helped me improve, here's what improved other people. Do as you please. And … the class was versatile*
> **Daniel:** *man you kind of sound like him a bit*

This freedom of creative expression is implicitly in line with Y?'s understanding of Hip Hop's essence: as *"evolutionary spirit."* He contradicts Matador and other traditionalist and Foundation-oriented teachers: as he states that aesthetically it is essential to not:

> **Y?:** *"You don't want to become the guy, who, when you hear trap is like 'what's this?' then you're actually more like the oppressors then. Because yo […] guess what, you know these kids are internet wired[…] like I said they can listen to Odd Future and Justin Bieber at the same time. We're not here to judge man. And also like they get inspired by certain things. So do not stifle their creativity. Look at jazz. When jazz became bebop 'dududu' people were like 'That's not... that's noise!' When they took off the suits and Miles started growing an Afro, Coltrane came on, and Bird was coming up. People didn't get it. They were like, 'what's this? This not real jazz.' I feel Hip Hop is getting.. it's at that level... like a lot."*

Y? thus, stresses the similarities to generational and aesthetic debates in other art forms, such as jazz. For him keeping an open mind is the core of Hip Hop's original form as innovative artistic creations by a young generation, i.e. *"something from nothing"*. In contrast, Matador's more traditionalist understanding of Foundation builds on political subgenres of rap music and Hip Hop's narrative of the different elements belonging together. Y? shares the love for the multi-elemental creative spirit of 1970s Hip Hop, Y? but instead of only preserving these traditions, he sees their evolution as Hip Hop's core. Therefore exchanging with the youth and their musical preferences hold possible lessons for himself.

It becomes clear that there are different approaches to teaching rap concerning fundamentals, how one should understand Hip Hop, and its boundaries for creative expression. I argue that the pedagogues design their classes from their understanding of HHC and their element's foundation and draw from their lifeworld, worldview, and external influences such as social movements. Matador's Foundation of political rap thus can be seen as one end of an artistic spectrum. In contrast, for Y? on the other end, the foundation of Hip Hop lies precisely in its openness and every artist discovering their approach. Without passing a value judgment, these approaches serve a different purpose. Matador's ultimate goal is to transform society by teaching the youth how to write political lyrics, engage in social activism, and preserve HHC's historical "holistic purity," including a political foundation. In contrast, Y?'s goal is to transform generational and learning hierarchies into more fluid formats so that both sides can learn from each other and grow a cultural practice that transcends genre boundaries.

But what does this spectrum and its tensions look like in other artistic elements and their pedagogies?

6.1.3 House Dance Foundation: Stylistic Freedom vs. the Fundamentals

Concerning breaking, much has been written on foundation and ways and spaces of practicing, learning, and teaching it (cf. Fogarty, 2012b; Johnson, 2009; Schloss, 2009). In chapter 5.3, we have looked at culture-specific ways of moderated peer-to-peer settings of teaching breaking. To gain another perspective, we will look at how the spectrum of foundation vs. freedom of expression is handled in another dance style in the following. This dance is not always classified under the umbrella of Hip Hop dance forms[150], but is practiced by many Hip Hop dancers and featured

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[150] A lot of house dancers would not classify house as a Hip Hop dance style, since it has its own music, history, and overlapping but different communities of origin with house originally being practiced among Black and queer communities in NYC and Chicago. There is an ongoing discussion of how to name and classify the different and interrelated Afrodiasporic dance styles. The umbrella term of "urban dance" is often criticized for its subtle racism of negating the Black origins and characteristics of these dance forms. Other umbrella terms such as topstyles or funk styles exclude certain dance forms, such as breaking (not a topstyle) or krumping (no funk music base). The term "Afrodiasporic dance forms" is too academic and does not meet the realities of these popular dance styles practiced all around the world.

at many Hip Hop dance events: house dance. House has developed independently of and parallel to Hip Hop's cultural format as an informal party phenomenon of Black and Brown and, later on, integrated communities. Dance historian Sommer (2001, p. 73) makes out the specific qualities of house, which mirror Hip Hop's dance styles and which are characteristic of many Afrodiasporic dance forms more generally: *"Side-stepping the luscious loss of self of the raves, the goal of the die-hard househead is to be a part of the group yet maintain a sense of individuality—to seek the good vibe and hit the zone through the physical rapture of hard dancing."* The importance of this sense of individuality and the occasional circle or cypher format are clear parallels between Hip Hop and house dancing. After its beginnings in the early 1980s in New York and Chicago, house dancing was influenced by different Hip Hop dance styles and capoeira, jazz tapdancing, etc. While House dance was practiced early on in an atmosphere of openness inside a few clubs and lofts, there was somewhat of an overlap with the gay and queer vogueing culture.[151] In the following, we will look at how house dance teachers differ in their approach and in the value they attach to the dance's foundation and fundamentals or to its openness.

6.1.4 Junious' Foundational and Structured Approach

When I entered the dance studio of DC-based tightly knit dance collective Urban Artistry for Junious 'House' Brickhouse's "Applied House Dance" class the "Intro to House Dance"[152] had just finished. Junious has mastered many different dance styles but is most recognized for his accomplishments in house dancing. He started his "Applied House Dance" class by putting on some house music and welcoming the group of 14 adults, who were diverse concerning ethnicity and gender. Whenever Junious switched tracks, he also gave some context on the song, whether it had the status of being a classic or where it was from, thereby teaching some of the dance's musical foundation. The first exercise he proposed is sometimes called "wall to wall," and participants take turns in leading the rest of the group through the large studio with one particular house step to enable mimetic learning[153]. According to Junious' explanation, one has truly mastered a step when one can perform it traveling across the dance floor. The rest of the group followed the leader with the same step to the best of their ability. You could easily follow if you already knew the foundational step or similar steps. If not, you would have to try and mimic the step as well as possible to follow the group through the space. After 20 minutes, everyone had shared a step to learn from one another. This exercise

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[151] NYC's pioneering Hip Hop crew "Mop Top" has mastered Hip Hop new/freestyle, house, and other dance styles.

[152] At Urban Artistry's dance studio, the different dance styles are usually instructed along two levels: the "Intro to …" followed by an "Applied …" class. This is the case for breaking, house, Hip Hop, as well as popping and locking, etc. The first class consists of background knowledge, basic/foundational steps and drills (i.e. a combination of chosen steps, to be repeated, or "drilled" until they become second nature.) During the second "Applied …" class the emphasis is on methods of training, improvising and performing for more advanced dancers. The goal here is to apply the learned fundamentals to your own style and to different social contexts of dancing.

[153] Usually, house dance consists of very quick upbeat step patterns performed on the polyrhythmic house music.

forces everyone to take authority and lead the rest of the group through the space, instilling confidence in the dancers. At the same time, foundational steps are repeated and drilled in a fun, interactive manner, and the students broaden their repertoire. This way of learning is close to the original ways of learning within Afrodiasporic dance styles and other oral cultural practices, which is mimesis, i.e., learning through imitation (cf. Rappe & Stöger, 2017; Sidran, 1981). It enables more communication for cyphers and battles by training your eye to see the details of a performed step pattern and becoming able to pick it up, respond to, and add onto it (1-upping it). Such culture-specific teaching practices enable learning foundation in a playful and peer-to-peer setting. During the ensuing stretching, Junious explained his approach of "3 Ps," i.e.: "Performance, Practice, and Participation." Battles and shows would fall into the first category. Drilling, repeating steps, and going slow are part of the second P, and cyphering and sharing are part of the third. Junious said most people were not conscious of when they were doing what. One had to be really clear about which P to focus on in which setting to progress and understand one's own approach in the dance. In Junious' view, a conscious approach to one's dance practice is a necessary step to gaining foundation.

He went on to explain that there had been many misconceptions about house culture and dance due to how people talked about it. Junious retold the mythical narrative of how in house dance, everyone was welcome everywhere, no matter how they moved, which from his point of view, was "simply not true." According to the experienced practitioner, "you will be judged, and people will talk shit about you if your shit is whack." From Junious' standpoint (and from a Hip Hop one), having skills is necessary to participate in the culture on an eye-to-eye level without being ridiculed. He went on to draw one conclusion concerning a path towards mastery: "It's all about evaluation because if you don't evaluate yourself, you'll stop making progress, and if you stop making progress, then you'll start making excuses, and then you'll stop dancing, and you'll stay at home, and your hair will fall out and then like your toenails will grow really long and…" he laughingly interrupts himself: "Sorry! This is just my personal nightmare." This half-serious joke is an expression of the Hip Hop principle of life-long learning, expressed in the "always a student" motto and where one's style is never finished but constantly evolving.

The second half of the class consisted of evaluations of showing and proving necessary for progress. First, we split into pairs, with one dancer going first and the other one filming their solo with one's phone. Junious told us to set a clear intention before the solo. After filming each other, we were supposed to honestly evaluate our performance (Junious: "Would you send this to the person you're dating?"). Afterward, short one vs. one dance battles were carried out, with everyone giving feedback. Hearing each other's evaluations is often used in dance classes to improve the dancers' performances, train the bystanders' ability to perceive certain qualities in other peoples' dance, and draw lessons towards one's own practice. The class closed with an open Cypher, which fulfilled the final P of participation.

The gist of Junious' masterclass was clear: Skills are necessary for cultural participation and professionalization. The narrative of house dance culture being "open to all" regardless of skill and cultural knowledge is not true and stands in the way of new dancers building a solid foundation in the dance form. He added in personal correspondence *"that this romanticized […] narrative can discourage deeper cultural understandings and connections to communities of practice. […] I believe these traditions to be* full of scholarship, worth learning before suggesting individualized perspectives."

What might seem like a rather hierarchical and meritocratic framing of the culture and foundation was counterbalanced by Junious' peer-to-peer learning methods. The class was collectively led in different formats, with group feedback and a focus on self-evaluation, which made building one's foundation more fun and more of an exchange than a tiring military exercise performed alone.

6.1.5 House is Free and Open – Amy Secada's Concept-Based Workshop

When I visited Dakar for the first time, members of one-element-based non-profit Kaay Fecc organized a free workshop by American dancer and choreographer Amy Secada, who dances many different styles, does martial arts, and instructs Yoga. Over 30 dancers showed up for the free class, which Amy began by highlighting the richness in various indigenous dances of Senegal. She stressed how everyone already had their own foundation inside themselves, and she would simply provide tools to find it. Somewhat contrary to Junious' position, she stressed that house dance was an originally free and open cultural phenomenon where all people of different ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, and eccentric dance styles and personalities came together. She said that the time of clearly defined boundaries and limits to one style was over and that instead, we should come as we were and combine all the movement we knew into our dance and that this was true to house's original spirit. She put on some house music and, after a quick warm-up, instructed a combination of open methods often used in contemporary dance classes and which I had not known before and which opened up new routes and pathways in my dance. Instead of giving us specific steps, she first told us to spread across the room and dance on our spot without touching the others. She then defined ten levels of movement, with one meaning we should be lying flatly on the floor and level ten being in the air, jumping or doing flips, or cartwheels and handstand elements. She would then name a level from 1 to 10 for us to dance on and switched them quickly. She then added another layer of dancing, either fast or slow, hard or soft, in our movement on that level for us to follow.

As a next exercise, she let us guide our movement by generating speed from our arms and following with the rest of the body. Amy finished the class with a comparatively short input of some specific moves on the floor and a cartwheel from Capoeira. While the class was advertised for house dance, Amy did not teach any house basics. Instead, she talked of the dance's history as party phenomenon characterized by explicit freedom of movement. Her purely concept-based teaching can be seen as an ideological counterpoint to Junious' approach[154] concerning foundation's dimensions of 1st cultural knowledge and 2nd of skills and style (cf. Rappe & Stöger, 2017, p. 148f.)

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[154] Junious is not dogmatic but stresses the importance of mastering the dance's basics for communication and preventing "shit-talking". He also pointed out the different ways of performing a style, which Urban Artistry documents and sustains (f. 7.3.1).

6.1.6 No Shortcuts to DJing Mastery/How Teaching Teaches the Teacher

DJ Perly, the first woman to win the prestigious US DMC Championships, teaches DJing at NYC's New School and states that this helps not only her students but also herself master the basics even better:

> **DJ Perly:** *"Whichever questions they [students] have, I'm here to help them as their lab instructor. So it's not just they're the students, I'm the teacher, I'm also the student because they're teaching me something about DJing. You know, they're teaching me how to explain things better. They're also teaching me how to, like, relearn everything and present it to them in an easier way that they can understand it, whereas where I was taught, it was like a whirlwind of information that was so hard to grasp."*

Making the knowledge more accessible reinforces the teacher's foundation as well. Hip Hop's "Each One Teach One" principle gains further meaning as teachers learn in their own classes. Perly must become conscious of and structure her teaching approach, thereby improving her technique.

When asked whether one had to have some foundation already before entering his class, DJ Gasga, who is teaching DJing in Dakar's banlieue, said: *"even someone who has never mixed in their life can join, because that is my goal, not to teach advanced students only, but even for someone who knows nothing, he can be coached to be a DJ, that is the motive. Three months are not enough to be a good DJ but it's enough to have some intellectual foundations on which you can build in the future."* Gasga says he can enable learners to progress independently in the scene by establishing a minimal foundation.

A proper foundation is essential in the initial stages of learning Hip Hop's technical and physical disciplines, such as DJing, breaking, or style writing, because more advanced techniques require a proper form in the basics to build on. NYC's Hip Hop teaching artist Rabbi Darkside says, *"I started DJing out in bars and clubs in like 2001 as well and never really had anybody give me any kind of instruction on the turntable. So when I did finally get to a point where I was able to, like, name techniques, right, like, know what certain scratches were, I had to unlearn a lot of bad habits"* Having a teacher show you proper movement form of DJing's basics (or any other Hip Hop element) can have a significant impact towards your further progress in the art form.

To gain such proper form, Gasga confirms that a clear teaching setup and structure is necessary:

> **DJ Gasga:** *"the basis of DJing is a mix, so everyday we do mixes, without looking at the screens. We play with a controller, just like this one a pioneer. And I shut off my computer screen and you will mix with your spirit and feeling, not the computer. […] Because tomorrow there'll definitely be DJs mixing with turntables, even if you have a screen telling you the beats per minute, you gain more control doing it by hand. […]. So step by step we do babyscratches, while the basis is still the mix you know. Before you become a good scratcher you have to know how to mix well. To find the right tempo."*

According to the Senegalese DJing champion of 2015, there is thus a clear order in which DJing techniques should be learned to properly progress.[155] To teach mixing and match the speeds of two records by ear and to be able to switch transition between songs, both Gasga and DJ Perly rely on doing it the traditional way, i.e. without the use of the computer.[156] As many other DJ teachers, the two expect their students to mix using a laptop and its technical shortcuts (pun intended). However, they see it as an essential part of DJ foundation to mix the traditional way without a screen. This fact is quite telling as keeping traditions alive is highly important in all Hip Hop art forms. With its mythical founding narrative, the culture has many conservative and preservationist aspects. Most teachers stress the importance of knowing the culture's history and carrying on such traditions as mixing without a screen serves the technical function of mastering the craft's foundation and also pays homage to HHC's beginnings.[157]

Digging / Bringing Something New to the (Turn-)Table

Concerning the choice of music, DJ Gasga takes

> *"all kinds of music, I don't have limits, because we are DJs, and we are not limited. But it is more Hip Hop than anything else. To explain the techniques, it is easier to use Hip Hop than other styles of music. […] [it can be] all kinds of Hip Hop: Senegalese, or from Mali or god knows what […] After we do afrobeat, dancehall, dirty south, trap, twerk, EDM, dubstep..."*

Thus, while learning DJing foundation, it is essential to scale the learning process and start with easy-to-manage Hip Hop songs and then progress to different genres. Apart from advancing in technical difficulty, there is another aspect to song and genre choice – originality.

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[155] There are different approaches of how to structure the learning and mastering of the basics. While for DJ Gasga, the mix comes first, Perly on the other hand, starts the other way around with *"the basics of scratching like the babies, the stabs, chirps, transformers and then for the advanced students, the basics of mixing and helping them mix on the one, dropping on the one, with the transitions, with the offset backspin or beatjuggles"*. Thus, there is not necessarily a shared consensus on Foundation and teachers scale and order their material differently.

[156] The two most common DJing programs to mix using the laptop and MP3s as well as turntables, are Serato and Tractor (the turntables then function as digital remote controllers). Both have the function to match the speed of two songs automatically, so that one just has to push a button to make a smooth transition from one to the next song.

[157] This can also be seen within the cult status of certain equipment, clothes, and tools as well as their brands, such as the Technics 1210 vinyl player, which has the perfect technical qualities for Hip Hop-style DJing. In style writing Montana spray cans, or in breaking Adidas sweatsuits, or classic break shoes, as well as fat laces always carry this cult status, because they posses technical or aesthetical qualities for practicing the art (e.g., the stripes on Adidas sweatpants accentuate foot- and legwork visually), and mark a purist statement towards carrying on Hip Hop traditions. Pioneering artist and traditionalist KRS-One (2009) even defines street fashion as one of many additional Hip Hop elements.

16-year-old Rookie DJ Mima from Dakar's banlieue, has participated in Africul-turban's all-female DJ classes "Galsen Woman Mix" and in the advanced classes with Senegalese DJ Pioneer Geebayss. She plays a broad genre mix, and when I asked her whether she chose her music herself, she responded:

> **Mima** *Sometimes, when Geebayss teaches us to mix, he tells us: 'take your songs!'. Like that it will be more difficult than the songs he gives us. I prefer Afrobeat, and yes, I like all the songs that go 'BOOM' [laughs]. That is why I like Afrobeat, and I mix it with Hip Hop and all. I like Mbalax (Senegal's most popular genre) only a little, but sometimes I try to use it as well."*

Geebayss states that he specifically asks his students to choose and play their music, not only to make it more challenging but also to develop their identity and original fingerprint as a DJ. This can be done through Mixing Style, technique and the choice of music. The practice of "digging in the crates," i.e., searching for new songs, is often mandatory homework and students have to bring their own songs to class and find their an original approach. DJ Perly has another way to incorporate this foundational element of DJing, as she wants to *"take them [her students] digging and get a feel for what's it like to go to a record store, finding a record, having that 'AHAAA, this is the record I'm looking for' and creating a set with it."* Digging in the crates, or digging for records is part of DJing's and beatmaking's foundation, to create an original Hip Hop identity (cf. Rappe, 2010, p. 172f.; Schloss, 2004).

Concerning DJing, there are thus different aspects to HHC's originality princi-ple: on the one hand, this encompasses developing one's own techniques and styles of mixing, cutting, or beat juggling. On the other hand, digging for original and rare songs and arranging an exciting mix of genres. While the DJ instructors see both elements as essential, their class focus is often on the more technical elements.

Having mastered DJ foundation and practicing it, has carryover effects for some practitioners:

> **Rabbi Darkside**; *"DJing not only influenced the musical, technical stuff, I think also just the way that I like manage a room or make musical choices. Like as a DJ generally I'm trying to like turn the party out, right? As an MC you know, I have a set that's like, it starts at, you know, five and goes to 10. And it's like increasing in energy the whole time. […] I think DJing has probably informed that practice across the board… Even like teaching you know, it's like everything is like a Mixtape to me, [...] I'm sensitive to like, the transitions of everything: When it's slowed down, when it's turned up."*

As Schloss analyzes for breaking, most Hip Hop art forms carry such a strong, emotional meaning for the practitioners that they transfer lessons learned therein to other aspects of their lives and approach them with the same attitude and insights (cf. Schloss, 2009). While for Rabbi, DJing has informed his teaching, many dancers and MCs talk about presentations they have to give at university or job interviews as a chance to "represent," "rock the cypher," or "battle" (depending on the com-petitiveness of the event and the ensuing choice in approach). Thus, for DJing being

such a highly technical element, foundation and basics carry a very high meaning for practitioners' lives. Through teaching, the instructors master their own foundation better and practice in a collective culture-specific way inside the classroom. The basics are structured and scaled according to difficulty and explained in historical lineage and traditional understanding of the craft. This cultural conservatism is counterbalanced by the originality principle and bringing new techniques and an original choice of music to the (turn)table.

Conclusion on foundation vs. innovation

In all of Hip Hop's art forms, there are similar tensions between traditionalist and innovative approaches, which result in different pedagogies. These approaches differ along foundation's three dimensions: the different understandings of the cultural and aesthetic openness when teaching the culture's history (1.), its focus on mastering the basics and stylistic fundamentals (2.), and its ethical dimensions (3.), which include political, or community-oriented approaches on the one hand, or more individualized competitive stances on the other. I argue that it is beneficial for Hip Hop pedagogues and non-profits to reflect on their position, make a conscious decision, and communicate it transparently to learners. Let us now look at how these approaches are condensed and institutionalized in different curricula types.

6.2. Flippin' the Script: How to Formalize HH Knowledge via Integrated/Artistic Curricula

In the following subchapter, we will look at how Hip Hop teaching artists (some with, some without an academic degree) start to categorize, catalog, and formalize their knowledge. Most of this knowledge had previously been present in certain media formtas (Hip Hop films, magazines, albums, etc.) as well as in oral cultural formats, i.e., in the traditional cultural practices, which practitioners pass on in collective rituals and via face-to-face interactions in cyphers at jams, at practice, or in the classroom. When entering different institutions, the Hip Hop pedagogues are often required to formalize their teaching and hand in a lesson plan. Thus, they order their knowledge practices[158] (cf. Casas-Cortés et al., 2008) and distill them into reproducible curricula.[159] Developing and writing curricula has to be seen as a process of institutionalization and formalization of knowledge. The practice is also an

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[158] Casas-Cortes et al. (2008, p. 17f.) define knowledge practices as happening in social movements which are thus *"important sites of knowledge creation, reformulation and diffusion."* I argue that Hip Hop similarly is a site for such creation of knowledge, development, and diffusion via teaching and practicing crafts and cultural knowledge.

[159] I will use the terms of syllabi and curricula synonymously for a written-out structure of the material to be learned, the exercises, and a lesson plan. In higher education they are further distinguished: the syllabus is a course and lesson plan for a particular class. Curriculum however refers to the knowledge contained in a broader course or educational system.

important tool for teaching and learning and for career advancement as an educator, as it showcases a high level of competence and proficiency. This practice of teaching artists formalizing their knowledge differs widely from the more traditional ways of Hip Hop based Education, where non-practitioner high-school teachers have often designed curricula using rap songs to interest the youths in more accepted sources from so-called "high culture," such as classic European poetry or literature. Practitioners and Hip Hop educational scholars have widely criticized this as reducing the culture to a mere tool in an oppressive educational system to (re-)integrate outliers.[160]

The chapter starts by looking at how the teaching artists begin to develop their curricula (6.2.1), as well as which types of Hip Hop curricula and curricular strategies there are (integrated curricula 6.2.1, purely artistic curricula 6.2.2, working against the curriculum/catering to community 6.2.3. Social Justice/Hip Hop/Black history curricula are discussed in subchapters 6.3 and 6.4).

But let us start from the beginning: when and how do Hip Hop teaching artists begin to develop their first curricula, and what does this practice entail for their teaching?

6.2.1 Developing One's Pedagogy by Writing Integrated Curricula

Rabbi and Farbeon, the two MCs, beatboxers, DJs, and co-founders of service-providing Hip Hop Re:education Project in New York, have somewhat of a shared history. Starting as Hip Hop practitioners and high school teachers first, their nightly Hip Hop persona naturally entered their day-time classroom activities as they realized the potential to generate interest with the youth. MC Farbeon wrote his MA thesis at New York University and both recognized that Hip Hop Educator could be a career path. Rabbi states that *"as part of that [MA thesis], we developed the six pillars of the Hip Hop Re:education Project together, which kind of are like, guiding tenants."*[161] Both describe that writing the first guiding tenants and curricula helped them become aware of their own teaching styles for their early programs housed in and outside schools all over New York and later in Universities. Carrying academic

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[160] According to Hip Hop educator/scholar Love (2016, p. 424) "a*nything created in conjunction with American values of capitalism, patriarchy, and misogyny will naturally be co-opted and watered-down to appeal to the economically privileged White population, even though it is suggested as an intervention for urban youth of color and, on the surface, represents their way of life.* Seidel(2022, p. 108) stresses that *"although these sorts of curricula can be extremely useful for English teachers overwhelmed by trying to build engaging lessons into state standards, there can be a problematic value judgment built in […] that what all students really need to read is 'the classics.' This is a manifestation of the commonly held belief in a canon of content—written almost entirely by white men who are no longer living—that all students need to know. The enforcement of such beliefs can alienate students, deny educators the freedom to be creative, prevent students from being exposed to many excellent texts, and perpetuate racism, classism, sexism, and other systems of hate ."*

[161] Farbeon had handed out these 6 pillars during a workshop at a youth center in Malmö, Sweden, when we were visiting a Hip Hop conference there and I have used them in my Hip Hop seminars at university to illustrate Hip Hop Pedagogy.

degrees, they realized that framing their activities in theories of pedagogy helped both further the reach and legitimization of their Hip Hop programs while also helping them reflect upon and improve their teaching practices. The need to formalize knowledge also arose from institutional requirements:

> **Farbeon:** *"At some point, you also have to communicate things to principals, to teachers there's gotta be [...] some theoretical foundation to what you're doing. [...] in school, you just don't wanna teach a kid to write a song. That's the easy part, I get more excited about how we use art to, like, impact student achievement. […] It's like to use art as a way so kids can remember and learn."*

Such a theoretical base and referencing theories of learning when writing curricula, as well as orienting themselves towards student achievement, then open new doors for project funding and access to official learning institutions. Student achievement is crucial, but both teaching artists summarize that critical thinking is also an essential part of their teaching. Rabbi states that when hiring for their non-profit, they are not only looking for *"just like dope artists or dope teaching artists, right? It's people who have a foundational understanding of critical consciousness and cultural history of Hip Hop, and an inquiry-based student-centered classroom, right, sort of like cypher pedagogy"*. This combination of practitioner focus, critical consciousness, Hip Hop history, and being student-centered form a consensus among my informants using integrated curricula combining art and social issues.

Farbeon outlines the sequential set up of his curricula for youth groups with different phases: First *"it's about bringing a culture for the group that's coming together, that cypher, it's about building that cypher."* The second phase is about *"getting on a same page with historical foundations, with the codes and what it is we're talking about the history of Hip Hop. The history of creative expression, the history of that art form that we're studying."* Thirdly, the teaching focuses around *"the point where it's like 'All right, what's your story?' So we spend some time developing work around their stories. And then hopefully, 'what's the community story?' And what do we wanna say about that and create solutions?' That's kind of the big scope and sequence."* This order of establishing a group relation first, then learning about Hip Hop history, and finally, focusing on the youth's own story and identity is parallel to Freire's (cf. 2000, p. 81ff.) pedagogic order. To fuel the different stages in this process, Farbeon often starts a class by introducing specific pieces of art pieces, such as graff piece, a music video or a song, to start a discussion and encourage critical thinking. Only then do they enter the process of working towards a final art project (a show, an album). Like Y?, Farbeon refuses to accept the title of a teacher of a more hierarchical banking model: *"I would say a lot of my stuff is not necessarily teaching, it's more like facilitating stuff. I'm a producer, I'm an executive producer and I'm bringing together all the resources to make this record."*

Academic, integrated Hip Hop curricula by Rabbi Darkside at New School

Rabbi, who – like Farbeon – is teaching classes at a University level, was happy to share two of his academic syllabi, one called *"Hip Hop, Skill, Style and Science"* and the other one *"Hip Hop Pedagogy and Practice."* These academic syllabi are handed out to the students to guide them throughout the semester, and these 14-page-long documents contain a course description, a list of "required materials and immaterials" (such as *"Integrity. Comfort. Bravery. Openness. Attentiveness."* etc.), and some basic definitions and quotes by Hip Hop affiliates, and critical thinkers. They also give an overview of the lesson structure, the required readings, the requirements for passing, and the standards for grading the class. What distinguishes these two class descriptions, including lesson plans, from more standardized academic syllabi and curricula, is that some of the graded requirements are Hip Hop specific practices, such as the introductory cypher: *"During the semester, each of you will be tasked with inspiring and conducting the cypher. The goal is to present the opportunity for everyone to participate revolving around a collective activity with an expressive goal."* This introductory activity to every lesson is intended to build a community spirit and can explicitly include *"Drawing. Singing. Beatboxing. Movement. Responding in the round. Meditation. Rhyme. Bring your passion into the room. Share your strengths. Take risks. Ask your classmates for support. Have fun."* Equally unusual is the mix of academic readings with not only music and video but a list of practical Hip Hop related activities included along the timeline of the semester, with the *"Skill, Style and Science"* class ending in a final Jam. During this final round of presentations every student is expected to *"address a social justice issue through one of the Hip Hop elements […] So it can be performance art, it can be a visual art piece, it can be a video piece."* For the Practice and Pedagogy class, *"the students create the outline of a course syllabus for their fantasy course […] centered around addressing a social justice issue."*

In addition to these practical interludes, these courses are the most theoretically oriented I have come across during my research. The required academic readings range from critical sociology of education and history, including Howard Zinn and bell hooks, to scholars of Hip Hop and its pedagogies (Mark Anthony Neal, Tricia Rose, Jeff Chang, etc.). There are many purely theoretical courses on Hip Hop at universities globally, with some of them instructed by linguists, and others in literary studies, philosophy, etc. However, as soon as a practitioner teaches a course on Hip Hop, it necessarily has to contain more practical and interactive learning modes, as the pedagogues structure their teaching according to their own cultural practices in Hip Hop. Rabbi and Farbeon thus use their cultural capital of academic education and knowledge of theories, as well as their subcultural capital of Hip Hop skills and cultural knowledge to produce integrated curricula. These, in turn, contain practical elements and theoretical references, which helped them develop their pedagogy and achieve more legitimacy in the face of state cultural/educational institutions traditionally skeptical of Black cultural formats.

6.2.2 Y?'s Purely Artistic "Beat Rhymers Curriculum"

After these "integrated curricula," we will now look at "purely artistic curriculum." After having taught the Beat Rhymers class at Eastside Community High, Y? said he did not want to continue teaching at this high school since he needed new challenges and wanted to work more towards his artistic vision. The founder of educational service provider BEATGlobal, James Kim, thus asked him to educate the next generation of teaching artists and make his methodology reproducible by writing a curriculum. Y? has no college degree and has learned the craft of MCing only within Hip Hop's many informal spaces – especially within New York's cypher and Open Mic scene. To complete the challenging task of writing the curriculum, James appointed one of BEATGlobal's interns, a Harvard student, saxophone player, and beatmaker, to help Y? structure and organize his teaching into a written format. The result is a teaching manual containing 25 lessons organized cumulatively within five units. These units build on each other and make up the basic structure of the semester. In contrast to Rabbi's syllabi designed for his students, Y?'s curriculum is arranged for instructors with basic knowledge in Hip Hop culture, and practical experience in MCing who want to employ both in their teaching.

Being confronted with the challenge of writing curricula, Y? was able to define his pedagogy more clearly:

> **Y?:** *"I decided to think about what am I teaching. I knew it wasn't about just teaching bars and this and that, I came up with the word cypher pedagogy. And that became what I really wanted instructors to pick up. We, our job, I think, as Hip Hop practitioners, is to create a space […] So a lot of what I'm teaching instructors now is how to get out the way and allow for it to create itself because the art is our guiding force that all of us are there to serve... like a child. Each of us are babysitting this child till it gets mature enough to live on its own."*

In this vein of juxtaposing Hip Hop's circular forms of teaching with the school system's standardized top-down lecturing formats, most of the exercises in the curriculum are interactive and cypher-based. The pedagogue thus facilitates group exercises from HHC, building on peer-to-peer learning.[162]

Just as Rabbi Darkside's university syllabi, this curriculum uses emic terminology (Hip Hop cultural insider language) and etic terms (mostly pedagogic vocabulary) and playfully includes and innovates upon Hip Hop's own vernacular. Another parallel to Rabbi's syllabi (with formal grade and passing requirements) is the Beat Rhymers curriculum's references to official school learning requirements.[163]

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[162] During the first unit, "Building From the Ground Up" very basic group games and activities are combined to introduce "students to the class, the teacher, and one another" (Guyadin, 2017, p. 9).

[163] Appendix A references in how far each of the exercises adheres to the anchor standards for reading /peaking and listening/language/presentation of knowledge and ideas/for mathematical practice etc.

Referencing these standards subsumes the HHC activities under the US educational system's requirements. This shows how far such legitimization is necessary to bring Black cultural traditions into an educational system historically structured by white supremacy (cf. hooks, 1994). The fact that this curriculum is of the purely artistic type also makes it easier to gain access to high schools in comparison with some of the more politically explicit and radical teaching initiatives (cf. 6.3). Referencing the public standards and adhering to state-regulated educational frameworks is often a necessary step for a career as a Hip Hop educator. It is also a career plus in monetary terms, as Y? got paid by BEATGlobal, for a year during which their instructors employed his curriculum.

Exchanging/ flipping curricula through Hip Hop's global networks

The Hip Hop educational spectrum and its formal and informal spheres are well connected globally. This can be seen, for example, in how Y?'s Beat Rhymers Curriculum has contributed to the MCing and rap workshops by my crewmate Alexander "Äleks" Wassilenko. I had brought the printed curriculum from my first field trip to New York, and Äleks was highly interested in it. He later told me, how he had incorporated and adapted a few of its practical lessons into his workshops at East German high schools, youth centers and during vacation camps. Äleks has started to develop curricula not only in breaking but also concerning specific topically focused rhyming lessons. Accordingly, he has developed a lesson plan around the sociological concept of "group-focused enmity," wherein he employs some of the open exercises of the BEAT Rhymers Curriculum[164] with his exercises around critical media literacy. Within a pilot project, he focused on the experiences of discrimination of a diverse group of migrant and queer adolescents in a youth club in East Germany. He used "group-focused enmity" to explain to them how, from their own experience of discrimination, they could explore more of a solidary and empathetic understanding towards other subaltern groups. Such workshops, of course, cannot entirely change the perceptions and behavior of their participants, who are subject to racialized and patriarchal capitalism and its divisions. They can, however, produce a fresh, conscious rap video and an experience of self-efficacy for its participants. Thus, a seemingly open "purely artistic and craft-based curriculum" can also inspire programs with a different topical focus, as Hip Hop educators sample, remix, and flip each other's methods, as they would usually do with flows, moves, rhymes, scratches, or lettering techniques. Hip Hop's educational field, like other

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These are part of the Common Core State Standards Initiative, a federal initiative, to develop more coherent schooling standards across in the US in mathematics and English language arts / literacy. According to the initiatives website *"these learning goals outline what a student should know and be able to do at the end of each grade. The standards were created to ensure that all students graduate from high school with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in college, career, and life, regardless of where they live."* (CCSSI, n.d.).

[164] E.g. Äleks used the exercise of word banks, giving students one word to let them collect rhymes. He transformed it into a word bank battle, a competitive exercise of who found the most rhyming words in a limited amount of time.

HHC scenes, is a network of global flows of information, adaptation to different contexts, and development.

6.2.3 How Waaak Works Against Curriculum to Cater to Community

> **Rabbi Darkside:** *"Part of, like, being a master teaching artist is, as Adrienne Maree Brown says in her book [emergent strategy (A. M. Brown, 2017)] it's like 'less preparation, more presence,' you know,[...] I don't mean that doesn't need right-off preparation, but like when you've been doing a thing long enough, it's not about a time-coded 75-minute lesson plan as much as it's like having benchmarks that you want to get to and move between and knowing that sometimes you need to slow down and make space right? To be able to, like, meaningfully move on to the next thing."*

There was a shared sentiment among all interviewed artists that curriculum writing is beneficial for developing pedagogy and gaining access to formal education institutions. There was, however, also a shared skepticism against too rigid curricular structures – as illustrated in this quote by Rabbi Darkside. For the Hip Hop pedagogues, a significant part of their preparation has happened during decades of teaching and practicing their craft. Therefore, strict adherence to the corset of a rigid lesson plan is sometimes counterproductive when running contrary to the leaners' emotional needs and interests.

B-boy and style writer Waaak-1 provided one rather drastic deviation from the original curriculum. Waaak had been invited by one of his mentees ("he's a break beast"), who was teaching a breaking class at a large nonprofit in the Lower Eastside of New York, to join and teach a style writing class. The classes took place at a board of education suspension site with its own school, which youth, who had been to jail could attend. In case they behaved according to the expectations, their sentence would be reduced. According to Waaak, the learning atmosphere there was tense, since the adolescents would be sent back to jail by their operations officer if they misbehaved in class: *"you get violated, and you get handcuffed and taken back to jail because you pissed off your math teacher."* It was not only this looming threat of going back to jail which inhibited the youth from really entering into a calm learning atmosphere but also the group composition and their behavior:

> **Waaak:** *"This is about a dozen kids, right? Kids from pretty much all over the city, most of them gang-affiliated Bloods and Crips, right? So like in my class, they'd be chillin' together working together. next week I'm like, 'where's so and so?' 'Oh, they got sent back, they essentially they got pulled back [into jail]' they said… like 'oh what happened?' 'Oh, after school, they were at McDonald's, and they're cuttin' so and so's face open'. I'm like, 'Oh shit!' they were just like sitting next to each other, working earlier, and then after school, one kid pulled a razor on the next, you know, it was wild."*

After a quick exchange on the prison-industrial complex, Waaak described how he had to step in as a guest to teach the adolescents since his younger mentee (despite

having immense breaking skills) was not pedagogically equipped to teach them and was about to quit the job.

Deviating from the original curriculum they had proposed, Waaak told his co-teacher, *"Let's change this up. 'Let's cater to the community. Let's meet the young people where they are and do something for them.' So we just made it an overall Hip Hop class, and we collaborated most of the time."*

According to Waaak, the male youths did not allow themselves the vulnerability of dancing in front of one another, and even during the graffiti class, fights erupted. Throughout the process, he realized that he had to switch from breaking to another, more popular Hip Hop element:

> **Waaak:** *"they were heavily into, like, MCing, so again borrowing from, I think, like a Raekwon and Ghostface hook 'line for line, line for line. This is how we get down' I made like a three, four-week lesson called 'line for line, line for line', and it was a conversation that I baited them in […] This is the time when Lil Wayne was popping. I'm like, 'Who?' 'Lil Wayne' I'm like, 'Nah, he's trash!' and they're like, 'Nonono, you gotta listen to him!' So I'm like, 'Yo, any of my favorite artists could beat your favorite artists. With any of his songs.' And I'm like, 'pick a song, pick a artist…'.*

Waaak focused the rest of the class on commercialized vs. more underground rap music from different generations and had the youth compare their own to his favorite artists. However, the youth would not listen to his arguments and could not distinguish their reasons for Lil Wayne being better than any of their teacher's favorite rappers (e.g., Thirstin' Howl III). Waaak thus told them to meet after class and come up with a list of criteria for rating the artists. Once they had agreed on this list, Waaak arranged for a formal debate format in the institution's own courtroom, usually used for reenactments of court situations. While half of the class wanted Lil Wayne to win, they had to each pick a different song and argue along the established criteria why their song and artist should be winning.

> **Waaak:** *"This put them in a positive mind-state – in a courtroom, where that's no longer a threat to them, and they no longer have like a black cloud over their heads. And that made up the classroom. They embraced it, they represented their artists, and at the end of the day, the artist who beat Lil Wayne and everybody else in the finals ended up being Jadakiss with the song 'Why'. And by the end [...] they were all singing the song and chanting and like, even the biggest hater in the classroom would be like 'Word yeah!' you know. And it was their own criteria, which they made up. They made the rules and used their own rules, you know, and they all voted. They all had a say."*

Confronted with an outright refusal of the youth to partake in dancing and style writing classes, Waaak did not resort to the violence of threatening them with a report to their operations officer. Instead, he focused on their favorite artists and engaged them in a competitive dialogue. By being honest and opposing their choice on an aesthetic level, Waaak could develop a format in dialogue with the youth, letting them contribute the categories of comparison and the artists and arguments.

While this is an extreme example of participant refusal, Waaak's reaction of deviating from the original curriculum and instead catering to their interest is in line with culturally relevant pedagogy, which takes the lived and felt realities of the learners as the point of departure (cf. Adjapong, 2017; Akom, 2009). This flexibility is an integral part of Hip Hop pedagogy's learner orientation. At the same time, the employment of a battle format is clearly influenced by Waaak's Hip Hop mentality, especially from a breaking point of view, where organized competitions are the norm.

After looking at integrated, purely artistic curricula and the Hip Hop capacity to cater to the learners by working against the curriculum, we will now look at social justice-oriented Hip Hop curricula. Why are these two topics so often combined, and what pulls the curricula toward equity and equality?

6.3 Getting Political: Social Justice Hip Hop Curricula and Social Movements

To grasp why this type of Hip Hop curriculum revolves around equality and justice, let us look at a few theoretical positions before analyzing some empirical examples. Freire (2000, p. 95 f.) formulates the normative condition that

> *"the starting point for organizing the program content of education or political action must be the present, existential, concrete situation, reflecting the aspirations of the people. Utilizing certain basic contradictions, we must pose this existential, concrete, present situation to the people as a problem which challenges them and requires a response—not just at the intellectual level, but at the level of action."*

We will thus take a look if and how some of the Hip Hop curricula meet this condition, which is highly tied to the factor that the curricula authors are part of or oriented towards movements. I follow Eyerman and Jamison's (2000, 2007) line of argument that movements are innovators of new and critical knowledge in society and that there is a direct and dialectical link between musicians and social movements. The latter pulls the artists toward the movement's ideological and normative standpoint, i.e., what the sociologists call the movement's cosmological dimension. At the same time, some of the musicians work as movement intellectuals in the Gramscian (2000) sense, organizing the people and formulating a common counter-hegemonic project. In their music, the musicians who are part of a movement condense the movements' thoughts and voice them in an emotive and coherent way. This revolves around critique, formulating a collective identity, and demands. I argue in the following that social movements have this effect not only on musicians involved in movements, or just on some of the most popular rappers, but also on the many Hip Hop teaching artists and educators and their projects. On the one hand, these projects are subject to the incentives and forces of social movements (recent and prior ones). On the other hand, they are also affected by the

music/culture industries and the de-radicalizing effects of the non-profit industrial complex (cf. Hart, 2010; Incite! Women of Color Against Violence, 2017).

Different examples will illustrate this relationship. The first is a cooperation between a Senegalese Hip Hop scholar and an MC/movement activist (6.3.1) followed by the failure to gain access to a public school for activists from the Y'en a Marre movement in Southern Senegal (6.3.2). Both cases illustrate institutional hurdles, censorship, and counter-strategies. 6.3.3 will discuss the integrated and political curricula developed at El Puente in NYC, which draw on different movement traditions (inter alia the Young Lords party). Under 6.3.4, the case of Fresh Prep illustrates how teaching artists perceive Hip Hop education as being coopted for the sake of the school system's banking model and how conflicts of artistic ownership between organizations and teaching artists play out.

6.3.1 Radical Rap as "Literary Text": A Scholar-Activist Alliance

In Senegal, protest movements and rap music have traditionally been closely intertwined since the 1980s/90s. Mamadou Dramé was one of the first Senegalese academics to write on "Hip Hop Galsen" in the late 1990s. Dramé has focused some of his research on the linguistic aspects and literary and poetic devices employed by the rappers (cf. Dramé, 2012, 2014), while other papers take the political and moral impetus of Senegalese rap music into account (cf. Dramé, 2010).[165] During an interview Dramé told me he had strategically used his university credentials to bring rap lyrics into high-school classrooms during his education to become a teacher. Via literary terminology, he could discuss radical rap lyrics in class:

> **Dramé:** *"I only used rap music as a support tool in class, which the French curriculum in Senegal allows for. Thus, you can justify it by saying that the curriculum allows for an opening toward new types of text. And that allows you to teach a certain number of things: for example, to teach 'versification', you can choose rap texts, or there are all types of verbs, and there are all rhyming types, and this is more in the youth's universe. […] and even on a content level, because there is gonna be a resemblance between what the students discuss through the music and themes of colonialism taught in class: namely the question of*

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[165] In the latter, he for example compares the artistic movement of the 1930s "La Negritude" with Senegalese Hip Hop concluding that: *"just like Negritude is the form of expression of an oppressed race, Senegalese rap is the form of expression of an oppressed and forgotten generation. It is the battle cry of a revolt, the denunciation of a system and social norms which are judged unjust and inappropriate"* (Dramé, 2010, p. 48) [translated from French S.H.]. This can be seen as a legitimizing strategy to facilitate the entrance of Hip Hop into educational institutions, where the Negritude is part of the curricula. Cesaire and first Senegalese president Senghor developed this cultural philosophy as a countermodel to Eurocentrist views on Africa. This positive Black self-identification harshly critiques white supremacy and colonialism. (Most political Hip Hop artists take a critical stance towards Senghor, as he is seen to have centralized power for too long and as head of the neocolonial ruling elite has catered mostly to the interests of Western powers; cf. Chapter 3).

'Negritude', the question of 'race', colonization or neo-colonialism, the relations between
the West and Africa. All those are things that you will find in Hip Hop lyrics."

The fact that a dominant current of Senegalese rap of the 1990s and early 2000s was so politically radical changes the topical shift when employing it in class. One text Dramé employed in grammar school classes (the French "lycées"), as well as in workshops for teacher education, is the song "J'accuse" (i.e., "I accuse") by Senegalese rap pioneer Didier Awadi of the group Positive Black Soul. The song denounces US and French economic and military imperialism, double standards of Western ideology, African leaders' corruption, who sell out their countries' resources, and the naivety of himself/African youth who dream of escaping to Europe and leaving their countries to the neocolonialists. In his words:

"I accuse the members of the security council,
of sowing conflict and discord in our underdeveloped countries,
pyromaniac firefighters, they sell arms and sow death,
they sow genocides and then condemn them,
I accuse Belgium of having killed Lumumba,
because not content with killing us like dogs; they slaughter us,
independent leaders? The colonizer doesn't want 'em,
he will send his brother to take them down,
we have seen SANKARA, we have seen SANKARA"

(**Awadi**, *"J'accuse"* 2008, Sunugaal, Studio Sankara) [translated from French S.H.].

Exploiting the French language curriculum's focus on lyrical and linguistic devices, Dramé was thus able to introduce radical, anti-colonial rap lyrics into grammar schools, despite the musical genre's stigmatization by many state institutions and officials.[166] Freire (cf. 2000, p. 103 f.) identifies the analysis of colonial relations as one of the most central principles of the pedagogy of the oppressed since it constitutes the global level of domination. Analyzing and naming the global south's exploitation and maintenance of its economic dependency is an important step that Dramé's curricular strategy fulfills.

Dramé introduced an array of different rap artists into French class. Among them was Fou Malade's songs, the director of the neighborhood-based cultural center G Hip Hop and one of the earliest members of the Y'en a Marre movement. The activists' songs included in the curriculum can be classified as social realism. Malade describes the hypocrisy of corrupt politicians stealing people's money and breaking their promises, e.g., to repair the broken sewer and canal system to prevent floods and the spread of Malaria in Dakar's banlieues (cf. Fou Malade "Folies Politiques," 2008, *On va tout dire,* label unknown).

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[166] Another contributing factor is that the topic of (neo-)colonialism is part of Senegalese school curricula.

In 2008, the researcher wrote a social justice curriculum for the project "Rap Poetique" and invited the rapper: During one semester, they helped students "translate" classical text of poetry and literature into rap format and vice versa. Due to Dramé's academic credentials and since this was before the founding of Y'en a Marre (seen critically by state institutions), the national ministry of education approved the project. Activist MC Fou Malade, in turn, helped the youth record two rap albums.

Whereas in the US, there are political subgenres in the mainstream of rap music, a whole generation of Senegalese rap is highly political. Therefore, the curricular strategy of introducing songs or activist rappers leads to a different political thrust than Waaak's discussion of who is the better (apolitical) rap star. While there are certainly also radical rappers in the US, they are more marginal than among the previous generations of Senegalese political rap (in the West African country, mainstream rap is now also changing towards more commercialized and depoliticized forms). This and the harsh socioeconomic realities of a comparatively poor West African state make it easier to talk about such things when introducing popular rap music into school curricula.[167]

Dramé has replicated this approach by teaching seminars on curricular development within the faculty of teachers' education at the university. For three consecutive years, he worked with students training to become teachers on rap music's integration into standard state curricula of different subjects. According to the researcher, many of them use these rap-based lesson plans to this day when teaching in Senegalese schools. While such employment of popular culture may raise the learners' interest level, Dramé also names complications when working with high school students, as they think their class is just a recreational activity. This necessitates a proper and professional framing of the class. Another danger he names is that the students afterward *"want to do only that [working with rap music] […] and we can't do that or else we will get a beating by the ministry [laughs]". Another problem is with the school administration, who sometimes does not understand it in the beginning when they see you with a boombox […] it's not something they are used to".* Thus, students losing interest in the regular banking model style teaching of schools and the authorities' skepticism are factors that can hinder such programs' success. While Dramé's academic credentials help in such instances, there are also possible conflicts because of the radical content of the texts employed. Dramé has taught a class for French teachers at a French "expat" grammar school in Dakar on how to use rap lyrics in class. He used Awadi's lyrics of "J'accuse," which was not well received by some of the Western teachers of this private school: *"they were shocked because they said that the text was racist [laughs]."* The outrage among the teachers was caused by the section following

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[167] At the same time, the introduction of teaching artists into Senegalese schools is comparatively rare, since there is no large after-school sector as in parts of the US, which resulted from budget cuts and privatization and is counterbalanced by rise in funding through large scale private foundations (cf. Incite! Women of Color Against Violence, 2017).

Awadi's line of *"'I accuse France of being imperialist' […] you know the people were not happy. Well listen, this is literature right? So that doesn't really concern me too much".* By referencing it as just "literature" to be included in existing curricula, Dramé defuses parts of the teachers' criticism and describes his stance towards the lyrics as neutral.

A lot of Hip Hop education in the classroom follows this model of using rap as literature and a tool to teach established academic standards. Various Hip Hop scholars criticize this approach stating the culture should be valued and taught in its own worth (cf. e.g. Emdin & Adjapong, 2018; Love, 2016). Dramé's curricular strategy differs, however, since he uses the above strategies to introduce politically radical content and invite activist rappers into the classroom. Thus, such curricular strategies can access high schools with comparatively radical Hip Hop content.[168]

6.3.2 No Access to Public School System for the Y'en a Marre in Kolda

Such access to the Senegalese school system is not always granted to people involved in movements and lacking academic credentials. While Dramé is used to working with large-scale bureaucratic procedures, Y'en a Marre activist Latyr has unsuccessfully tried for two years to get his project "schoolpark" approved for elementary schools in the southern city of Kolda: *we said let's do a 'schoolpark' which would consist of organizing cultural events and workshops for elementary schools, and introduce them to citizenship and the social and civic values".*[169] However, the procedures required applications with three different state authorities and local schools' approval. The project was not officially rejected on political grounds. However, Latyr's affiliation with Y'en a Marre (a movement harshly criticizing the government, traditionally a taboo in Senegal) and lack of academic credentials certainly prevented institutional access.

In contrast, Dramé's self-positioning as a neutral teacher who is teaching "just literature" can be seen as a strategic form of code switching, which worked for the projects, in addition to the institutionalized capital of his academic credentials. Thus, while movement orientation fosters radical content for teaching artists, specific strategies are necessary to enter educational institutions and curricula.

6.3.3 El Puente: From Arts-Based to Integrated/Political Curricula

To fully grasp how movement influences can play out, we will take another look at a US context: At El Puente's after-school program, Waaak One was challenged to develop arts-based curricula and then integrate more political topics. In line with the organization's Freirian orientation (cf. chapter 4.1.3), b-boy and aerosol artist Waaak One, being a young Hip Hop artist of color from Brooklyn himself, fulfilled the role of a Hip Hop pedagogue who knows the students' cultural lifeworld. Similar

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[168] This is somewhat aligned with the goal of Alim's (2008, p. 219) Critical Hip Hop Language Pedagogies *"of not just teaching language, but to inspire pedagogies that make explicit the link between language, power and social process."*

[169] This framing around the role of the citizen is typical of Y'en a Marre (cf. chapter 8).

to his Hip Hop mentor b-boy Ken Swift's challenge Waaak credits similar influential figures at El Puente who asked him to develop art and skill-related curricula at first:

> *"I'm a young dude with no really formal education, I'm dancing I'm kind of making everything up along the way, like 'Okay, we need a curriculum. The people who are funding us, you know, the city wants to approve a curriculum'. I never wrote a curriculum before, but this is what I'm doing... list of a bunch of names. 'What the fuck does that mean? I don't understand what that means. [...] Try again!' you know.*
> **Saman:** *(laughs) you would just like write down moves or whatever?*
> **Waaak:** *Yeah, 6-step, kickouts, Ccs, err, whatever that means nothing to them. So, you know, I've learned a lot from the organization as far as how to be a teacher. You know."*

Thus, the state and the funding requirements made it first necessary for Waaak to write a curriculum.[170] As a next step, El Puente's movement-influenced leadership challenged Waaak to transform this lesson plan into integrated and social justice curricula:

> **Waaak:** *"I'm at El Puente, so I'm teaching every day, right? After school, you know, a breaking class, and sometimes it would be like an art class. Sometimes we'd do like a special like, maybe like a holiday and the kids have a week off from school. They challenged us to like 'OK, this is the theme of MLK, Martin Luther King Day' or this or that. Tie Hip Hop into it, turn that into a Hip Hop lesson!'"*

This way of trusting the upcoming teaching artist with no formal but with a large pool of informal Hip Hop educational experiences to treat issues of social justice in his classes exemplifies Freirian Pedagogy in practice. Thus, Hip Hop cultural practices exemplify what Freire (2000, p. 96f.) calls the learners' (student-teachers') "thematic universe." Freire's liberating stance implies that the organization infuses different social justice topics into the curricula. The neighborhood-based cultural center's founders have a strong social movement background and ties towards the Christian Workers movement, the Young Lords Party, etc. (cf. chapter 4.1.3), which makes for this normative alignment toward social justice and liberation. While the Young Lords Party, as well as some proponents of liberation theology, are outspokenly anti-capitalist, El Puente's website and its social media platforms do not carry that same tone of anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist rhetoric. The funding structure, as well as the organization's institutionalization by running multiple public schools, make for what could superficially be read as a deradicalization. However, the actual content of the curricula and actions undertaken through the organization remain rather radical. The El Puente Academy's social justice-oriented curricula include Hip Hop, other arts, and political topics relevant to the local population. The learners for example studied the pollution of their own neighborhoods of Brooklyn

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[170] Similar to the denial of access to the school system, the approval of curricula by funding and state institutions, can be seen as possibly censoring / deradicalizing, which in the case of more political curricula might require code-switching.

Williamsburg and Bushwick. During science and math classes, the students surveyed local populations to look for asthma and other health issues, which led to a scientific paper published in a medical journal (a premiere for such a community organization). In line with the Freirian (1971) problem-posing method and its repeated circle of theoretical reflection and collective action, the youth and their teachers undertook protests and legal action and prevented a 55-storey incinerator from being built: *"Math and science classes measured and graphed levels of toxicity, a humanities class produced a documentary on their findings"* (Westheimer, 2007, p. 185).

More Hip Hop related social justice curricula revolve around the collective identity of El Puente's majority Puerto Rican and Latinx demographic, as lead organizer Frances Lucerna recounts:

> **Lucerna:** *"Hip Hop is very much integrated within [...] parts of the curriculum, and it's in our culture as well you know – Our Latino culture. I mean we have a whole 'Who am I?' curriculum at the academy: it's the 'Who am I? Who are we?' You know, 'What is the nature of the world, and how do we change that?' And I think that's a very powerful formative experience for young people where we're going to our roots – our African roots and really understand scholarly the contributions of our people to academia."*

The focus on ethnic identity in a learning process is nowadays common enough (even though not necessarily in public high schools). While Puerto Ricans have played a significant role in Hip Hop culture's early stages, contributing many musical, artistic and performative pieces to the puzzle[171], their African heritage is rarely acknowledged, even by themselves.[172]

Further integrated curricula at El Puente treat the history of Caribbean sugar production via slave labor and how this generated wealth for Western ruling classes, the US neo-colonial relations towards Puerto Rico, or sweatshops' working conditions (cf. Ancess & Rogers, 2015; Gonzalez, 1995). Lucerna says their global history class is mainly based upon Howard Zinn's "A People's History of the United States" (as Rabbi's college curricula). Such radical analyses starting with the learners' is in line with Freire (2000, p. 84 & p.81), since *"problem-posing theory and practice take the peoples' historicity as their starting point."* This enables them *"to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves,"* thereby gaining the necessary preconditions for systemic transformation.

Such an approach is mostly possible due to the specific build-up of the neighborhood-based center/hub organization of El Puente. It starkly contrasts the topical suggestions for arts-based curricula, which other teaching artists told me they received from their principals at regular public high schools when working for a

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[171] Cf. e.g. Henry Chalfant's (2006) classic documentary "From Mambo to Hip Hop."
[172] When I asked about Latinx' contributions to HHC and Hip Hop scholar Tricia Rose replied that most Puerto Ricans did not acknowledge their African ancestry. Questions of self-identification are thus opposed to an academic classification of ethnocultural heritage according to the American "one drop rule" and a Caribbean lineage of Afrodiasporic traditions.

large after-school arts non-profit in New York. The Hip Hop pedagogues here were supposed to design curricula around mostly liberal and far less radical issues of re-cycling, or diversity training, which remain disconnected from historical and sys-temic understandings of racism and oppression. Similarly, gun violence is an often-recurring topic mostly treated without systemic root causes and more radical anal-yses on, among other things, the school-to-prison pipeline or the prison-industrial complex.

In contrast, El Puente's teachers and the youth analyze the structural causes and regularly join climate strikes or Black Lives Matter protests and undertake direct action in the neighborhood, such as urban gardening and cultural initiatives and festivals. It becomes clear that the organizers' social movement orientation leads to these integrated social justice curricula and actions. I argue that the field of class-room Hip Hop education is thus politicized according to the influence of social movements on the one hand, and the deradicalizing tendencies of the public school system and the non-profit industrial complex on the other (cf. Incite! Women of Color Against Violence, 2017).

Banking model and pedagogy of the oppressed under one roof

Since the Academy for Peace and Justice is a registered public high school that is run in cooperation with New York's Department of Education and receives public and private funding, the school also has to align with the standardized testing re-quirements already mentioned above. Former school principal Lucerna says they initially encountered backlash and critique and thus had to abide by the banking model of education to maintain their school's state approval:

> **Lucerna:** *"the Bottom line was that our young people had to take those standardized tests. I had to get that first graduating class through and really be able to say, 'We can do this!' And so we did. We figured out sort of what the system… we looked at every regents [standardized tests required to graduate from all public schools] for the past I don't know how many years, we looked at, you know, and looked at the format. 'What is this? What's the sort of the […] formula?' And then that's what we did. We made sure that we could do clinics for young people to be able to take those tests and successfully pass those tests."*

The fact that the organization institutionalized its learning in the form of a public high school made it necessary to consent to these standardized tests and devote particular time to them. The organization's specific set up as a combination of a public high school and a neighborhood-based cultural center enabled it to devote more time to each student during the day-school and after-school programs. They were able to fulfill thus not only the state requirements but also give the students an education geared towards social justice and activism. A few years in, the school had *"a 90% graduation rate in an area where schools usually see 50% of their students graduate in four years"* (Westheimer, 2007, p. 184). The organizational setup thus enables a

social movement orientation and more institutionalized forms of education, with El Puente now running multiple high schools in New York and one in Puerto Rico.

El Puente is one of the earliest institutions to write Hip Hop curriculum in the early 1990s, and Lucerna specifically names Freire as the primary influence for giving Hip Hop a central role in its high school and after-school curricula. The Freirian dialogic approach also empowers teaching artists like Waaak One to professionalize themselves and include more social justice topics in their teaching practice. The strategies of code switching and collective protest to prevent the organization's eviction were necessary for their long-term institutionalization and enabling their social justice curricula. The following case will illustrate the dilemma of wanting to combine banking model requirements of public schools and the goals of a liberatory Hip Hop education in lack of such an institutional setup.

6.3.4 Integrated or Social Justice Curricula? *Fresh Prep* vs. *Getting Free*

Before teaching at college, MC, DJ, and beatboxer Rabbi Darkside had been teaching in high schools as a regular teacher and purely arts-based classes around beatboxing, Spoken Word Poetry, Music Recording, DJing in many different after-school programs. As with Waaak, this arts- and craft-based teaching was followed by more integrated curricula. In 2009/2010, Rabbi thus created a program called "Fresh Prep" via service-providing non-profit Urban Arts Partnership, which is according to Rabbi, the *"largest arts education provider in New York."*[173] He designed the program to prepare students *"for the global history regents exam, which covers, you know, 4000 years of global history over your junior and senior year. And I wrote the 17-track wrap-up. I worked with a collaborator who would outline the curricular units, and then slide me the outlines and then I would turn that into rap lyrics and then record the songs."* Parallel to El Puente's high school focus on taking the regents tests, this program was set up primarily to improve students' performance. In contrast to El Puente's integrated approach, however, Fresh Prep was dominated by the needs of the regents' exams, as the non-profit of the service-providing type lacked possibilities for long-term relationships with the learners and had no social movement ties. According to Rabbi, the banking model program did, nevertheless, effectively improve students' performances. During the pilot of *"a two-week crash course, [wherein] 30 students, who had all failed the regents somewhere between one and five times, they retook it, and like 90% of them passed it."*[174]

In contrast to the programs, which Rabbi and Farbeon often organize through their own service-providing non-profit, here it was not the students who would record the music, but the teaching artist himself. The lyrics, which Rabbi wrote and rhymed himself contained the content of the state's global history curricula to the instrumentals of popular rap songs. Warner Music Group/Atlantic records granted the organization access to its entire catalog. Rabbi instantly recites a few lines about

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[173] This is not a purely Hip Hop-based non-profit and has not been discussed in chapter 4.
[174] These success rates are confirmed by newspaper reports on the program (cf. Erwin, 2015; Otterman, 2011).

World War I and II along the melody and flow of Kanye West and Estelle's hit "American Boy." After these success rates, Rabbi reports that the organization realized Fresh Prep's enormous for-profit potential and thus *"jumped on this program, made it one of their flagship programs, got a six-figure Robin Hood Foundation grant. It was the first time the Robin Hood foundation had funded an arts program like that."* With this immense sum, Rabbi and one partner were paid to write the lyrics and accompany the teaching of the content in the classroom, providing the students with 250 pages of lyric books and workbooks and downloadable mp3s, which the youth could listen to on repeat on their portable devices. During 1.5 years, Rabbi was paid to develop three further integrated rap albums on US history, English composition, and Algebra.

As the program became a notable success, Rabbi invited collaborators, such as conscious and underground rap artists *"Sadat X and Talib Kweli, Dres from the Black Sheep, and they all guest-recorded these songs that I had written."* While Rabbi tried to infuse Howard Zinn and his own spin on topics, a social justice-oriented curriculum was not the non-profit's goal. Instead, for Urban Arts Partnership, the publicly declared *"point was... to help students pass these tests, so those were really based on the content they're going to be tested on.´ [...] But, you know what, my collaborator, Tracy Warley would... she left before I left working on this program, and she left saying like 'you know what, we're not actually helping anyone get free by helping them pass the test.'"* The co-creator's criticism of the banking model program illustrates the social justice values many Hip Hop pedagogues share.

Using and remaking popular rap hits employs rhymes as mnemonic devices and integrates the knowledge demanded by the school system into the known melodies. Enabling the mostly poor participants of color to pass the regents test and acquire the cultural capital of a high school diploma allows for tiny steps toward leveling the inherent injustice of a liberal social model. Using rap as part of a banking model of learning can work against what Bourdieu & Passeron (2000) make out as the school's task of the *"reproduction [of inequality] in education, society and culture"*. However, this partial leveling does not radically transform society when maintaining capitalism's general distributive inequality of economic, cultural, and social capital. The means of production and large-scale financial assets remain in few hands, and education does not become a liberating endeavor either.

Not only did the artists who created the program perceive it to not cater to their grander social vision, but on top of this, they felt exploited as financial conflicts arose with the organization:

> **Rabbi:** *"eventually, this company wanted to sell the music. And in order to do that, we had to unseat it from popular beats, and we had to have original beats. And when we got to that point, I was like, 'cool, here's my lawyer!' Because if you're going to sell music, I've written we have to treat it like you know, entertainment with like music... business entertainment law, and they didn't want to have that conversation. And they basically made me like a joke of an offer by this point that this program had garnered like, hundreds of*

> *thousand dollars for them. So I left and it became like a million-dollar department […]*
> *It was called Fresh Prep, which Tracy and I had branded. Then it became Fresh Ed."*

While the songs becoming profitable is rather rare, the theme of copyright and ownership conflicts between Hip Hop teaching artists and non-profits was a recurring one during my research. The recorded songs of this and other programs represent both cultural capital and the prestige of a working tool for increasing student performance. It also represents the ropes of the non-profit industrial complex, where the organizations often want to claim a program to be their own, while it is the teaching artists' creation, who, on the other hand, depended on the organization's funding to develop it.[175] In news reports, often only the organization is credited with improving student achievement, not the composers and creators (cf. e.g. Erwin, 2015). The example of "Fresh Prep" points towards the differences between integrated, banking model curricula and social justice curricula, as well as the importance of who owns the material – the non- or for-profit organization or the creating pedagogues. Rabbi's practitioner experience is in line with Love's (2016, p. 423f.) critique that "p*repackaged hip hop education products remove and dismiss the culture, history, elements, sensibilities, and the ideas that students can critically examine hip hop culture's violent, homophobic, and sexist messages to form new knowledge and imagine new possibilities for justice" (cf. 2.1.2).* This illustrates how standard banking model design of such Hip Hop educational curricula runs counter to the movement orientation we have looked at before.

In conclusion, we have seen how pedagogues' and organizations' social movement orientation make for social justice Hip Hop curricula. Such an orientation can lead to difficulty gaining access to educational institutions, which the pedagogues counter by strategies of code-switching, using academic credentials, and treating radical rap lyrics as "literature."[176] A lack of such a movement orientation can lead to a simple banking-model type of integrated Hip Hop curricula or even profit and copyright conflicts between exploiting organizations and creative pedagogues.

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[175] In a more equitable way, BEAT paid Y? a fixed sum during a year when their staff used his Beat Rhymers curriculum.

[176] Such inclusion of rap lyrics is a shortcut to Freire's (cf. 2000, pp. 100–124) problem-posing method, which is a long process of multiple stages of alphabetization and in turn, generating themes and limit situations (i.e. where one's oppression becomes perceivable) with the oppressed from their lifeworlds. Together the educators and the learners de- and encode these themes and limit situations and pose them as problems that require collectively naming the oppressive elements and acting upon them. Curricula are developed by the educators and brought back in dialogical feedback loops to the learners, who helped develop the themes. During multiple research stages, sociology and psychology researchers assist the student-teachers and teacher-students and participate in their sessions, cultural circles, and meetings to generate new scientific insights. Such a complex process needs vast resources. Current rap music can thus be a shortcut since it already includes various themes, limit situations, and ideological myths, to be posed as problems and deconstructed respectively.

6.4 Born in the Bronx: Hip Hop History Curriculum and How to Navigate its Contradictions

As already discussed earlier, most Hip Hop pedagogues regard it as a necessary part of an educational and artistic foundation to teach about the culture's history and often frame it as a cultural liberation. It is a common curricular strategy to talk about questions of social justice via Hip Hop's history and its socioeconomic contexts. The mythologized liberation narrative has been complicated by the public accusations of sexual abuse and harassment towards one of the culture's godfathers Afrika Bambaataa, and many other cultural pioneers (such as b-boy Crazy Legs). As discussed in chapter 2, those are not the only complications of this liberation narrative, which still serves as a moral compass for Hip Hop activists globally. Misogyny and homophobia, the one-dimensional depictions of Blackness in mainstream rap, or the criminalization of rap music in a broader context of the prison-industrial complex are only a few of these complications. How do the pedagogues navigate such contradictions and for what aims do they employ the different parts HHC's history? I will analyze this employment and interconnected pedagogical strategies in the following.

The discussion of the socioeconomic context of Hip Hop's birth (6.4.1) is followed by a theatrical reenactment of Hip Hop's mythologized founding narrative (6.4.2). Afterward, 6.4.3 discusses the use of Hip Hop's cultural and political precursor movements. A case of censorship via non-profit gatekeepers (6.4.4) is followed by a final discussion of how Hip Hop pedagogues navigate the scandal around Hip Hop godfather Bambaataa (6.4.5) and how they treat and make pedagogic use of Hip Hop's contradictions, i.e. its misogyny, violence vs. its empowering aspects (6.4.6).

6.4.1 "The Bronx is Burning": Economics of Hip Hop's Cultural Upheaval

New Yorker MC/DJ Spiritchild has close ties to former Black Panther Party members and has been part of social movements ranging from organizing against the Iraq war, for political prisoners' freedom in the US, to actions against police violence. Most recently, he was a local organizer at Black Lives Matter protests. This grounding partly shapes his pedagogic approach of "Critical Revolutionary Hip Hop Pedagogy," and he employs a feminist focus during the "Hip Hop Herstory – the Untold Truths" program.

This social justice curriculum's first kick-off session with the 8th grade of the all-girl high school (with only Black and Brown students) included a power point presentation on Hip Hop history right after the initial show and prove (cf. 5.2.1). The young girls were mostly from upper Manhattan and the Bronx and recognized some places when Spiritchild showed excerpts from the documentary movie "From Mambo to Hip Hop" and explained the building of the Cross-Bronx Expressway and its devastating effects on borough's social structure (cf. Chang, 2006; Rose, 1994). He showed images of the Bronx during the 1970s and asked why the buildings were

burning and who had the power to let them burn. The responses were swiftly given by some of the girls: "White people!," "Politics!" Spiritchild replied that today not all politicians were white and that they were right about the oppression. He then asked the students about gangs, and the responses included lost family members, drugs, and violence. Spiritchild listened, agreed, and added that gangs were also defenses against oppression and a source of community. He then showed pictures of the infamous Peace meeting of various New York gangs in 1971 and mentioned the Ghetto Brothers as a progressive force. This intro allowed him to explain oppression and systemic neglect. He mentioned that there would be a Pop quiz about this and that the youth could win T-shirts.

This way of referencing the socioeconomic conditions and talking about cultural history is a common way for many Hip Hop pedagogues to start a conversation about class, racism, and other social justice issues. The rest of the Hip Hop Herstory curriculum has an equally political focus. It zooms in on women in Hip Hop and integrates the youth's protest poetry about police violence. These poems were to be the basis of their rap lyrics, which they would eventually record and perform during the last sessions. On the fifth of the eight sessions, the curriculum foresaw an activity where the girls would join their teachers after class for a rally against police violence at Union Square. The pedagogue's movement orientation leads to an activist component in the social justice curriculum with the goal of learners and mentors joining political rallies. Introducing these issues happened via the curricular strategy of addressing historical oppression and exclusion via HHC's history and its socio-economic context.

6.4.2 Reenacting Hip Hop History I Socioeconomic Context

Rap and political activist group Rebel Diaz has an equal footing in movement traditions, with their father supporting the socialist Allende government and having to flee Chile from Pinochet's authoritarian rule. I argue that their movement participation and orientation explain their focus on these conditions in their own workshops. Their case is of interest, however, as they use a more interactive way of reliving the devastating effects of the Cross Bronx expressway's construction, the ensuing white flight, and police violence: via a reenactment. During an organizing workshop for political activists in Berlin based on the experiences of their neighborhood-based cultural center, *"The Rebel Diaz Arts Collective,"* the two brothers set the participants up in the whole room to represent the Bronx's population and its social structures. Posing as policemen, they showed how notorious city planner Robert Moses' plan violently destroyed relationships, housing, and local businesses. They had to push and shove the workshop participants out of the way to build the Cross-Bronx expressway through the room. This interactive and humorous way of illustrating the racist and violent nature of postindustrial city planning shows how Hip Hop pedagogues usually make educational settings more interactive: They base them on lived experiences rather than just top-down teaching. They employ the curricular strategy of talking about and reenacting the injustice via Hip Hop's socioeconomic contexts. Explaining the liberating effect of Hip Hop for the local

population, they shared the lessons drawn from the community organizing of their own squat/cultural center. Thus, Hip Hop organizers and pedagogues weave the history of Hip Hop into a topic, which in leftist circles often remains very dry, making it more accessible and fun to follow.

Reenacting Hip Hop History II: Cultural Uplifting via Theater Setting

Activists at neighborhood cultural center G Hip Hop have various ties to the Y'en a Marre movement.[177] They have also invited radical US artists, such as a member of New York's "The Last Poets" – often cited as the forefathers of rap (c.f. e.g. Dufresne, 1992) – and Dead Prez's M1. In 2015, the center's educational program director Young Noble recounted another project of enacting Hip Hop's history:

> **Young Noble:** *"basically it was about teaching the history of Hip Hop through theater. [...] We started with the South Bronx and how things started there to how things started in Senegal in the 1990s. It was about how the music started, and they interpreted the songs, like Grandmaster Flash, using theater. And it was kids who were not really understanding what Hip Hop is. And Keyti the rapper was playing the old school. And they started with a cypher, with the b-boys over there, people of the Zulu Nation pioneers playing what the real Hip Hop is[178], what the temple of Hip Hop is… KRS-One. How it started with b-boying, […] And the kids played it and learned it and enjoyed it a lot. And they were playing as if they were there themselves in Sedgwick Avenue [...]people being at a party! In 73, when the philosophy of Hip Hop started and when they realized that they were Black, that they were descendants of Africans, and that they should use their knowledge and philosophy to empower."*

The pan-African ideals of parts of early Hip Hop and especially Afrocentric rap artists of the 1980s are often used as a common denominator by Hip Hop educators in Senegal to establish a cultural connection towards African American cultural formats of resisting oppression. Reenacting HHC's mythologized true-school narrative and its liberating moments is parallel to Rebel Diaz's techniques and to the many Hip Hop theater initiatives in New York by El Puente or Farbeon's university seminars on Hip Hop theater. This mythologized narrative enables the pedagogues to talk about some political issues. It also serves as a normative framework, and the story of artistic agency in the face of structural oppression works as a motivational ideal symbolized in the motto "From Zero To Hero" (many Senegalese teaching artists and organizers repeatedly cited it during interviews and informal conversations). G Hip Hop's activists instructed youth from Dakar's banlieue to reenact this

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[177] As detailed in chapter 3 and 8, the organizers are some of the first members of the Y'en A Marre movement and are partaking also in more recent and more radical movement coalitions, such as Aar Li nu Bokk and Nio Lank.

[178] The interview took place before the child abuse allegations were made public against Bambaataa and the Zulu nation.

mythologized narrative to maintain Hip Hop as a self-reproducing system with its own norms, ideals of learning, and cultural activism.

6.4.3 Takin' it Back: Teaching Afrodiasporic Hip Hop History at University

> **Rabbi Darkside:** *"'[Hip Hop] comes from young people who are by and large products of other diasporas. If you trace that timeline and those roots, it takes you back through the great migration, through Reconstruction, through Jim Crow, through the Antebellum, into the Middle Passage and back to West Africa,[…] to understand the history of Hip Hop culture is to understand the history of America. […] From work songs to spirituals to gospel to blues to jazz, funk, soul, rock 'n roll, and [eventually] hip-hop. A lot of these [Black genres] are musics of survival,"* (Darkside in: Garcia, 2016)

The academic setting allows Rabbi to go further into historical detail when talking on Hip Hop via in-depth readings of historical and theoretical texts. This opens perspectives on the interrelations between Afrodiasporic cultural forms and the oppression of their eras. Rabbi's students at the New School University said they had discussed the history of Black oppression and resistance in his Hip Hop seminars via readings of bell hooks and Howard Zinn. When asked whether they learned about Hip Hop's Afrodiasporic precursor movements Alex, a young white British woman, said: *"We also cover that in the intro class […] before we even learn anything on the turntables it's the understanding the context of what, how, when and where and why we're learning all of this."*

After his seminar, Rabbi reported that the interactive parts of using a cypher, pop cultural media, and integrating practical experiences of Hip Hop culture into the classroom worked quite well.[179] However, teaching social justice issues via Black/Hip Hop history had challenged the white, Jewish teaching artist:

> **Rabbi:** *"The first thing I really had to reckon with before stepping into this role was my whiteness. And I had to kind of come to terms with my own authenticity and expertise and yeah, had to kind of like disarm myself and that' is something I'm always working on. but yeah, it's you know, it's a thing. It's a big it's a big responsibility in general to be working in realms of social justice."*

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[179] However, when it comes to the readings, not all students aim for a deeper understanding and instead only talk about their opinions on pop cultural formats. Rabbi: *"A lot of them [students] come in thinking like, they kind of know everything. And that's, you know, partly because there's like 'The Get Down' [series] on TV now and like, you know, a Wu Tang […] you don't have to dig that deep to get like a superficial pop-culture version of the birth of Hip Hop."* Thus Hip Hop's ongoing prevalence in mainstream pop culture can enable students' attention and hinder them doing the readings. I have made similar experiences teaching four undergrad seminars on Hip Hop at Potsdam University, Germany.

This individualized reflection of one's privileges is very common in the neoliberal era with its essentialist identity politics[180]. While the analysis usually stops here, this approach also bears the potential to talk about the systemic root causes of capitalism's racialized and gendered hierarchies. Rabbi employs tools, such as a privilege walk, where all students with a particular privilege have to take one step, such as being white, able-bodied, male, or having parents with academic degrees. According to Rabbi, his academic courses then go beyond such individualized notions of privilege and analyze class and systemic injustices and the role of such identifications in upholding and covering up exploitation.

The academic context allows for a different level of abstraction when employing HHC to discuss interrelations of class, race, and gender (and how the latter are socially constructed) than high schools. There are also fewer state requirements of standardized testing, and critical perspectives in the humanities mainly depend on the teaching staff themselves (and the faculty's staff choices). But what does social justice teaching via HHC and Afrodiasporic history look like in the high school context?

6.4.4 Movement History and NGO Censorship at High Schools

In high school settings, social justice curricula often focus on social protest precursors to Hip Hop, such as the Black Power and Civil Rights movements, including rap references of Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, the Black Panthers, or the Young Lords. In addition to his cypher pedagogy, teaching artist Y? talked to his students about Black history and invited the youth to Urban Art Beat's holiday:

> **Edwin:** *I remember me and LJ, we took our summer, you know, summer where you're supposed to just like spend time at the beach. We were in class and we're learning about the history of Hip Hop starting with the Young Lords, like the activism of the Black Panthers and Young Lords and how ...*
> **Daniel:** *he [Y?] taught us about it, too.*
> **Edwin:** *and how, you know, how they were advocating for their rights. And then, you know, it went just down to the Last Poets, and you know, we're talking about their craft.*

Y?'s integration of movement history happened only after building a relationship with the youth and, therefore, again requires long-term teaching contexts. Having worked for various NGOs, Y? also speaks on the de-politicizing and censoring effects of the non-profit world and its gatekeepers.

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[180] Many of the neoliberal diversity approaches/trainings build on individualized notions of social justice, where the solution is ending oppression, exploitation and the unequal distribution of wealth and power. Instead, individualized reflections of privilege and a diversification of the ruling elites are proposed (cf. Mendivil & Sarbo in: Sablowski et al., 2021). This also counts for popular culture, e.g. when rap legend Nas talks about sharing the same goals as *"the good guys on Wall street – if there are any – […] to diversify corporate America".* Cf. (*Breakfast Club Nas Interview*, 2020).

Y?: "another reason I had to start 'Creative Expressions' [his own non-profit] and move away from the NGOs... I don't consider myself that political but I consider myself authentic. And I cannot be silenced. And that's another reason I took a financial hit my brother. they wanted me to be the cool safe guy of color. [...]but then when I would start to tell these kids 'Yo[...] guys, this is Black culture [...]' I remember some directors, I'm not gonna say their names, but they're like 'Hey, Y? we love what you're doing with two bars and pass, but yo when you do that extra component...', you know, they would try to say it, but I was like, 'Fuck no!' I was like, 'Why don't you want me to say that? They live in the projects? For real, and then look, this one kid is in the projects on avenue three. and this one kid is in the East side and his dad's a fucking corporate banker that lives in a luxury condo… and I don't want this one to look at this one like he's better than that one or vice versa cause I remember these kids saying, 'Yo, this neighborhood is not for me no more.' I was like 'No, I'm sorry. fire me' [...] I'm not gonna lie, it cost me a lot of money."

Being of lighter skin color and very entertaining and inclusive in his teaching and his cultural views, Y? reports the censoring instances of the non-profit sector. Here, large foundations and the 1% determine the programs to be funded, and program directors can act as gatekeepers and censors. Y? thus perceives it to be his choice of either compromising political and personal integrity or financial income and career perspectives, which can be seen as curricular censorship.

When teaching Hip Hop and Afrodiasporic history, further complications stem from the outside and from the culture's internal contradictions. So how do the Hip Hop pedagogues navigate the latter, and how do they try and maintain the liberating impetus and agency of the narrative of the "Birth of Hip Hop"?

6.4.5 Navigating Contradictions in Hip Hop: "Bam and the Foul Shit"

The allegations of sexual abuse against Hip Hop's "godfather" Afrika Bambaataa were made public before my first fieldwork in New York. I got to know only one organization and its teaching artists to maintain relations with the Universal Zulu Nation, founded by Bambaataa (cf. 2.3.4). However, not all actors were fully aware of the scandal, and Bambaataa still carries a positive reputation in parts of the field. One example was given by Y?'s mentees in 2019 when they remembered a particular rap show they were able to perform in through their teacher's network:

Matthew: like at Nuyorican's there was an opportunity [...] and also we performed at.. and we did... it was like a Hip Hop anniversary in Harlem, I think, Afrika Bambaataa was there.
Edwin: Word? That's fire!
Daniel: Amazing. That's the one we went through? Afrika Bambaataa was there? That's craaazyyy
Matthew: That's from what I heard [...]
Saman: You guys were performing there?
Edwin: I never... I didn't get to perform there

> **Matthew:** *you guys have like Alzheimer. [laughter]. Yeah, me and him [points to Daniel] […]*
> **Saman:** *Yeah, crazy… And I know it's like a really touchy subject but like, did you guys…? What's your take on the Zulu nation and Bambaataa and the scandals like?*
> **Edwin:** *I've never really...*
> **Matthew:** *Word, I did my research and shit. He was touching boys.*
> **Daniel:** *That is crazy there's always something*
> **Saman:** *It's so mad man. The guy who named the culture...*
> **Edwin:** *this n**** yoo*
> **Daniel:** *there's always gonna be some shit man, like naah, it's real fucked up bro.*

Bambaataa's name obviously still carries weight with these aspiring artists, and only one out of the group of five knew about the abuse. In contrast to these upcoming MCs, all teaching artists were aware of the accusations and the public debate around it, and the vast majority were highly critical of Bambaataa and of those members of the Zulu Nation covering up the cases of abuse. However, they all differentiated between Bambaataa and the inner protective circle on the one hand and the many chapters in the US and globally, whom they said were mostly doing good activist work. The teaching artists had different classroom/curricular strategies for addressing the abuse and Bambaataa's role in Hip Hop overall.[181]

Strategy I: De-centering the Zulu Nation and Bambaataa

The first strategy in discussing the history of Hip Hop is one of de-centering the Zulu Nation and Bambaataa and instead focusing on other actors. On the one hand, MC/teaching artist Y? highly identifies with 1970s Hip Hop and its creative outburst. Nonetheless, he explicitly distances himself from many of the Hip Hop *"purists who start their history in 1973"* (with Kool Herc's first block party). Thus, he also distances himself from his own "purist" past, *"cause trust me in the 1990s and early 2000s, I was like '73, 73!!!'"* However today, he calls the mythologized Zulu Nation narrative into question:

> **Y?:** *"I really study people like disco King Mario and how in the Bronx in the 1980s, when Blondie and Fab Five Freddy… let's keep it real… I'll say this.. some might get mad at me. There were people from the community they didn't want to go downtown. And there were the people like Bambaataa, who went downtown and took a check and was with Tommy Boy and a signed artist. So not to say he was the first sellout because I understand,*

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[181] In one-off school workshops on Hip Hop history, I now usually leave Bambaataa out of the presentation slides, since this would just take up too much time to clear out and explain for such a context. Instead, I keep in a few slides on the Zulu Nation and shortly mention the canon of Hip Hop values defined from within the organization. During university seminars on Hip Hop, I have presented readings from before the publication of the scandals that include Bambaataa's contributions and have made the issue of abuse allegations a talking point in combination with the public statement made by the collective of Hip Hop educators and activists mentioned in chapter 2 (cf. Clemente et al., 2016).

but they took his narrative, and that became the narrative we call to this day. And it was this romantic story of this Black Spade gang leader that you can see going like 'Warriors – Can you dig it?' of unifying and all that, but when you really look at the Ghetto Brothers, shout out to those guys. Those are some bad-ass dudes. And they were playing Beatles covers.

Saman: *Their music is so good!*

Y?: *They were playing guitars. Go back to the Fat Back Band with 'King Tim III'. That's MCing straight up, going back to Pigmeat Markham [imitates a rhyme flow from the 1968 single 'Here comes the Judge'] This is all before '73".*

By questioning the mythologized and canonized narrative of Hip Hop, that was agreed upon by Hip Hop's three "founding fathers" Grandmaster Flash, Kool Herc, and Afrika Bambaataa in an interview in/with The Source during the 1990s (cf. Poschardt, 1997), Y? fulfills different strategic aims. First of all, he separates himself both from a Hip Hop purist position and from the popular cultural views so common due to the superficial accounts of Hip Hop in the mainstream. Thereby, he affirms his position as a cultural insider when formerly insider positions have become mainstream knowledge. At the same time, this positioning and referencing of influences earlier than 1973 allows him to take Bambaataa somewhat out of the central focal position awarded to him in the mythologized Hip Hop narration. Thus, he can maintain a history of cultural liberation that centers more around the Ghetto Brothers.[182]

This strategy of decentering Bambaataa and the Zulu Nation in the narration and focusing instead on a different set of emancipatory and creative Ghetto youth, is equally employed by Farbeon and Rabbi Darkside of the Hip Hop Re:education Project. When a former participant of Farbeon's global cultural diplomacy programs visit New York to shoot documentaries etc. he brings them not only to Hip Hop's birthplace of Kool Herc's first Block Party at Sedgwick Ave:

Farbeon: *" I mean Sedgwick is the thing sure, but Hoe Avenue boys and girls club is like where they held the first intergang meeting after the killing of Black Benjie right? So for me that's where I want to take him [successful rapper PsychoGee from Indonesia], because like.. yeah we can talk about where the music started how the culture started and all that. But really it was about a critical awakening of the young people to put aside their behaviors that they were doing for a greater cause. [...] The Ghetto Brothers are an example of like where art and education and social justice connects at."*

This common strategy of shifting attention toward other social justice-oriented actors and deflecting from Bambaataa keeps the Hip Hop narrative of Black and Brown youth liberating themselves intact.

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[182] Nicholson's (2010) documentary "Rubble Kings" is based upon Jeff Chang's (2006) "Can't Stop Won't Stop" and tells an equally romanticized version of the Social Justice organization/gang/band/peacekeepers "The Ghetto Brothers."

Strategy II: De-centering Hip Hop through "Multidisciplinary Art"

As a second strategy, Y?' references the historical tradition of different Black musical genres and says that rap has existed before 1973. He also told me during and after the interview that he does not use the term Hip Hop popularized by Bambaataa anymore and prefers to talk of "multi-disciplinary art" or uses the term, which is also the name of his own newly founded non-profit: "Creative Expressions". This strategy of decentering his cultural genre of choice and disassociating it from the term Hip Hop is another strategy of shifting the cultural practice away from the Zulu narrative. Thereby, he can also cater to all the students in his educational projects, regardless of their musical taste and genre preferences. In the same vein, he has recently broadened his own teaching and music-making skillset to include the guitar, the piano, and other instruments, as well as singing instead of rapping.

Additionally, instead of retelling the Hip Hop narrative, he employs artists of the different elements:

> *Y?: "I am able to not say, 'Hey guys, Hip Hop started in 73', but they see Waaak [b-boy], they see me, they see a producer, [...] and also our graphic design element is our video component. So that, to me, is still keeping the elements but in a modern way. So still keeping that what I call multi-disciplinary art in 2019, 2020, for younger people who may not have a connection to like how I did the '73 of it [...] But it is still Hip Hop pedagogy. It's still what I call the cypher pedagogy."*

Thus, by employing different artists without telling the standardized Zulu narrative, Y? argues that he also makes it more accessible to today's youth via experiential learning instead of top-down stipulations.

Strategy III: Naming and Facing the Contradictions Head-on:

Rabbi Darkside also, to some extent, de-centers the Zulu Nation and Afrika Bambaataa and similarly references the Ghetto Brothers and other artists more when teaching at the academy. At the same time, he follows a third approach of addressing and centering "contradictions in Hip Hop" more generally. By naming these contradictions, he can address the Bambaataa scandal head-on and still value his cultural, musical, and political contributions. Via this "contradictions in Hip Hop" approach, he can equally address other pressing issues in and beyond HHC, such as inter alia the misogyny or criminal images in mainstream rap. Let us look at how the teaching artists navigate these contradictions in the following.

6.4.6 Ways to Navigate Misogyny and Commercialization

As mentioned before, one classroom/educational strategy for addressing the misogyny prevalent in a lot of rap music and other Hip Hop elements is to focus on Women's roles in Hip Hop history and to analyze Heterosexism and Patriarchy.

Cultural center G Hip Hop's former program director Young Noble did so by giving talks and by defining what authentic Hip Hop is and what it is not:

> **Young Noble:** *"I take care of the fifth element myself. We do a conference once a month, where different subjects are set up. I studied history at university, so I try and focus on the history of Hip Hop and its 9 elements.[…] How did things start? On women in Hip Hop. For those values, which people in the press are always saying that Hip Hop is just insulting women. Which is not always true. And which only goes for the mainstream audience. And real Hip Hop is not about that. Instead it is about community. What can the culture do for the community? And then give them the example of Hip Hop in Senegal and also all around the world: like Hip Hop For Change in Cali, or what Lupe Fiasco is doing, they are not really perceived in the mainstream, but they are doing big things for their community."*

By declaring only Hip Hop varieties as real, which do not insult women, and by distinguishing the activist from the commercialized Hip Hop for "mainstream audiences," Young Noble clarifies a new in- and outgroup for "real" or authentic Hip Hop practitioners. For this purpose, he evokes a normative hierarchy between underground and commercial Hip Hop – a common trope and means of distinction.

He told me that he had bee ndiscussing women's roles in HHC with Amadou from Africulturban and both gave talks on the issue. Amadou instead stressed that he preferred to give women a platform to speak for themselves via his organization Africulturban. The next chapter discusses the strategies of uniting female artists and organizing female-focus festivals outside the classroom. Concerning classroom-based activities, both cultural centers organize specific editions of their educational programs, such as the three-month-long Urban Woman Mix, a female edition of the DJ classes with ensuing events, or concerning classes on cultural and project management during the festival Urban Woman Week.[183] They also include workshop quotas, so during the regular DJing workshops at the Maison des Cultures Urbaines, at least half of the participants have to be women. Thus, by employing, educating, and professionalizing more women in the field, these organizations and, more particularly, the women in them work towards a larger female quota of representation and participation to shift power and the right to have a say in HHC.

Putting a specific focus on the role of women in Hip Hop through talks is parallel to the curricular strategy described by Urban Art Beat's organizer Rosa for their "Hip Hop Herstory" class.

> **Rosa:** *"We put a focus on female pioneers of Hip Hop and also of Hip hop artists because systemically and herstorically, their narratives have been left out. […] we always want to highlight the inspiring legends that have come before. And if you don't actually take the time to do that intentionally, it won't always happen [...] If we were to ask the*

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[183] In the dance world, it is equally common to see female-only workshop weeks, such as the West German "Ladies Dance" program. The specific women-only battles and festivals will be discussed in the next chapter on scene-specific learning.

girls who their favorite MCs are, you know 75% of them will probably say male names,
once they figured out what a MC was. You have to say rap artists or rapper. But if you
ask them 'Who are your favorite female MCs?', then they name them, and then through
each other, they learn more, you know, so they might not know some of the ones from the
past, but they hear from someone else like 'oh, who's that?' and then because it's peer, or
because it's a special guest that's talking about it, then they look it up. So you're sharing
that love and then encouraging each other to create that community reception as well by
focusing on the Herstory."

Role models are critical in the male-dominated, (partly) meritocratic, and hierar-
chical cultural phenomenon of Hip Hop. Therefore, strategically highlighting
women's contributions to the culture and establishing female role models works as
a small-scale subversion on the grassroots level.[184]

Conclusion: Different Curricular Types and Strategies for Different Ends

Thus far, we have seen the different types of curricula and curricular strategies to
bring Hip Hop into the classroom (cf. the table below). With these, the teaching
artists fulfill and sometimes surpass the goals of Billings' (2018: 22) 'culturally rele-
vant pedagogy', which *"involves 3 main components: a focus on student learning, developing*
students' cultural competence, and critical consciousness." The first point references intellec-
tual growth instead of the Banking model learning style. Teaching artists fulfill this
via integrated curricula, and tieing Hip Hop's artistic practice to other topics. Sec-
ondly, cultural competence means the students recognize the value of their own
culture and learn the ropes in other cultural backgrounds – Hip Hop can represent
either of these two points, and the students' own culture can tie into the artistic
production. The third point of critical consciousness is taught via social justice cur-
ricula by referencing Hip Hop and Black history and naming the culture's contra-
dictions. It is also put into practice at El Puente, or Urban Art Beat, by joining in
movements and protests. The purely artistic curriculum differs from the other inte-
grated curricula, as its primary goal is to improve the artistic skill on an aesthetic
level independent of artistic content or ideologies. Hip Hop pedagogues design in-
teractive, multidisciplinary, and multimedia curricula, introducing themes from Hip
Hop and popular culture and the learners' interests. This is quite similar to how
Freire's (2000, p. 123) Pedagogy of the Oppressed designs "general program[s]" of

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[184] However, a successful feminist strategy for transformation would have to change mediatized
mainstream rap (and lyrics/music videos of all genres, advertisements, movies, and the pornography
industry). However, it also requires institutional and collective solutions to abuse and harassment in
Hip Hop and the larger society. Following feminist Marxists (cf. Federici, 2014, 2021; Taylor, 2016),
these issues can never be fully resolved without tackling the systemic root causes: The capitalist gender
hierarchy is due to over-exploitation of women in unpaid reproductive/care work and underpaid
female wage labor, leading many of the patriarchal discriminations and abuses. Low-level training
concerning critical media literacy in Hip Hop projects can, however, contribute a piece of the puzzle
to a larger feminist strategy.

specific "educational campaign[s]." In his multistage process, educators generate the themes in close dialogue with the population of potential learners. While such a resource-demanding process is rarely possible with non-profit Hip Hop curricula, they often leave many open thematic spots for the learners to fill with their own themes and identities.[185] The diverse and entertaining ways of presenting and engaging the material are similar to Freire's (2000, p. 121) method, where *"once the breakdown of the thematics is completed, there follows the stage of its 'codification': choosing the best channel of communication for each theme and its representation."* What is specific to Freire's *"problem-posing method,"* is that the themes consist mostly of antagonisms, which people perceive in their every day lives and in so called *"limit situations,"* i.e. situations where they experience their oppression and the limit of their individual, or collective power. The educators should not propose solutions but rather moderate an open-ended discussion, which then leads to collective reflexive action by the learners. This can be achieved by a repeating circle of theoretical reflection and planning, intervening, and reflecting on the action (cf. Freire, 2000, p. 122 f.). This is similar to Urban Art Beat's social justice "Hip Hop Herstory" curriculum, where the teaching artist and mentors challenge the participants to reflect upon their role as young Black women underrepresented in Hip Hop culture, and to discuss larger systemic issues of racism, or police violence. The reflexive action in this case is mostly recording music but also includes collective participation in street protests etc. Other curricular designs strategically focus on "just literature" to bring radical rap lyrics into the classroom, which are highly critical of neo-colonialism, and thereby build critical consciousness.

Ibrahim (in: Alim et al., 2008, p. 232) sees Hip Hop as *"inventive, boundary breaking, boundary pushing, which may best be referred to as Creative Margin Curriculum that is deeply related to students' lives, and which students use as a site of learning and identity formation."* By writing different types of Hip Hop curricula teaching artists serve various artistic/political goals and challenge the school system's oppressive demands of obedience. Explicit social-justice curricula and foundation-oriented, artistic curricula can carry more aspects of the banking model, wanting to transport much knowledge quickly. Most curricula, however, merge banking model teaching of HH skill foundation and more open cypher formats, where students can contribute themselves. Again, I argue that the open, or closedness and type of curriculum should be reflected upon and made transparent by the pedagogues. If the students disagree with the lesson plan, strategic working against the curriculum and "catering to the community" can be a solution.

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[185] This focus on set identities can also lead to problematic essentializing and complicate practiced solidarity across lines of difference. However, this depends on the way these questions are framed and whether a solidary class perspective is given.

Tab. 4: Hip Hop Curricula, Curricular Strategies, their Practices and Outcomes

Curric. Type	Characteristics, Practices & Outcomes
Hip Hop Curriculum in General	> Professionalization of pedagogues > Access to formal teaching institutions > Generates income for authors of curricula > Develop one's teaching structure: Set learning goals, include a timeline, activities & content > Teaching becomes reproducible and can inspire global Hip Hop pedagogical projects > Hip Hop practices for innovative learning formats (cypher, Battle, Call & Response, Flipping, etc.) Dangers: > Can become too rigid > Learners/institutions do not take content seriously
Purely Artistic Curriculum	> Oral cultural knowledge is stored and archived > Proper artistic foundation becomes accessible > Often uses culture-specific spaces and relations of learning to teach the practices > Easier access to institutions than social-justice curricula > Knowledge becomes institutionalized and formalized > Can inhibit artistic innovation; creativity has to be taught
Integrated Curriculum	> Combination between skill-related & general knowledge > Renders academic teaching more interactive, engaging and levels out hierarchies of learning > Multidisciplinary teaching can be more inclusive towards a wider range of learners (via different elements, learning formats of Hip Hop culture and more standardized pedagogies)
Banking Model Integrated Curriculum	> Can increase engagement and measurable student performance in banking model institutions & tests > Limits Hip Hop as a tool for the larger goals of producing obedient and high-performance students / workers and for learning "high cultural" content > Can reaffirm hierarchy between marginalized students, cultures & knowledge vs. mainstream society
Social Justice Curriculum	> Uses Hip Hop to connect to larger themes of justice > Can relate to learners identities to personify learning and create greater motivation > Movement orientation provides normative framework, opens up alternative platforms for learners
Curric. Strategies	Characteristics, Practices & Outcomes
Include rap as "Literature"	> Workaround standard curricular agenda > Set own, social-justice agenda > Make literature and language classes more interesting

in state curricula	> Gain quick institutional access for Hip Hop pedagogues
Work against the curriculum	> "Cater to the community": take learners' emotional needs and interests into account > Teachers become flexible in their pedagogy and level out hierarchies > Work against dogmatic readings of Hip Hop culture
Use Hip Hop & Afrodiasporic History	> Digging and learning about the culture (5th element) > Using Hip Hop's contradictions to talk about larger societal issues (patriarchal, racialized capitalism) > Making "dry" leftist topics more accessible to learners > Telling Hip Hop history as one of cultural liberation gives agency to aspiring practitioners

6.5 Show and Prove II: Final Performances or "the Proverbial Dog and Pony Show"

After discussing the different practices of classroom-based Hip Hop in chapter 5 and some of its more content-related aspects in this chapter, we will focus on what is often a combination of the two, as well as the end goal of such workshops: a final show and prove. As mentioned in 5.1., anything learned within Hip Hop only makes sense when practiced in culture-specific spaces and events, be it cyphers, battles, DJ showcases, dance performances, concerts, parties, or painting walls and trains. Thus, Hip Hop's experiential learning comes to its fulfillment in the experience of HHC-specific performance spaces. Most HH pedagogues try to replicate such performance spaces inside the teaching institutions.

Similar to the scene events, these end-of-the-year /semester /summer camp shows pose creative deadlines and function as incentives for the learners to work towards refining their skill sets and ameliorating their artistic performances. In HHC, there are many competitive and cooperative formats. In HH classrooms, however, cooperative settings are the norm as the teaching artists mainly want to unite the class in a collective endeavor. Some of the final show & proves include an audience of experts/practitioners or the lay public. Others focus on a final artistic product, such as a recorded album, an exhibition, or a music video. I argue that to adequately employ the culture-specific show and proves in class, the pedagogues must have a grounding in Hip Hop – particularly when they want learners to perform at scene events or in social movement spaces. Such final artistic productions are a central indicator of a program's success for teaching artists, funders, and the learners themselves.

The following subchapter discusses different types and aspects of such show and proves, beginning with establishing a "culture of completion" (6.5.1), and classic versions of such final performances (6.5.2). Thirdly, different formats of albums,

video productions, or exhibitions are discussed (6.5.3.) Finally, the more political dimensions of such a final performance are analyzed (6.5.4), such as instances of censorship, El Puente's yearly 3-Kings social justice theater show, and protest event performances.

6.5.1 Hip Hop Accountability: Show and Prove for "Culture of Completion"

> **Waaak:** *"in high school, I was a truant, I'd leave school or I wouldn't come to school. I was on the trains writing all day, shoplifting. I came to school because my friends were in school breaking and I wanted to break with them. And then when I was fucking up, my friends (...) was saying 'Yo, man, you fucking up! You should go to summer school! (...)' Teachers didn't care. Guidance counselors didn't care you know. My peers held me accountable for those things, you know, so that community held me down."*

Being a young Brooklynite of color from one of the poorest parts of New York, teaching artist Waaak-One, makes out a discrepancy between school and his Hip Hop peers. He contrasts Hip Hop community accountability with his experience in the public school system, thus portraying the US system of public education as a place where young and poor kids of color do not receive the psychological and aspirational capital (cf. Ortner, 2002; Yosso, 2005) needed to graduate and gain the cultural capital of a degree.

Rosa from educational service provider Urban Art Beat calls this "a culture of low expectations" prevalent in public schools and some larger non-profits. She told the story of how UAB had organized a vacation program for another cultural center-type non-profit organization[186] in New York: *"It has free services.[…] it's extremely funded and it's a great resource. I saw there what I've seen in many public schools where there's a culture of low expectation because some things are so difficult, right? And then when you have people getting that defeated feeling, it can be contagious."* To counter this, she and the teaching artists established a "culture of completion" by employing three main techniques: auditions, rules of exclusion, and thirdly, the climactic final show and prove. The auditions were not based on talent but were instead carried out so that the youth *"could see how serious it was and know that they would be committing to something. Y? brought that to our attention […] it really made a very big difference because we [...] let them know 'These are our expectations.'."* During the one-on-one interviews, they established rules of exclusion by telling the youth that they would have to leave if they missed two days in two weeks, which was against the host organization's standard policy:

> **Rosa:** *"at first the youth were like 'No, I can come and go.' And we're like 'Well in our program, that's not how it works.' At the end, for many of the youth, the feedback was, 'I didn't know I could do this. You were the first people to ask me to like step up.' And you know, we had shows and original songs and original beats, we had like the second*

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[186] I have chosen to anonymize this organization. It is not among my analyzed organizations.

summer that we did it there people were learning instruments and created their own beat on an actual instrument."

What Rosa describes is the ideal case of how a Hip Hop-based program works, when the youth overcome their stage fright and achieve a final result, be it a performance, recorded music, an image, or a video. This fuels pride in their achievements and possibly changes their views of themselves and their capacities. In this case, establishing the culture of completion, including auditions and rules of exclusion, enabled a successful final show and prove.[187] This represents a show and prove of the classical performance type, i.e., an end-of-the-program (/semester/year) showcase inside the school or host institution, which poses a creative deadline. It often involves the kids' parents as public and concludes the learning process up until that point by making the pedagogical accomplishments visible.

Performance Skills via a Final Show and Prove – The Learners' Perspective

Y?'s students of the Beat Explorers program describe the potential and dangers of the first performance:

> **Edwin:** *"It [the first performance] is either your best performance, and it was gonna be like 'that's it. I'm gonna keep going!' Or it's gonna be your worst performance, and within that worst performance, you was gonna either stop, or you was gonna either keep going.*
> **Daniel:** *Yeah, it makes you better [general agreement]*
> **Matthew:** *Ey yooo like everyone… like almost like 90% of the people that was actually doing that performance kept going.*
> **Edwin:** *Yeah, I remember I messed up, and then I just kept going.*
> **Matthew:** *He pushed that shit..*
> **Edwin:** *Yeah, he pushed that shit*
> **LJ:** *That was the main thing he taught in the class, was like stage presence and shit like that, if you fuck up on stage, don't stop and stand there off-looking like an asshole, and the crowd is probably not even going to realize that you actually fucked up. [all agree].*
> **Matthew:** *There were so many times I'd freestyle, and I was just like: 'OH YEAH'*
> **Edwin:** *What's funny, and I'm glad Y? did teach me this like, I messed up during my graduation performance, right? Because I couldn't hear the beat cus my mom was yelling. So I was like [claps], I was like, 'Hold up! Run that back' like […] and then after, I hear the break, I just went in and killed that shit, and like from there I knew that I had the confidence to whatever if I wanted to freestyle or… […] I'm just grateful for the opportunity to just meet him and take his knowledge."*

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[187] This works against the culture of low expectations, which can be seen as a threat in public schools and the NGO realm. Rosa described that public school teachers do not want to work afternoons, *"so if one of the teachers is staying after school, they'll fight that because that makes them look bad. So it's just this weird political egotistical game."* According to her, there is a similar climate in some parts of the non-profit realm, as Urban Art Beat could not carry out a third vacation program, since their methods were somewhat threatening the status quo of the hosting organization.

Y?'s students thus describe what can be considered the norm in workshop-linked performances, pre-show stage fright and post-show self-judging for having messed up or pride in one's performance. A good Hip Hop pedagogue knows how to frame a showcase so that the learners see it as an opportunity to grow and become better. At the same time, high school students' fears are often justified, as in some schools peer judgment, being bullied and laughed at for a "bad performance" are the norm. However, by instilling skills, confidence, and improvisational abilities into his learners and teaching them to just "keep going," Y? was able to open up the space for the growth of their performance skills.[188]

Most teaching artists see the upcoming performance as a means to discipline the learners and achieve a proactive group spirit toward this final cooperative work in a culture of completion. One of the results can be that the youth take pride in their performance, such as Y?'s students when describing their high school's end-of-the-year talent show:" *LJ: ours was the most lit.* **Edwin:** *No, ours was lit! No, definitely. That's what I'm saying!"* While such classical show and prove performances mostly take place inside the school or hosting institution, there are also arrangements with other more prestigious places to increase the show's importance for the kids and their parents. After only a year of practice, Waaak's students from a BEATGlobal breaking program performed a showcase in Washington DC, in front of the White House for Easter celebrations. Similarly, one-element-based organization Kaay Fecc organized a French-Algerian choreographer's workshop's final show and prove at the French Institute in Dakar's city center. Performing at this impressive venue was a premiere for many of the visibly excited dancers. Some more political pedagogues criticize such venues, but they carry the weight of institutional/"high"-cultural recognition. They can illustrate the worth of the learned material and give the program more visibility and legitimacy. The cases above differ from scene-type show and proves. Let us now see how.

6.5.2 Scene-Specific Show and Prove Performances

Scene-specific show and proves either take place at scene events or in scene-specific formats of a Battle, or a cypher. The pedagogues must be grounded in HHC, and the organizational type also plays an important role. As mentioned already in chapter 5, MC and teaching artist Y? combines both scene-specific and more classical types of final performances in his workshops: His students from BEATGlobal's program at the Manhattan high school performed inside the school and in Hip Hop and open mic venues. According to Y?'s student Matthew, the latter would happen *"every year. It would be once or twice a semester. Yeah. Aside from the talent shows [inside the school] and those were already set in stone."* Taking them to perform at the "Nuyorican

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[188] Y? developed an inclusive strategy against stage fright: **LJ:** *"if there was kids in the class, who didn't know how to rap […] he was like 'all right so you're gonna host the show, so you're still going on stage motherfucker!' [laughter]."* This strategy of delegating tasks around the performance is in line with Y?'s inclusive cypher Pedagogy's learner orientation.

Poets Café" or at Zulu Nation Hip Hop anniversaries, Y? ensured their scene entrance and shared his Hip Hop-specific social capital as a few of his students got small job and project offers via these scene connections.

A quite different simulation of a scene-specific show and prove is used by b-boy and style writer Waaak One in summer-camp-style writing classes in Baltimore. After going over the basics with the youths and letting them develop sketches of larger graff-pieces on paper, he wakes them up one night. He lets them know that they will "go bombing," i.e., illegally paint the neighborhood with their pieces. Instead of going out into the city, they stay on holiday campgrounds and paint predetermined walls, keeping up the act of an illegal nightly bombing tour.

In addition to the pedagogues' grounding in HHC, organizational types equally matter for scene-specific performances. Senegalese DJs Geebayss and Gasga teach DJ classes at the cultural centers MCU, Africulturban, and G Hip Hop in Dakar and its Banlieues. They use their organizations' specific setup and scene events for their students' performances. After leading a two-month-long DJ class inside the MCU, Geebayss arranged for a final collaborative show and prove performance at the "Mix Up," the country's largest DJing competition. During the competition hosted by the MCU, the students performed basic scratching techniques in front of the expert crowd, which highly differs from performing in front of family members and school peers. The latter, however, can sometimes be as judgmental as the cultural insiders. Every individual could only spend one to two minutes at the decks, which makes sense because DJing takes much time to master and sound good. Young female student Mima nevertheless reported how proud she was of her performance after I congratulated her and was even more motivated as she was sharing that night's stage with some of the country's best DJs.

DJ Gasga at G Hip Hop regularly invites his students to mix during a scene-type of event. Each advanced student gets around 20 or 30 minutes every Wednesday to mix instrumentals during G Hip Hop's open mic rap cypher. This longer performance in a regular scene-setting makes for an authentic Hip Hop experience and integrates the students HH's community of practice. According to the organizers, this has already led to various collaborations between rappers and DJs and opened many scene perspectives. Such scene-specific show and proves are only possible due to the organizational type of the neighborhood-based cultural center combining both formal classroom settings and informal scene events. The teachers must also be active practitioners and maintain their scene network to integrate the learners.

Battles as Scene-Specific Show and Proves for Classroom-Based Learning

Most classroom-related show and prove events are cooperative. However, one-element-based organization Urban Artistry regularly hosts competitive scene-like events for their students, such as small 1 vs.1 dance battles in their classes as part of the class curricula as well as outside of class at their open sessions and

socials/jams. In classes, instructors explain the various rules, formats, tools and strategies for competing. Then, they simulate the feeling of a real scene-event, to help students prepare to battle in a variety of settings and sizes, including at jams, open sessions, clubs, and formally organized battles. For example, students are ranked according to skill level and get to battle many rounds to gain experience. This normalizes the battle interaction, and provides new dancers with many positive experiences battling, rather than the frustrating experience of practicing multiple times a week for months and then losing after dancing only a one-minute round at a professional one vs. one event.[189] Urban Artistry instructors talk about competitor mindset, goals, and how to develop a healthy relationship with competition, so that when something frustrating, disappointing and/or embarrassing happens in a competition setting, they are prepared with knowledge and tools to overcome those moments and continue to grow as dancers. The teaching artists often integrate instant feedback rounds. After an in-class battle, Urban Artistry's breaking teacher Russell told us to say one positive thing about our own performance, one thing we would like to improve upon, and one inspiring thing about someone else's performance. This framing of self-analysis forced the participants to take a step away from a common first reaction of being unhappy with one's performance. Compared with a regular class, such battle-based classes are much more energetic, and the students get very excited. After a breaking Battle class at Urban Artistry, the participants exchanged on their psychological and physical approaches for a long time. Battles inside a classroom can break the ice and enable verbal exchanges after physically competing – similar to the scene (cf. Schloss, 2009).

Battles thus function as a culture-specific motor for HH learning by instilling a competitive spirit into the students. Russell counterbalanced this by telling everyone to compliment their partners.

6.5.3 Different Types and Formats of a Final Artistic Production

The final recording of music is the most common non-performative artistic product, finishing off rap-based vacation or after-school programs. Senegalese teacher Dramé and activist rapper Fou Malade used this type of show and prove in their "Rap Poetiques" project. The youths here wrote the lyrics and recorded two albums with professional support from Fou Malade. All of New York's service-providing non-profits work similarly. Urban Art Beat's Hip Hop Herstory program finished with a final instance of the girls recording the songs they had written throughout the semester. The organization also records songs during its prison workshops on Riker's island, sometimes sparking co-productions between female and male inmates who never met in person as they are locked up separately. "All City" – one of the main pillars of "The Hip Hop Re:education Project" – is based on original

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[189] In scene settings, beginners often lose after dancing only one round, and the frustration is possibly high, especially when they do not dance in the Cyphers before and after the battle (which requires much confidence).

music production by youth from all over the city and in cooperation with partici-
pants from various Hip Hop youth exchanges. Such recording is a standard proce-
dure requiring the youth to cooperate and develop an artistic vision for their final
product, be it a song, an EP, or an album. Many of these songs end up on the
organizations' Soundcloud pages, visible to funders, other organizations, and the
youth's peer groups.

Teaching artist Y? carried out another type of show and prove with Black and
Brown youth from New York's projects with a political non-profit called YO-SOS
(Youth Organizing to Save Our Streets):

> **Y?:** *instead of making a million songs, I said we're going to take one piece of art, compose
> the music, make the lyrics, the text, make the song, make the video, storyboard it, direct
> it, put it on the internet. I want to teach them the process versus the product. So some of
> the kids, they didn't rap, but they directed the shot. They were like 'We want a piano, we
> want trap drums, we want this and that!' and what I did as a producer, I went in there
> with a staff of three, one video director who had an assistant, one emceeing coach and then
> one producer coach, because I'm also making sure I'm building up other people [...] I bring
> youth producers and mentors, so I train them while I'm training the youth."*

Y? describes this approach of quality over quantity with one properly produced
video outweighing a poorly produced album. According to Y? it is important to
have a final result that the students are proud of and want to show to their peers.
By employing his former students, Y? enabled peer-to-peer learning and job oppor-
tunities. He determined the framework, but it was up to the participants to choose
the song's and the video's themes. They focused on gun violence from the shooter's,
the victim's, and a narrator's perspective. During the workshop period, an actual
shooting occurred in their neighborhood. Thus, on top of the video, the group was
invited to play live neighborhood performances addressing Black-on-Black gun vi-
olence. This orientation toward the participant's lifeworlds enables them to identify
with their final artistic product. What sets this specific multimedia and performative
show and prove apart is how all of the youth get to play a creative role in it, even if
they are too shy to rap or sing. They can help with the shotlist, video directing, or
beat production. This allows for an inclusive show and prove for different learners
and interests.

In Africulturban's Youth Urban Media Academy in Dakar, participants exhib-
ited their photos as a final project (the self-chosen themes included: older workers,
pollution, homeless children, etc.). In 2019, many participants were already em-
ployed at Africulturban's center of documentation to take photos and videos of
Dakar's Hip Hop events, focusing on the organization's own concerts and festivals.
By having their pictures published via the organization's social media channels and
receiving money for it, the youth thus experience cultural and financial recognition
of their acquired skills. Most teaching artists want to transfer their students from
classrooms to HHC and use scene-specific show and proves to do so.

6.5.4 Political Dimensions: Censorship or the Proverbial Dog & Pony Show

Activist teaching artists aim for another transition and would like to see their students enter social movements. But how does this play out, and what are the hurdles in non-profit and school realms?

Teaching artist Rabbi Darkside describes the clichéd end of the semester *"proverbial dog and pony show"* as very repetitive and often bearing the danger of political censorship. I asked him whether one of New York's largest educational service providers[190] censored Hip Hop pedagogues. He responded:

> **Rabbi:** *"Nooo, there are a lot of badass revolutionary motherfuckers, who work for this organization, who are uncompromising in what they would teach and wildly inspirational. […] But I think it's people who just reached kind of a breaking point with like a moral conundrum around working for an organization that didn't represent their values. And when it comes to the end of the year shows, right? That's where like the selective editing comes in."*

According to Rabbi, who himself can teach more radical content at New York's New School University, the non-profit context often has a compromising effect on the educational content and the final showcase in particular. He describes its repetitive and censored nature:

> **Rabbi:** *"it gets exhausting like it's the same the same students who are the marquee performing artists every year who get on stage in front of like these huge crowds and like, you know, spit a dope poem but that has been edited and performed for the executive director who is like... well… thumbs up or thumbs down to certain components of it, right? […] the person who runs the organization and the artistic board chair will both get eyes and ears on and recommend any changes that need to be recommended."*

Rabbi is highly critical of the non-profit realm and has taught different HH elements via various organizations and programs. He sees program directors and funders as potential gatekeepers and censors for the political content of a final artistic production in liberal democracies.[191]

Censorship during Hip Hop Diplomacy Project Next Level in Uganda

In more repressive and illiberal contexts, the intimidation of critical artists and voices often takes more direct forms (cf. Chapter 8). After an in-depth reflection on the political implications, Rabbi Darkside agreed to work as a teaching artist in the Next Level program, a widely known Hip Hop program of US cultural diplomacy. Next Level is funded by the civil branch of the US military (the state

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[190] This organization has not been analyzed in chapter 4, as it is not a purely Hip Hop-based non-profit.

[191] This can be seen as running parallel to what many rappers describe as the depoliticizing tendencies of the largest record companies, who equally function as gatekeepers (cf. Hart, 2010 and chapter 2).

department) but often invites radical American Hip Hop artists to teach their craft worldwide.[192] During their stay in Uganda, Rabbi taught a DJing class, while his colleague – a female political MC– went deep into Black radical traditions. While dancers, DJs, and style writers were relatively apolitical – the MCs were not:

> **Rabbi:** *"the MCs in Uganda… they were about social change. They were about it. As was their instructor, Maddie Mama, She is a US MC from Oakland. And, you know, and maybe this comes a bit into play when we talk about like, non-profit industrial complex, right, the end game for Next Level programs is to throw a final concert that's open to the community."*

Since the final show and prove was supposed to take place Kampala's National Theater, a prestigious state institution, the US tour manager forbade some of the MCs their planned radical anti-government statement. Three of the MCs had already been bailed out of jail by the manager and *"their performance […] was censored for their safety but nonetheless censored, right?"*[193] The censorship took place ahead of the show for the artists' safety. However, the prestigious place also kept visitors away, since as Rabbi recounted *"anyone who wanted to come into the theater had to go through metal detectors and get searched by Military Police. So, of course, you're going to deter people who maybe would come to like a community performance and an open outdoor space. […] And they're like, 'fuck this! I'm not dealing with the cops!'"*
There is thus an obvious trade-off when entering high cultural institutions of authoritarian states: either one accepts their censorship and political streamlining and receives their prestige. Or the prestige is traded for a radical, community/grassroots orientation with a final presentation in neighborhood spaces. Another option, according to Rabbi, would have been to do both a formal and an informal performance, but finally, only the national theater show took place. Nevertheless, the fact that the radical US teaching artists spent much time with the people on the ground also carries an impact.[194]

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[192] For a critical discussion of cultural diplomacy the agendas and role of state actors and their structuring influence cf. Ege et al.'s (2018) excellent anthology on popular culture and the state as well as Dunkel& Nitzsche's (2019) anthology on "popular music and popular diplomacy," and Kendra Salois' analysis of the US' Next Level Hip Hop diplomacy program in the same volume. Appert (2018) also critically discusses the fact that US Hip Hop diplomacy programs mostly take place in Muslim countries with the goal of containing threats of Islamist radicalization – often a result of US imperialism. Cf. also its founding director Mark Katz's (2019) insider account of Next Level, with a vast interview base of artists and diplomats.
[193] The MCs wanted to reenact a classroom situation and refused to stand for the national anthem. Arrests for statements against their government/police is an experience shared by many political rappers from Dakar (cf. chapter 8).
[194] Another hurdle described by current Next Level director Junious Brickhouse was that in almost every national context, local Hip Hop actors were deeply divided. When working with one camp, the program would be boycotted by the other.

6.5.5 Public Protest Performances as an Answer to Institutional Censorship

A possible counter-strategy to such censoring attempts is carried out by Urban Art Beat's organizers Rosa and Spiritchild. For our first meeting, I joined the two for a march at the African American Day Parade in Harlem. Some original Black Panther Party members had organized a float and marched with demands to free US political prisoners. Spiritchild was DJing, and the rest chanted political slogans and handed out flyers for an upcoming Black Panther Party film festival. The couple joins similar protests regularly with and without their own children and invites the youth from their workshops to them. According to Rosa *"every summer camp since I met Spirit, so starting in 2014, we would culminate our performances at the Nicholas Hayward Memorial Services*[195]*, and that's the October 22nd Coalition, Stolen Lives Project. So those are folks that have lost someone to police brutality."* Rosa reports that these spaces directly impact the youth's music: *"you can hear it in many of the songs that they've written even after the fact, that they always mentioned Nicholas Hayward and Nicholas, Hayward Jr. And so that's the one where it's like, put into the calendar and also into like the hearts."* Building emotional bonds and experiencing protests via a show and prove leads – according to the organizer – to a lasting identification with such social justice issues. There are no principals or program directors present to censor any radical content. The participants of Urban Art Beat's "Hip Hop Herstory" program (cf. 5.2.1) also visited a Black Lives Matter protest. Movement participation is thus normalized and institutional censorship prevented.

6.5.6 Three Kings at El Puente – Connecting the Dots via Political Theater

Brooklyn's El Puente practices another movement-oriented approach. The neighborhood center's instructors and staff participate in political rallies with their students and organize such protests themselves.[196] Their social justice orientation also plays out in their annual theater show and prove. 17-year-old nursing student and El Puente intern Naya described this performance as follows:

> **Naya:** *"we do the so-called Three Kings every year in January, and it's our biggest show of the year because all of our sites, we all come together, and every site incorporates something. So like, you have kids dancing from every site, kids making the set from every site, kids singing, acting. […] [It's] almost 36 years that we've been doing the show […] We always focus it on a social justice issue. Usually, it's one that's like really big around*

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[195] This Black Lives Matter predecessor commemorates a Black boy murdered by police in 1994 (cf. Slotnik, 2019).

[196] Nacier, aka b-boy Nasty, who is in his late teens and who has been learning from Waaak, and others is now teaching breaking classes himself at an El Puente community center in Bushwick. He describes that at *"El Puente basically, you know, they educate you on those things [social justice related issues], and they expose you to different things like I've been to so many protests, so many marches, and like, you know,[...] shows me how important it is like to you know, fight for your right and fight for your community"* Nacier describes himself as someone who *"doesn't really know about a lot of things going on around me,"* but via El Puente he has become more socially conscious.

that time. [In 2018], we focused it around the hurricane and about Puerto Rico. [...]all of our donations or we'll sell shirts or something, and it'll always be for a good cause. We have a site over there in Puerto Rico. So we sent everything over there."

The play thus brings together youth from the organization's different sites, and its topic is decided upon collectively by staff and students and always connects with current social movements. This enables the youth to link their collective artistic practice to such social justice issues and collective action.[197] In 2019, the co-director of the local Bushwick neighborhood center I visited had written the play's script. Rap and Music instructor Richard described the theme of the political theater performance:

> **Richard:** *"It was like a retelling of the Wizard of Oz but like in modern times. And it was about education inequality. Yeah, how, like, some schools have more access to resources than others. And so, in this story... This girl is going to like this school where […] the teachers don't really care about the students and everything is bad. And then she goes to, you know, Wonderland and the Wizard of Oz, which is like a really nice school where the teachers really pay attention to you and like, you know, the food is better, and then everything is better […], and I was in there rapping (Nayla: 'Woop'). Now that was my first time being in a Three Kings piece. I'm usually just watching."*

To have the final show and prove as the collaborative endeavor of a theater piece by the many participants bears many possibilities. The theater format enables the organizers to emotionally address a political issue, incorporate their different art classes, and interconnect the movement activism of the organization's many branches. Six of the seven group discussion participants at the local leadership center had taken part in the last Three Kings Show in different roles and artistic disciplines:

> **B-boy Nasty:** *"It was definitely an experience, because like, I was always the person in the choreography, I wasn't actually the person... like making the choreography. So it was like a good learning experience for me. And that's when mentorship plays a role because [b-boy] Theatrix even though he wasn't working here anymore, he'd come through to the studio, like, you know, help me critique. So it was pretty cool."*

Such an experience thus enables younger learners to take responsibility and learn from their mentors. This enables further identification with the organization, its participants, and the performance's theme. Other participants had been designing the piece's set, and in addition to music and dancing, the youth also had to learn their roles and text. The process involved three months of script-writing and

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[197] Additionally, the participants describe that for every Three Kings show the street art collective *Los Muralistas De El Puente* create a matching mural. These huge murals can be found all over Brooklyn, are usually painted with a permit and span across large building walls in public spaces. This leads to an artistic visibility and embellishment of the neighborhoods by the community organization. cf. https://www.losmuralistasdeelpuente.com/murals

rehearsing, and all staff and participants focused mainly on the performance. The fact that the diverse youth come together for this large-scale, free-of-charge performance helps educate them about such social justice issues and their families and friends in the audience. Due to its organizational type, El Puente's Three Kings theater piece has an intergenerational reach. Developing, writing, and performing such a piece would not be as easy for service-providing non-profits without a space in the neighborhood.

The impact of El Puente's political orientation is illustrated in Naya's following statement:

> **Naya:** *"The one [topic] that I feel most passionate about right now is climate change. And we focus a lot around that. Like whether it's just like going to our local gardens and like, fixing them up or like hurricanes, like for hurricane Maria that happened in Puerto Rico. […] and we also do things like the Climate March, we always attend, and we bring our art, and it's always like a big turnout and to see like everyone who cares about climate change."*

To have so many of its young participants so highly invested in different topics of social justice shows how the movement orientation of El Puente translates into actual educational and cultural change on a small scale. The organizational staff's political orientation and their refusal of funding not aligning with El Puente's values, also, to some extent, prevent censorship and allow potentially more radical messages (cf. chapter 4). The culmination of their many after- and day-school programs' in the yearly performance thus furthers the youth's political consciousness, their collaboration, and collective action.

Final Show & Proves – Concluding Remarks

The different types of show and prove performances serve various goals and differ according to space, audience, artistic elements, content, political message, and overall format (e.g. collective vs. cooperative). Most teaching artists have the specific goal of transitioning their students from the classroom into realms of HHC. They use final performances and artistic productions to connect the young learners to scene-type events. Other, more political teachers/organizers use their educational formats and connections to achieve a transition of their learners not only to HHC but also toward social movement activism. At the same time, the non-profit sector, its funding mechanisms, and the threat of state intervention can develop a depoliticizing impact on such final artistic productions. Depending on their institutional setup, context, and funding schemes, Hip Hop non-profits can nevertheless develop final performances revolving around social justice issues and even directly tying into social movements.

Tab. 5: Different Final Show & Proves and their Characteristics

Show & Prove type	Characteristics, Practices & Outcomes
Classical Performance (inside the school/host institution/ prestigious places)	> Marks the final point of the learning period (semester, program, etc.) > Works as a motivator for preparation = sub-cultural capital increased > Works against "culture of low expectations" and for "culture of completion" (including auditions and rules of exclusion) > Peers acknowledge accomplishment: confidence/aspirational & psychological capital increased > Collective showcases of learned skills = incentive for collaboration > Increases performance and improvisational skills > Danger of shocking learners into seclusion > Prestigious / "high cultural" spaces can illustrate pedagogic importance for learners, funders & society (danger of censorship) > Can transport message; however danger: of censorship by funders, teachers and other gatekeepers
Scene Performance	> Allows youth to transition towards practitioners in the scene. > Enables job opportunities > Either cooperative (showcase/cypher) or competitive format (Battle = motor for skill development) > Scene-type of show and proves can be emulated in safer spaces (Go 'bombing'/spray-painting at night legally; breaking battles of students) > Less danger of censorship > Depends on pedagogues involvement in Hip Hop/non-profits institutional set up (own festivals, jams or concerts)
(Political) Theater Performance	> Allows to tell political story > deep identification for participants and learning experience for audience > Can bring together various artistic elements and learners (dance, rap, singing, band, painting and stage design, script writing, director)
Recorded tracks/EP/ album	> Pride in accomplished product > Can be shared with peers, scene and funders > Students learn the whole process of artistic production > Easy to combine with scene and classical show and proves
Music/dance video	> Enables learners' participation according to interest/ability (Production, rap, Filming, recording, etc.) > Fuels pride as it increases visibility
Protest performance	> Answer to institutional censorship > Invites youth to participate in protests and movements > Deep learning and identification with issues of social justice

6.6 Conclusion for Classroom-Based Hip Hop Learning (Chapters 5 & 6)

> **Sam Seidel** *(2022, p. 201): "The education system has plenty of gatekeepers. Just as a bouncer keeps out those whom the club owner believes don't have enough resources or the right attire, the standardized testing apparatus, teacher credentialing programs, and others block nonconforming educators and students from our schools. The performers on stage change. For much of the past ten years, the mic was dominated by 'No Excuses' soldiers. Recently, it has shifted and the main act seems to be a group of educators who make 'equity' and 'innovation' the refrain of every other song. In practice, though, this rarely goes past serving tacos on Tuesdays to 'honor diversity' and allowing the highest achieving students to do a project at the end of the school year. They are backed by booking agents and record labels–politicians, lobbyists, policymakers, and funders–who, beholden to the dictates of neoliberalism, only support those artists whose messages they control. And sadly, while some are fanatic groupies and others are begrudging attendees, much of our society shows up at the club, willing to pay, even though for every ticket purchased, someone else can't afford admission."*

Some Hip Hop pedagogues have been able to sneak past the gatekeepers mentioned by Seidel and enter the club of formalized educational sites. They have used academic credentials, high cultural references, written-out curricula, non-profit professionalization, diverse theoretical legitimizations, and their popularity via learner engagement to enter such institutions as high schools or universities. In other cases, they have built up their own institutions, such as El Puente's high schools or Africulturban's YUMA. The teaching artists have brought Hip Hop-specific teaching practices with them, such as initial and final show and proves, collective formats of the cypher and battles, as well as Hip Hop's teaching and mentoring models. Their pedagogies differ according to their view of Hip Hop. Some place a large emphasis on foundation and conservation of the culture, while others place more emphasis on welcoming every contribution and innovation. Some are politically radical and influenced both by social movements and by the non-profit sector and hosting institutions, and try to oppose the banking model of education.

> **Freire** *(2000, p. 77): "The banking concept of education, which serves the interests of oppression, is also necrophilic. Based on a mechanistic, static, naturalistic, spatialized view of consciousness, it transforms students into receiving objects. It attempts to control thinking and action, leads women and men to adjust to the world, and inhibits their creative power."*

Hip Hop pedagogy, in many respects, poses as a counter force to this banking concept, especially when it employs a movement orientation, such as in the social justice curricula, or when it addresses Hip Hop's many contradictions to critically talk about larger systems of power. Ibrahim (in: Alim et al., 2008, p. 242) suggests that Hip Hop *"is a site of multiplicity that is replete with as much dangers as possibilities and the essence of Hip Hop Pedagogy is to live in this dialogic space between dangers and possibilities."*

The pedagogues use these possibilities and navigate the dangers via different strategies. These might concern mainstream rap's misogyny and one-dimensional images of Blackness, or the sexual abuse committed by former Hip Hop heroes. Additional dangers lie in the possible censorship from the gatekeepers mentioned above or the profit motives of banking model organizations.

Most learners I spoke to stated having gained confidence as their teachers and mentors shared sub-cultural, social, psychological, and aspirational capital with them. The pedagogues almost always follow the declared goal of transforming the learners into Hip Hop practitioners and start by emulating Hip Hop's many spaces, practices, and relationships in the classroom. Additionally, they arrange for scene-specific performances and even employ the learners in their non-profits according to their institutional setup and resources to ensure longer relationships and Hip Hop professionalization. All of this is in line with Hip Hop's internal logic of a self-reproducing system: Members of this community of practice have to maintain the culture by either teaching and winning over new members or by organizing events and producing spaces for cultural practice. Once the learners follow this path, develop their Hip Hop skills, perform in scene-type settings, and become acknowledged by the community, they gain culture-specific agency, which can translate into other realms of their lives. Cultural anthropologist Ortner (2008a, p. 144) determines an individual's agency along its subjectivation, and position in larger power structures: *"People in positions of power have legitimately or not – what might be thought of as 'a lot of agency,' but the dominated too always have certain capacities […] to exercise some sort of influence over the ways in which events unfold."* Hip Hop's educational projects analyzed thus far, can be seen to happen at the margins of power while increasing the agency of the participants on a smaller scale. This increase in individual and collective agency is furthered even more, as some more political teaching artists and organizations even bring the learners to perform in protest spaces and aim towards their transition into social movement realms.

The following two chapters discuss similar questions for spaces of Hip Hop's scenes, and social movements. Chapter 7 focuses on scene-specific learning and organizing practices and the broader logic of the field, while Chapter 8 provides a case study to assess movement-organizing and public education via Rap-based social movements.

7 "Back on the Scene": Scene-Specific Teaching, Learning, and Organizing

After having looked at classroom-based Hip Hop, its pedagogy, norms, and practices, this next chapter will analyze the field(s) of the various scenes of Hip Hop culture. We will look at how they are structured via the non-profits, the activists themselves, and outside influences, funders, and institutions. Firstly, we will analyze how the different types of events play out in the scene and how they structure relations between practitioners, their learning, and their careers and set various incentives (7.1). Secondly, I will discuss what I see as a counterpart to these events and their scene performances, i.e., open spaces, which serve as a space for practicing the skills to be finally showcased at jams and battles (7.2). In the third subchapter, we will further delve into various types of Hip Hop mentoring and how this plays out outside the classroom in practitioners' style developments, career and life choices (7.3). Finally, we will look at how the activists professionalize themselves and other artists via their non-profits and teaching of non-Hip Hop skills, such as project management, or self-marketing, and via the route of founding federations. The latter also serve the purpose of activists representing themselves when dealing with state and private institutions but also lead to conflicts in the scene. The last two chapters were necessarily more focused on younger learners inside and outside of high schools. Instead, the settings in the following two chapters are more zooming

in on how adolescent and adult practitioners learn, develop their styles and spaces, professionalize themselves, structure the scene, and deal with the field's forces.

7.1 Battles, Shows & Cypher Jams: Scene-Based Performance to Structure Learning Processes

Urban Woman Week Festival's Press Conference, Dakar, March 2019:

We are sitting in a neatly arranged conference room inside the Maison des Cultures Urbaines, one of the newer Hip Hop cultural centers in Dakar. A panel has been set up for the press conference to initiate the "Urban Woman Week" starting the next day. This festival with a female focus includes cultural and project management workshops, panels, social interventions (a visit with clothes donations to the local women-only prison), and many different concerts and performances. The room is full of representatives of some of Senegal's larger media outlets, and the press conference is moderated by Africulturban's director Amadou Fall Ba. In addition to the organizer, who also works as cultural advisor to the mayor's office, the panel includes two female members of Africulturban's team: the photographer and this festival's initiator Ina Thiam, and Zeinixx, a nationally known spoken word and Senegal's first female graffiti artist. The three are joined by the director of the UNESCO Office for West Africa, who talks at length about the economic impact of creative and culture industries: whereas in France alone, they earned a yearly profit of 400 billion € and in Nigeria, the movie industry accounted for 2% of the GDP. He finishes with the importance of including women in this economic endeavor, which is why the UNESCO funded the Urban Woman Week. Ina retells the story of how she initiated the festival seven years ago, as she saw the dire need for a larger event to provide a platform for women in Hip Hop and a place for exchange because there simply were no women in the sector. This absence included not only the artist positions in the different branches of "urban cultures" but also posts in management, event production, hosting, and media outlets. Her story is followed by a long, sleep-inducing talk by the only white person on the panel – a representative of the foundation Positive Planet whose goal was to provide business coaching, entrepreneurship, and the creation of micro companies. After a lot of repetitive questions revolving around the festival's goals, one question shakes the panel's quiet and somber atmosphere: Malik, a male journalist from the newspaper "le Quotidien" stands up and, with a booming voice, questions the actual impact of the festival. He says that while the event has existed for seven years, he saw no results whatsoever. The journalist, who is obviously also a rap fan, then compares the festival with the nation-wide newcomer rap competition "Flow Up" also organized by Africulturban and which, in his eyes and in contrast to the Urban Woman Week, was "immensely successful." He explains that the competition's success shows not only in providing the winning artist with massive prize money but, even more importantly, with enormous managerial and logistic support in launching his rap career. After his three-minute rant, Malik decides that he made his point and asks Ina to comment on it.

Ina, who has apparently handled a lot of machismo in Senegalese Hip Hop circles and beyond, responds instantly and sharply: "Malik, have you heard of 'Genji Hip Hop'?." Malik mumbles something about having heard the name but not really knowing what it is about. Ina cuts him off:

"So Malik, you're falling asleep in class, huh?" She follows this punchline with a detailed expla-
nation of the federation, which she founded with other festival participants as a support network
for women in Senegalese Hip Hop. She explains how they had started to meet and organize them-
selves regularly, creating a non-profit and a business network where they specifically catered to the
interests of women in urban cultures. This network now counts up to 69 members from different
artistic disciplines connected to Hip Hop, as well as managers, organizers, fashion designers, stage
and event managers, sound engineers, radio hosts, etc. Amadou Fall Ba adds that women in Hip
Hop Galsen have become much more visible since the festival's beginning seven years ago. He
mentions two female rap crews, founded after having met and connected at the festival, who are now
regularly featured at Africulturban's other festivals and concerts.

It becomes clear that Senegal's largest players in the Hip Hop non-profit and event sector regularly have to justify their organizational choices. Hip Hop actors from the different scenes, media personnel, and their organizational competition regularly question how and why they allocate the resources provided by, e.g., the UNESCO, private foundations, and lately also small sums of state funding. Malik questions the use of an all-female Hip Hop festival. He would rather see more events of the sort of the rap competition "Flow Up," which generates a large media echo and has successfully launched a few rap careers in the past. This is not only very telling about the sector's ongoing male dominance but also about the choices that organizers of Hip Hop events make and how they impact the scenes. By organizing competitions, the non-profits set incentives for artistic production, often helping increase skills and, in some cases, for a marketable artistic product, such as Flow Up's prize of album production and touring.

In contrast to such competitions, the organizers themselves claim that a cooperative and celebratory event format such as the Urban Woman Week has a different impact. Instead of just increasing the artistic level and having a field of competitors, the festival's cooperative elements lead to a functioning network and collective organizing. The seminars on project management and the founding of one's own structures have resulted in the creation of the all-female federation and support structure "Genji Hip Hop." Female MC Toussa told me in 2015 that the Urban Woman Week seminars enabled her to found her female-only recording studio and label structure "Fam Musik" (cf. 7.4). The team of neighborhood-based cultural center/hub organization Africulturban thus formulates a clear vision and a legitimizing normative framework: They want to structure the informal Hip Hop sector by enabling more practitioners to found their own institutions and organizations. Their often-stated mission is the reduction of social inequality. By addressing women in Hip Hop, the focus here is one of gender equality.

The two representatives from large funding bodies UNESCO and the private foundation set another direct frame for such festivals as they both stress the economic impact towards GDP and the founding of micro-enterprises – while at the same time being inclusive towards women. This legitimizing strategy for funding cultural projects is very prevalent in the development industry: it explains the worth of any activity by its contributions to a country's economic development. In this

case, it formulates a clear vision of creating a cultural economy that continuously generates profit by selling art. This seeing of cultural activities mainly as a means to the end of profit conflicts with the underground/non-commercial narrative of some practitioners and a social movement understanding of culture as transformative and educational.

These different artistic, social, and economic normative frameworks for the culture are voiced not only when someone else's style or career is criticized but even more so when practitioners and organizers critique the different events in the scene. Hip Hop's self- and external criticism makes for the fact that successful organizers are often more used to justifying their work along these normative lines. In addition, I argue that these normative frameworks also influence how and which events are set up by the actors in the Hip Hop non-profit and for-profit realms.

It is clear from both the practitioners' and some of the non-profits' focus, that events make the Hip Hop cultural world go round. Without jams, battles, festivals, cypher sessions, open mics, parties, and panels revolving around the culture, none of the artistic and pedagogic practices would make any sense. To analyze this, I will use Ortner's (2008, p. 129) definition of a group's cultural practices on the micro level as *"serious games,"* which are *"actively played, oriented toward culturally constituted goals and projects, and involving both routine practices and intentionalized action."* While this perspective focuses on micro-politics, *"its ultimate purpose is always to understand the larger forces, formations, and transformations of social life."* It is thus the analysts' task to lay open *"what those cultural games are, [naming] their ideological underpinnings, and [researching] how the play of the game reproduces or transforms those underpinnings"* (cf. Ortner, 2008, pp. 130, 152).

Accordingly, this subchapter will take a deeper look at the different event formats, i.e., Hip Hop's different "serious games" and their "ideological underpinnings." By setting incentives, focusing on certain aspects of the culture (i.e. either competitive or cooperative) and demanding specific skill sets, Hip Hop events structure the scene and transform individuals, and collectives, as well as their practices. Different types of events teach different lessons and open up and close down various artistic and economic opportunities. In 7.1.1, we will look at the most prevalent event format in the Senegalese non-profit realm – a large-scale festival which combines many different cultural activities. This is followed by an analysis of the role of competitions (7.1.2), as well as their different formats (7.1.3). The last part (7.1.4.) looks at cooperative, cypher-based, and explicitly political events. It will discuss a "culturalist's" viewpoint, which might conflict with the economic/profit-orientation discussed above.

7.1.1 Hip Hop Festivals or How to Succeed "in Creating an Ecosystem"

Originally, my research plan was to only look at classroom-based Hip Hop learning programs. To have such a restrictive classroom focus, however, means somewhat missing the point of how Hip Hop learning works. Africulturban's organizers

repeatedly describe how from the earliest instances of organizing their yearly festival FESTA2H, they had included workshops. To enable actual Hip Hop learning, they then extended them into the 3-month-long daily learning modules of their Hip Hop Akademy. However, when I visited Dakar in 2015 and 2019, the only regular classes were in DJing. In addition, different festivals' programs also included a few workshops in dance, rap, and on project management. However, the Hip Hop Akademy was no longer running, and the larger neighborhood-based/hub organizations did not host other regular classes. Instead, in 2019, the activists from three non-profits organized five large festivals in only eight weeks. I was surprised about the sheer amount of festivals crammed into the two months of March and April.[198] Among these were the Urban Woman Week (mentioned earlier), the 1st anniversary of the Maison des Cultures Urbaines, the Banlieues Francophones Fraternelles Festival, i.e. an exchange- and performance-based program, the Battle National – a national dance competition, as well as the Festigraff, a 10-day long style writing event. On average, these festivals were around a week long, and there was almost no day off for the non-profit organizations' staff. I initially questioned why so many festivals were organized in such a short time. However, I realized the reason during the MCU anniversary and the Urban Woman Week: These events enable Hip Hop's scene-based cultural practices and its many effects on learning and relationship and scene-building. During these two events alone, an all-female style writing collective painted two large walls in Dakar's center, a national championship of DJing took place, and spoken word poetry nights, panels, and rap concerts with a 30-artist lineup followed dance performances. Almost all of the festivals mentioned above combine different Hip Hop art forms and work to keep them linked to enable relations between their practitioners, their supporters, and audiences. In short, they enable the continuous practice of a larger Hip Hop scene. As specific "imagined communities" (Anderson, 2016), such scenes must be regularly reinstated discursively and via collective practices.[199]

Organizer Amadou Fall Ba at one point, consulted me because he wanted to focus more on dancing. He asked for feedback on his idea of organizing a vast international breaking battle with at least eight of the world's best crews coming to Dakar and competing in Dakar's prestigious "Grand Theatre." When I asked him whether it would not make more sense to invest such a huge budget into the organization of many smaller events, he replied, "*Actually, the kids need something to start dreaming.*" According to many scene-invested activists, Hip Hop learning and its

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[198] This festival period was restricted by the national elections, the holy month of Ramadan, and 4 months of rainy season.

[199] Forman (2004, p. 1 ff.) likens the discursive reinstation of the Hip Hop nation, via practices, cultural artifacts or media to the way Anderson describes the imagining of collective identities among members of the same nation state. Fogarty (2012a, p. 453) introduces "imagined affinities" as *"identifications expressed by a cultural practitioner who shares an embodied activity with other practitioners,"* sustained also through mediated texts (VHS tapes, DVDs, YouTube videos, etc.) that suggest collective identity, which upon closer examination does not persist.

scene-based practices do not necessarily need structured pedagogical programs (though they are beneficial). More important than classroom learning are the culture-specific spaces and events, which for new and experienced participants alike, spark an insatiable drive and passion for developing their styles and instate the community of practice. From the activists' view, large HH events can impress the youth and eventually fuel the autodidactic and collective processes of scene-based learning. This also explains why Africulturban, which had initially shifted its focus from organizing festivals towards the classroom-based HH Akademy, in 2019 had more or less reversed the process. They now focused on planning numerous huge festivals throughout the year.

Asked about his organizations' successes, Amadou Fall Ba states, "*we have succeeded in creating an ecosystem*". Against the funders' argument proposed during the above-mentioned press conference, he explains that this ecosystem has not achieved economic success but rather a social one. They had gotten impoverished youth to believe in themselves, perform, and feature on the radio and TV. This somewhat symbolic social mobility also worked through their main festival:

> **Amadou Fall Ba:** *"for the artists, I told you that we have produced a lot of people and we have organized a lot of festivals. Because Festa 2H in 10 years, what is it? It's a 100.000 people who have watched the festival. It is more than 500 artists. In Senegal 90% of the artists have played during the festival. It is not a choice of money or being commercial, but it is just a platform for yourself, for the youth to express themselves."*

Organizing festivals thus enables semi-professional careers, as most of the artists in Senegal cannot live from their art but have multiple side jobs. However, they have shared large stages with famous US and French rap stars and get media coverage. Cultural budgets for HH in Senegal are comparatively low, and there is not much corporate funding and only a limited market for selling art, music, or dance. This ecosystem is thus based more on growing one's social, sub-cultural and psychological capital than on making a living off of one's art. Nevertheless, many organizers work toward professionalization in economic terms as well.[200]

Africulturban creates such an ecosystem by assigning individual activists clear responsibilities to create regular, structuring festivals, federations, networks, and competitions, i.e., institutional platforms for self-representation. Ina organizes the Urban Woman Week, Amadou heads their vast annual festival Festa 2H, while Omar is president of the national federation of Slam Poetry with its international events (cf. 7.1.4).

The types of festivals depend a lot on the organizers' different underlying visions. Apart from media representations of Hip Hop, practitioners' and spectators' perception of the culture depends mainly on such event programming. Pi, one of

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[200] They organize various panels and workshops to create economic structures and enable HH artists to live off of their art.

Dakar's most influential stand-up dancers, clearly stressed the relationship between a holistic vision of HHC and the festival agenda.

> **Pi:** *"in Hip Hop, normally there are links, but me, I don't see these links here between rappers and dance, or musicians and graff writers and all. Because you know the rappers […] they do not really live the Hip Hop movement, they live the rap movement […] they always say 'Hip Hop movement, Hip Hop movement', but I say 'nah, that's not true'. Very recently... I salute Simon [a famous MC and Y'en a Marre activist] because he did a festival where he invited me to teach dance classes and Mbassa [an older and experienced b-boy]. […] I taught house dance, and he taught b-boying. And I salute that. We need these kinds of things. But apart from him, this is not happening."*

Like many older practitioners, Pi, who is only in his late 20s, clearly adheres to an old-school vision of Hip Hop where the elements belong together in practiced formats. For him, a diverse festival lineup is one of the main ways of enacting this vision. By including the different elements, festival organizers can show that they acknowledge their value and can thereby receive recognition as true adherents to Hip Hop culture and its original blueprint. In contrast to Pi's statement, for Africulturban's 10th anniversary in 2015, we rehearsed and performed a dance showcase with Compagnie Kaddu as one of two dance showcases. Even though rap music dominated the program, there were also a few DJing and beatboxing showcases. The original cultural blueprint of uniting the different elements thus still plays a role with many organizers. These mostly stem from the first and second generations of Senegalese Hip Hop and have often practiced different HH art forms. Aside from bringing the different HH arts together, such festivals are also a way to reunite a neighborhood-based cultural center's many participants during the event. Similar to El Puente's Three Kings performance, the organization's in-house artists are often given a platform during the Senegalese festivals. Some of the more famous artists are paid to perform for larger events. For others, they are not, and instead, they are expected to showcase their talent in exchange for organizational services. When some rappers did not show up to perform at MCU's anniversary, Amadou Fall Ba told me they would no longer be allowed into the recording studio. They could not simply jump on the bandwagon and use the facilities without contributing when it was necessary.

In rare cases, the organizers exclude certain actors and there is definitely competition between the organizers of different events competing for the same funds. However, there are also cases and strategies of cooperation with the proclaimed goal of regionally developing the scene and sharing skills of festival organizing. Both the Senegalese "Battle National," the national dance championship, and the Festigraff, an African aerosol art festival, consciously employ such an approach.

> **Docta (Festigraff organizer and style writing pioneer):** *"I told myself, we'll create an environment, to create a platform to already acknowledge the graff writers, reaffirm and acknowledge graffiti, but also to permit those who don't know graffiti, that*

they can discover, approach it, discuss and get to know what it is. In addition, we invite
other artists from all over the world with different styles so that they can share with the
youth who would like to become graff writers. That allows for diversity in the approach.
After that, we had to set it up, organize it, bring other elements, […] which we let
participate in the whole event, the dance, the DJing, the graff. All of that to go together."

Docta, who is from Senegal's first generation of Hip Hop heads just like Matador, has practiced all of Hip Hop's elements in the past and tries to integrate them into his style writing festival. At the same time, the activist explains that by founding a non-profit and organizing different events, he was able to create a career and pathway for himself as an artist. Many of Africulturban's and G Hip Hop's staff share this strategy of getting funds and a regular income via their own organization of cultural events. Docta used his connections as a professional, internationally connected aerosol artist, i.e., his social HH capital, to partner with local style writers in Benin, Togo, Congo, Cameroon, etc., to create offspring festivals modeled after Festigraff. Within this cooperative organizing approach, he and his crew Doxandem Squad share contacts, invite international artists, act as advisors, and visit festivals in different countries.

The dance organization team of Kaay Fecc follows a similar cooperative strategy for all the regions within Senegal. Gacirah, the co-founder of the non-profit, has partnerships with cultural organizers in 14 different regions of Senegal, who all organize qualifiers in popping, Hip Hop, and breaking for the large final championship "Battle National." This annual final happens in coproduction with these local partners in a different region every year (given the budget) and includes rap concerts, DJ and beatmaker showcases, workshops, etc. They also intend to give the local traditional culture of each of Senegal's regions a platform in a framework of Hip Hop artistic creation. During this week-long festival program, Kaay Fecc's organizers share their contacts, organizing, grant writing, advertisement, and technical skills with the local organizers, who in turn help with the local arrangement and communicate with local authorities, etc.[201]

Such large festivals serve different purposes: They create employment and funding for the organizers and are a central pillar of the non-profit's practice outside classrooms. They aim to "create an ecosystem" and structure the scene by setting incentives and enacting a holistic cultural vision. They bring together artists and thus reinstate the Hip Hop communities of practice. But what are the different competitive and collaborative aspects of such Hip Hop events, their impact, and what do they mean to practitioners?

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[201] Such regional partnering and skill-sharing to develop the scene and empower local cultural actors is not without sacrifice. Touring is far more costly for the organizers, than just organizing the event in Dakar, where they have their own event space, technical and stage equipment at free disposal. However, Gacirah stressed that staying in Dakar would be very undemocratic, since the capital already had most of the country's resources in the artistic realm.

7.1.2 Battles: Different Competitions Make for Different Competitors

The artistic format of battles has been a core element of HHC since its earliest days, even before the age of organized competitions. Like most Afrodiasporic cultural practices, they have a playful competitive element (cf. Rappe, 2010; Rose, 1994; Sidran, 1981). In Hip Hop's early days, the judgment of who won a spontaneous battle during a cypher or even a predetermined call-out type of match-up was up to the surrounding public. Today, most battles take place in a more institutionalized manner, with a paid jury of established practitioners choosing the winner who receives a trophy, prize money, etc. Now and then, however, one primary cultural function of a battle is being a motor for the practitioners' training. As a competitive format, battles often motivate more than a mere showcase. Many practitioners testify that battles have been one of the most driving factors in their artistic development. MC, DJ, and beatboxer Rabbi Darkside contrasts learning in such peer settings with official mentoring:

> **Rabbi:** *"I've never really had a mentor in life [laughs]. […] I would say mostly I was forged in, like, intimate cyphers with the close homies where you just go, you know, hours and hours of prompted freestyle […] I then met folks through events like Freestyle Mondays [traditional New York MC battle], […] the battle scene was sort of growing beyond just a couple of specific battles in New York, so I got enticed by battle culture pretty early on. And that was a big... a big part of shaping me. I think I had, like, probably a solid ten years where I was doing a lot of rap competitions."*

Thus, for Rabbi, the cypher as a dialogic and collaborative space and the battle as a more competitive one replaced a teacher-student relationship as learning grounds. The extent to which practitioners view their style and Hip Hop persona as equaling their overall self is made explicit by Rabbi: It was not his style, but himself who was "forged" in cyphers, and battles "shaped" him. The complete identification of oneself with one's artistic practice and stylistic statements shows the relevance of battles and cyphers. These are the primary spaces for performing one's style among other practitioners who can read its every nuance. The practitioners' recognition and how they are treated in the community of practice largely depend on their performance at these events (cf. Schloss, 2009). At the same time, the artistic development and structuring of the scene are determined by the type of battle and event formats dominating a scene. In the following, we will look at a few particular types of battles and how these competitions shape the competitors, their career paths, and the larger community.

Battle of the Year, Senegal: Initiating a Crew and Choreography Focus

The Battle of the Year (BOTY) is the earliest international breaking competition to receive world championship status, accepted within the scene.[202] It was founded in the early 1990s in Germany with the original mission of having a competition that goes beyond a simple round for round breaking battle and instead includes choreographed showcases. Of these 6-minute shows, the best crews are chosen according to a designated criteria table. After the show part of the competition, they enter a standardized crew battle format, where dancers take turns to top each other's rounds. Trophies in the event are not just awarded to the best battle performance but also to the best showcase. This format was supposed to open up professional career paths for the participating groups, as they would have a choreographed showcase to sell and earn a living after the competition. Many groups and individual b-girls and b-boys who are touring the world today, performing commercial or dance theater shows, have done their first choreographed pieces at Battle of the Year.[203]

Many of today's largest and commercial breaking competitions have either a 1vs.1, such as the Red Bull BC-One, or a maximum 3vs.3 format. BOTY is one of the last international crew competitions, focusing on group performances with approx. 20 qualifiers globally. The collective challenge of building a show and preparing the event is the ultimate test for a crew and has led to many groups either splitting up or growing even closer together. When visiting Dakar for the first time, the one-element-based non-profit Kaay Fecc invited b-girl Loopi from my crew and me to judge that year's BOTY qualifier, which was part of the "Battle National" festival.[204] Two weeks before the event, Kaay Fecc had sent two professional b-boys to the Southern Casamance to coach the local teenage breaking crew for the event, since they did not have access to the same information as crews from more metropolitan areas. Kaay Fecc uses the same approach to coach the winner for the world final.

In the Casamance, 12 breaking crews competed who had won regional qualifiers beforehand and trained hard for the event. Most of the dancers had not been to Europe before. The goal of winning a trip to Europe and entering the world finals has an obvious class dimension. For many youths from poverty- and

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[202] Numerous "Breakdance" world championships were organized by dance federations, who know nothing about breaking and are regarded in the scene as laughable. However, many world championships have come up later, which are on par with BOTY or have an even larger scene status, e.g. LA's Freestyle Session, UK b-boy Champs, or South Korean R-16.

[203] The event's impact is the most obvious with German b-boys, such as Storm, Amigo, or French group Aktuel Force, who have pioneered numerous Hip Hop dance theater performances. The Flying Steps' commercial success is also traceable to BOTY – having won in 2000, they now hire skilled dancers to tour the globe with their shows, such as "Flying Bach."

[204] International judges with less personal ties to local groups are more impartial. For me, judging a battle of such proportions was a great honor. Today, I have judged two Senegalese and one Cameroonian qualifier. Having taken part in the German final four times, in the world finals once, and working in its team since 2012, I know the event quite well.

unemployment-ridden Senegal, going to Europe to earn money and send some of it back home is a life goal (cf. Schmid, 2017; Ziegelmayer, 2021). In addition, Europe has far larger cultural budgets for dance productions, and especially African dancers and styles are quite popular in Europe's dance theater realm. This socio-economic context led to the fact that the group "Tribal Crew," having won the year before, had chosen to run off after the BOTY finals to stay in Europe illegally. Like some Moroccan and Algerian dancers, they preferred to let their visas expire and remain in Europe without an official residency permit or health insurance. Getting visas for Europe's Schengen space had already been very hard for Kaay Fecc and the dancers beforehand, and after this seemed almost impossible. The remaining dancers in Senegal differed in opinion: Some understood the choice, while most of the top b-boys and the organization's staff saw this as a selfish act, which closed the possibility of getting official German visas for Breakers to go to Europe. I would argue that the group is not to blame as individuals but that this is instead the fault of an unequal global order.

The winning group in 2015 was overly enthusiastic since it would have been the first time to go to Europe for most of them. However, they were not granted visas after their predecessors had remained in Europe. The same thing happened to the winning crew at the Cameroonian qualifier, which I judged a year later. It was only three years after this when the world final was moved to France that the French embassy granted visas to the Senegalese b-boys again to come and participate. Global economic inequality with roots in colonial and neocolonial forms of exploitation, and Western migration regimes, thus make equal participation for many practitioners from the poor countries impossible. The work of one-element-based non-profit Kaay Fecc is equally inhibited, as founder Gacirah puts a lot of her own money into the event every year, with there never being sufficient funding. When finally coming back to the BOTY world finals in France three years later, the organization's staff had a tough job supervising the participating crew to ensure they did not run away to stay in Europe illegally so that the next groups would get visas.

BOTY's general level of visibility and its focus on crew showcases have greatly impacted the continuation of the dance globally, especially since the recordings from the 1990s are still historic stylistic references for most practitioners. Many dancers state that they have started out learning from these VHS recordings. At the same time, it enabled professional pathways for some dancers in the more industrialized countries. In Senegal, this economic effect of professionalization has worked only for some of the local dancers. Many of the groups who had been to BOTY and returned to Senegal continued to perform their choreographed showcases. For some, this opened up a pathway towards theater and exchange projects and performances. However, the vast majority cannot make money off of their dancing. Nevertheless, there is still a somewhat active scene of breaking in all of Senegal's regions, and some crews remain. This is thanks to events like BOTY and one-element-based non-profits, such as Kaay Fecc, who organize competitions in all regions and invite international dancers to teach workshops.

Flow Up, Mix Up & Slam Poetry: Scene-Building via 1vs.1 Battles

Africulturban follows a similar route of scene-building through battles. In contrast to BOTY, however, these are all 1vs.1 competitions, which carry enormous importance for the different scenes. Mix Up is the national championship of DJing, and similar to Flow Up and the League of Slam Poetry has qualifiers all over the country. This DJ battle has just one category of mixing, and other techniques, such as beat juggling, can be incorporated but do not have separate categories, as in the famous DMC Championships. Since mixing is the most marketable component of DJing, this also focuses on possible professionalization. Having worked half a year on specific mixes for the competition, DJs can use these, when booked for mixing in clubs later. DJ pioneer Geebayss has initiated the event and is still regularly teaching DJ classes via Africulturban. Almost all of the event's winners have been taught or mentored by him at one point. Following an old-school Hip Hop blueprint, the organizers constated during the mid2000s that there were many rap groups in Dakar alone but only a handful of DJs. To equal out this disbalance, they taught classes and organized competitions. When I visited the battle in 2019, Geebayss was one of the three judges, and, as in 2015, the winning DJ was from neighborhood-based cultural center G Hip Hop. The winner from Dakar's Banlieue broke into tears and gave a little speech receiving the giant trophy and the check with the prize money of 1 million FCFA (around 2000€).

In the same vein, all of Africulturban's competitions follow the logic of Amadou's statement that the practitioners needed *"something to start dreaming,"* and thus carry prize money, trophies, and official titles. The titles of such national championships are important cultural capital for the practitioners and their careers. It is also the non-profits themselves who cite these titles to justify their work.

To see how Africulturban, as a hub type of cultural center, practices scene-building, let us look at another artistic field: Slam Poetry. Africulturban's long-time organizer Omar said that the non-profit's founder Matador had told him after Festa 2H's second edition: *"It's your mission to develop Slam [Poetry Slam/Spoken Word] in Senegal" […], so I created a club which is called Carrefour Poetique [poetic crossroads]".* The specific assignment was to build a scene by establishing structures that enabled regular practice. Given this assignment, Omar passed the same mission of creating clubs in the different regions of Senegal on to local poets and cultural organizers. A few years later, they convened, created a national federation, and voted Omar their president. This federation now hosts a league with local qualifiers for the national championship of Slam Poetry. There are 14 regional offices of the federation throughout Senegal, and they have hosted an African Cup of Slam Poetry. In 2019, Omar prepared a World cup in Senegal in collaboration with international federations. As with the Battle of the Year, such regular competitions create incentives for artists, reinstate and structure the scene, and establish possibilities for international exchanges, which can lead to more resources via Western contacts and funding institutions.

7.1.3 Innovative Battles Set Different Incentives: "End of the Weak"

MC Rabbi Darkside told me he was participating in a rap battle for the first time in many years – "the End of the Weak"[205] US finals, which took place in a club in Brooklyn. In addition to the six contestants, 15 underground MCs in the showcase section completed the lineup[206], including Immortal Technique and Homeboy Sandman. The competition format consisted of five rounds, where the competitors could collect points. First, competitors had to perform a written song; secondly, they had to rhyme an acapella piece to then freestyle about random objects pulled from a bag. During the fourth round, they had to rap to three different beats, which DJ Scram Jones would switch, speed up or slow down at any given moment, and in the final round, they were divided into groups of threes to take turns in rhyming four bars each multiple times. By including such tasks, the event differed from the standardized rap battles, where contestants usually insult each other in a multitude of ways, with the most skillful bully winning. Here instead, it was a fun and cheerful set up: while there was a lot of competitiveness between the contestants, this was a little defused via the tasks' artistic playfulness. In addition, the event laid a focus on many craft-related aspects of being an MC instead of the punchline delivery mono-focus of other acapella rap battles. Rabbi came in a close second, after the only Black competitor Osiris[207] and later shared with me that one of the judges, rap superstar Lupe Fiasco had him winning and wanted to cooperate in the future. Even when not winning, the platform of competition can lead to furthering a practitioner's social capital, help build stronger ties in the scene, and advance careers. In this case, the specific format opened up a possible project perspective for the versatile MC,

Freestyle Concept Dance Battle, Dakar

Variations of such concept-based competitions are popular in today's dance realms.

In 2019, one such event was organized by two small dance non-profits under the direction of Khoudia, a professional female dancer who constantly travels the globe to HH and theater events, residencies, etc. She often uses her international contacts to invite experienced dancers to judge competitions and teach workshops in Dakar. Like most of Dakar's standup dancers, Khoudia dances many styles, and chose a battle format designed to open up interdisciplinary and creative pathways for participants and bystanders. After a short preselection, the international jury chose the top eight dancers to enter the quarter finals. Now, the dancers drew concepts from a hat and performed them

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[205] Like Freestyle Mondays, this is a traditional MCing battle in New York with editions in other parts of the world as well.
[206] Only two performers were women and while the two hosts did encourage the crowd to cheer for everyone, an acquaintance and I agreed that their encouragement was less for the women in the lineup.
[207] Of the remaining six male contestants four were white, one Black, and one Latino. One of the two Black hosts stated how the lineup's ethnic composition showed the degree of Brooklyn's gentrification. Apart from this, ethnicity was only mentioned by Rabbi himself, who made a short statement on his responsibilities as a white person in Black culture.

after they had been read aloud by the two hosts. These tasks included dancing a full round with your hands in your pockets, dancing one round as if underwater, basing one's whole round off of one step only, dancing while carrying another person on their back, etc. These proposed concepts forced the dancers to leave their usual patterns of movement. They surprised themselves, the audience of mostly dancers, and the judges, which led to collective enthusiasm. People were clapping, chanting supportive slogans, standing up in awe, screaming, and pushing each other in disbelief during the performances. This made an enormous difference to the battles I had seen earlier in Senegal (e.g., the Battle National), where usually the energy was equally high, but the spirit was far more competitive. In contrast to regular competitions, the competitors were very supportive of each other since they all faced the same hurdles, had to leave their usual frame of reference, and could not perform pre-choreographed sets[208]. This led to more improvisation in all danced rounds and some rounds, which were just silly and where the dancers did not take themselves too seriously. A different concept was introduced from the semifinals on: jokers were drawn from the crowd and jury panel to turn the battle into a two vs. two format. Among these were dancers specializing in traditional Senegalese Sabar dance, krumping, and dancehall. In the final, these duos had to dance one round together – an unusual feature in HH dance battles and far more common in contemporary dance. Both sides followed different concepts and created unexpected moments. One duo transferred energy among each other, matching the music, while the other team enacted a resurrection spectacle where one dancer died and was brought to life by the other to dance like a zombie.

Such formats give diverse input to the dancers to take more improvisational routes, and the battle thus functions as an educational tool outside a workshop space. Such a format also rewards more versatile dancers, as the two finalists had clearly mastered many dance styles and could thus easily switch between them to match the different genres of music and the improvisational tasks.

Cypher, Female-Only, and Other Competition Formats

The type and focus of a competition thus clearly set different incentives and further specific artistic practices. During my first visit, Urban Artistry from Washington DC, organized another very popular format among purist and underground-oriented practitioners – a cypher competition. The "That's House" event of the one-element-based organization is open to dancers from many styles. After a specified time limit of open exchange in one central cypher, the round of participants chose the winner, who represented their style best. Thus, the dancers take turns in the

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[208] Sets are predetermined solos clearly choreographed from beginning to end. In breaking, sets have become dominant due to today's competitions being judged round for round since they give an advantage in winning every round. They differ a lot from the cypher, where battles are more communicative. This call-and-response character is true to the dance's oral cultural origins. A dancer here always responds to the moves, gestures, and emotions of the battle partner. Such exchanges align with HHC aesthetics since they are performed among practitioners, instead of a lay public valuing different things.

cypher, and short call-out battles might erupt.[209] In contrast to staged battles, here, skills of communication, call and response, and cypher etiquette are learned and rewarded. The organizers thus aim to instill the practice of cyphering, i.e. dancing and exchanging in a circular space, into a group of practitioners who might only be used to dancing when the host calls their name. In a regular non-cypher competition, they might lose in the first round having danced just once during the event. To instill the traditional practice of cyphering into current generations of dancers, many of the older practitioners thus chose such formats. This also carries problems with the inexperienced dancers not knowing the little codes of what practitioners call "cypher etiquette" and e.g. all rushing in the circle at once (cf. *BBoy Remind on Cypher Etiquette | Break XL | Strife.TV*, 2014).

Another more specified and hotly debated format is female-only battles. These are common in rap and in the dance realms dominated by men (speaking in terms of sheer numbers) to create a safer space and a more equal playing field. Such formats cause controversy among practitioners, with the opponents claiming that Hip Hop knows no distinctions according to gender, looks, or ethnicity, but only according to skill. The proponents of having b-girl or female MC battles often state that it is important to provide a platform and safer spaces to empower women* in Hip Hop, who often feel not ready to enter a practice. There are far less visible female role models, and practitioners have not been socialized to be as assertive as men and are subject to further discrimination via Hip Hop's machismo and patriarchal society. The female students from a group of refugee children, whom we had been teaching for little over a year, got an enormous motivation boost after visiting the Queen16 and seeing some of the most skilled b-girls in the world at this b-girl-only 1vs.1 competition.

By having representational quotas, such as at least one b-girl in the jury panel or half of the concert/battle lineup being female, organizers can normalize women*'s participation. With breaking's entrance to the Olympics, b-girl and b-boy divisions for 1vs.1 become more common.[210]

Other battle formats work for a more inter-generational exchange and to build scene ties. One example is a lottery-type battle, where participants sign up individually and are then assigned a partner by chance to battle in a two vs. two. This can be done, for example, by teaming up a teen and an adult. Some battles also focus just on specific subdisciplines of the elements, such as beat juggling in DJing competitions, toprock for breaking, or sketch battles in style writing. Organizers can thus lay a focus on certain aspects of the craft, or collaborative elements neglected in a particular community of practice. They can highlight different aspects of the

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[209] In breaking, such cypher formats are often employed to have a more interesting battle preselection. It differs from the regular mode of the jury choosing the top eight dancers after 50–300 one-minute solo showcases.

[210] With breaking's very heteronormative scene in terms of practitioners' discourses, there has not been a large debate about the limiting perspectives of such a division for Transgender and non-binary practitioners.

culture and shape the scene via different battles. However, some practitioners are critical of the competition dominance in HH's commercial events and its impact.

7.1.4 "Restoring the Balance": Cooperative and Political Counterpoints to Large Competitions

> *B-boy & style writer Waaak-1:* *"So ego and Hip Hop – very necessary. That's what catapulted us to greatness. That's why we're here. Right? So it's a very important component and part of who we are. It's the fire that fuels like, you know, the culture. Right? […] I personally feel that it's [...] getting a little bit out of hand and it's going to be doing more harm than good in the long run. Because the main focus is on that and not on cyphers and getting better [...] What's the point of competition? To see who's the best right? And why do we need to see who is the best? You can say because that's how you accredit people, that's how you inspire people, that's how you get people what they justly deserve right? So what's happening in these competitions where people are being proclaimed 'They're the best'. Why? so that they can be branded, branded, sold, so money could be made off of them. […] Because they got a lot of YouTube views or they got a lot of Instagram followers, you know […] it's another form of exploitation."*

Waaak One and his crew ("Breaks Kru") have won many battles and he acknowledges the purpose of ego-based competition and battles. They accredit practitioners and fuel the growth in collective skill level leading to "greatness." However, Waaak – a b-boy and graff writer in his 40s - assesses an imbalance concerning the predominance of organized competitions over more cooperative event formats. Waaak counts breaking pioneer Ken Swift as one of his mentors, who, as a member of "the Rock Steady Crew," was part of the 1980s media hype around "Breakdancing" and its large-scale mediatization. Older practitioners today feel that this phase was a disaster since mass media massively misrepresented the dance form and HHC (cf. Rappe & Stöger, 2017; Schloss, 2009). In addition, the dancers were economically exploited and saw little of the money corporations made from large Hollywood productions, such as "Breakin'."[211]

There had been large artistic competition already in Hip Hop's earliest stages during the 1970s, before the commercial and media phase, the first rap videos, Hip Hop movies, "Breakdance" TV Shows, or organized battles. However, this competition was informal and the winner was left to declare for each of the practitioners and the audience themselves. While organized battles came up later in most HH art forms, they have become the most common event format for breaking today. The biggest event today in terms of marketing budget and media coverage, which Waaak One apparently hints at when talking about the way that the winners can be "branded" and "sold," is the Red Bull BC One. This international 1vs.1 has

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[211] However, without the commercialization and media craze the dance would not have achieved the same international interest and breaking would not be the global phenomenon it is today with active scenes in almost every country.

qualifiers all over the globe and the company has selected some of the world's most successful dancers in terms of winning competitions to enter their own "Red Bull BC One Allstars". All of them have to wear branded gear whenever they battle or dance on video, and post almost daily on social media with this gear, and a Red Bull can visibly placed. The energy drink company Monster has a similar set up now, following the same marketing concept, and also sponsors its own events. Almost any large event that does not receive huge state cultural budgets has to rely on corporate sponsors, including the Battle of the Year. Despite these corporate interests, there is a difference between the 1980s media craze and today's commercial representation of the dance form. Red Bull has followed a cleverer line by not dictating too much of the actual event, involving pioneering dancers and organizers in the decision-making processes, and employing them as public spokespeople. By involving many opinion leaders and adhering to many of breaking's practitioner values, the company acquired the authenticity of these actors and large parts of the scene's approval.

It is primarily a small underground section of the dance world that criticizes the company and its events. Waaak had told some of the Red Bull BC One Allstars, *"Yo, I don't fuck with Red Bull. I don't think Red Bull is good for the community"* and that *"there needs to be some balance".* While he does not fully oppose working for the company in principle, he asked the sponsored b-boys whether they were trying to *"figure out how they're going to take this Red Bull power and elevate the culture with it? Or you just working for Red Bull? Pretty much. You just selling the culture to Red Bull? You know, Hip Hop is expendable at that point."* The b-boy and writer follows an underground Hip Hop orientation when questioning the long-term effects as the company and its events transform the culture.

It is even rarer to hear a critique of the company's political positioning in the scene. Outside of the dance realm, Red Bull has been criticized for remaining silent on issues of Black Lives Matter and for having used racist depictions of the world during internal sales meetings (cf. Steigrad, 2020). The late company owner also financed some right-wing media outlets (ServusTV & Addendum) and has criticized the wave of solidarity towards refugees by people and partly governments in 2015 in Europe (cf. Tamsut, 2019). The fact that so many leading dancers are on Red Bull's payroll and depend on it to pay their bills and feed their families does undoubtedly play a large role in the fact that these complications are almost never addressed in the scene (apart from the fact that large parts of the scene globally consider themselves apolitical). I have restrained myself from posting critical articles on the company's practice on social media, since due to my employment for Battle of the Year, I know a lot of the people organizing the Red Bull BC One and have also done stage and artist management during the BC One world final once. I could, in this vein, experience the silencing effect of financial and career cooptation of cultural realms via my own posting practice. Not many people will speak out against such company practices when their income or careers depend on it. These silencing effects will remain intact unless prominent role models speak out and a movement

focus becomes stronger in the scene[212] providing alternative structures, leading to solidarity, more social and cultural capital, and career alternatives.

In 2015, I visited the anniversary of Waaak's group "Breaks Kru," i.e., a cypher event in a bar with no organized competition and only practitioners and friends present. Such a jam format can be a more cooperative counterpart to organized competitions. Spontaneous breaking and rock dance battles did erupt, but there was no proclaimed winner, leaving the scene hierarchies more fluid.

In social psychology, it is clear that collective incentives and tasks define whether a group perceives of themselves as a cooperative collective or as opponents (cf. Forsyth, 2018). Within capitalism, individual capitalists, as well as laborers, compete in a market for limited resources. The subcultural phenomenon of HHC was created in the lowest and ethnically excluded classes of the most capitalistically advanced, and the West's most unequal country. It is appears logical that Hip Hop also carries such characteristics of competition and fosters egotistic behavior. At the same time, the Each One Teach One principle captures the dialectic opposite: an ideal of cooperative learning and teaching of all participants and practitioners. Ortner (2008, p. 153) describes how individuals' agency differs according to how they are *"embedded in webs of relations, whether of affection and solidarity, or of power and rivalry, or frequently of some mixture of the two."* Hip Hop has both aspects of competition and egotism, as well as solidarity and cooperation and specific events that can further one aspect more than the other. The organizers thus bear a large responsibility for which aspects they incentivize in their communities of practice.

Political Alternatives

Another contrast to the competitive mode lies in the purely cooperative and awareness-raising events organized by radical educational service provider Urban Art Beat, which the activists call "Open Mic Soul Shares" and "Communiversities". The prior is a performance and exchange-based event:

> **Rosa (organizer):** *"you could come and either perform a piece you're working on or even just like pop in to mentor[…]. It was just… it was really beautiful, we'd always have a different topic, it was once a month. And you know, it was women's month it'd be like Hip Hop Herstory, you know? October is anti-bullying month so we do like anti-police brutality actions. The youth and mentors from the regular workshops would be invited and it included a mutual mentoring format where people were teamed up in pairs to give each other constructive feedback on their performances. […] [The communiversities focus on a] particular topic and either showing like a film on it, or having experts on it and then like*

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[212] The Black Lives Matter protests had a significant impact on the scene. Many scene media outlets and practitioners for the first time acknowledged that breaking is an originally Black cultural format and posts in solidarity with the movement and its goals were shared widely. The #metoo movement also left a lasting impact in the scenes (cf. 7.3.3).

having a dialogue afterwards. Because if we're not really like building with community and pushing ourselves to know more, then the change won't come."

Such politically educational community events can be seen as a counterpoint to large commercial battles.

Senegal's Y'en a Marre movement has also organized different political event formats. These included the "UPEC," an international conference for both political MCs and researchers to exchange on methods of movement-building via rap and to build pan-African cooperations (cf. UPEC, 2020). The movement also organized "Dox Ak Sa Maire" (follow your mayor) debates, where populations from disadvantaged low-income neighborhoods could meet local politicians, question them about budgeting, and tell them about their issues and grievances to establish accountability. Y'en a Marre leader Simon organized the talent-scouting rap competition "Citizen Mic" similar to Africulturban's "Flow Up." The difference, however, was that during the Citizen Mic, competitors were supposed to write political lyrics. Thus, a battle's effects of engaging participation and fueling skill growth served as incentives to create political music. The goal was to set a political focus among younger generations of Senegalese rappers (cf. 8.4.2).

Drawing once again on Ortner (2008, p. 129 ff.) I argue that there is a plethora of different types of "serious games," i.e., events organized by practitioners via non-profits or by large corporations with different ideological underpinnings and impacts on the scene: Large-scale festivals, as practiced in Senegal, bring the practitioners together, set incentives for artistic production and performance, and create "an ecosystem," i.e., a functioning scene. Competitive events structure a scene and motivate practitioners but also create more tension and aggressive competition among them. Different battle formats can open up more career paths and incentivize crews, cyphering practices, freestyling, and creativity. Underground-oriented practitioners criticize the dominance of large commercial competitions driven by profit and marketing motives. They see organizing more community-focused and cooperative event formats as necessary to reinstate a balance. The cooperative open mic, concept and cypher formats, the festivals, and the social movement orientation of political events can counter the large commercial competitions. The orientation of events depends on the type of non-profit, their funders' agenda, social movements, and the Hip Hop ideals of the particular organizers. Despite these ideological differences, it remains an integral part of being a Hip Hop practitioner to organize your own events, to create spaces for the collective practices, and keep the culture alive.

Tab. 6: Hip Hop Event Types and their Effects

Hip Hop Event Types	Effects, Outcomes and Practices
Large Scale Festivals	> Combine all different Hip Hop elements and reinstate Hip Hop as an "imagined community"/as an ecosystem > Create platforms for the artists to present their art > Give the kids "something to start dreaming" > Fuel the autodidactic and collective processes of scene-based learning
Battles	> Act as a motor for the artistic production and for the stylistic creation > Trophies represent institutionalized cultural capital for the little institutionalized practices and serve to legitimize non-profits and educators > Winners can be branded and serve as advertisement to sell a product
Battle of the Year	> Lays a specific focus on choreographed breaking showcases and thereby opens up ways towards selling these shows and professionalization > Lays a large crew focus brings practitioners to form crews
Freestyle/Concept Battle	> Incentive to become stylistically versatile, creative & to improvise > Defuses somewhat aggressive competition via elements of playfulness
Cypher Jams	> Act as more cooperative counterpoint to competitions > Teach practitioners the most basic form of Hip Hop cultural practice
Political Events	> Introduce practitioners to political and movement perspectives & spaces > Render political spaces more fun and interesting

7.2 "Once We Have Togetherness"[213]: Open Spaces for Peer-to-Peer Learning and Exchange

If scene-type events are the most important space for practitioners to perform their skills, then the counterpart would be those spaces where these skills are trained and developed in an autodidactic and peer-to-peer manner. Hip Hop learning originally evolved outside of classrooms, in informal environments and open spaces, where young practitioners could work on their moves, rhymes, cuts, hand styles, etc. As practitioners, many organizers take their own informal peer-to-peer or self-learning

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[213] cf. The Jimmy Castor Bunch "It's Just Begun", 1972, It's Just Begun. RCA Records.

as a model to create spaces for such practices. Director of Africulturban Amadou Fall Ba has the goal to create a functioning cultural ecosystem and explains this approach:

> **Amadou Fall Ba:** *"Well, I don't know whether we are doing institutionalized teaching. We rather just need a frame, because actually I myself do not consider it an academic education. First of all, it is not recognized as such by the state and by universities etc. … We are more in what we call the validation of knowledge and experiences. That means that as Africulturban we define ourselves more like a bank of knowledge, thus when the people come, we share what we have and take what they give – just like in the Hip Hop philosophy Each One Teach One."*

Amadou heads both neighborhood-based cultural centers MCU and Africulturban. Both hub-type organizations are always open and have regular dance practices, and Macintosh computers. The MCU has a dance studio, a DJ room with multiple turntables, and a recording studio, all of which are free to use. G Hip Hop's program manager explains their center's similar approach with a historical reference:

> **Young Noble:** *"It's open for everybody [...] The cypher you see new rappers coming every day. I mean it is Hip Hop we are taking it to the hood, the street. We try to do it in an open way like back in the Bronx. Everybody can dance, rap, write, or DJ. I'm in charge of the training program, and I'd say that everybody can join. It's an open space where people can help each other."*

There is an element of nostalgia for the good old days when Hip Hop was informal, mainly happening in face-to-face situations and less institutionalized in commercial and cultural realms. Their attempt to reenact this informality is visible in Young Noble's claim to take "to the hood, to the street". This implies a counterpoint to the classroom-based instances of learning we have seen in chapters 5 and 6. While G Hip Hop, Africulturban, and the MCU sometimes have classes, they expect participants to come and practice self-reliantly out of intrinsic interest (an essential Hip Hop ideal). They will get help once they have shown interest and asked for it. The organizers state that they have designed their classroom-based programs upon the demand of those already using the space. In New York and Dakar, such open spaces are usually provided by non-profits of the neighborhood-based cultural center type.

This subchapter discusses the invitation of people into open spaces via neighborhood interventions (7.2.1), the interdisciplinary dance space at Blaise Senghor (7.2.2), and finally, the influence of gentrification on further diminishing open spaces (7.2.3).

7.2.1 "If you Don't Have the People, Whatchu Doin'?"-Filling Open Spaces

One of the most central questions of such open spaces is how to get people to come and make use of them. As described in Chapter 4.1.4, political rap group Rebel Diaz involved locals by inviting them into their neighborhood cultural center RDAC in

an occupied candy factory. In exchange, the residents fulfilled manual and repair tasks and stayed for their events. Rodstarz compared their own to another political/cultural center modeled after theirs, which lacked the most central ingredient:

> **Rodstarz:** *it is that energy. If you don't have the people, you can create and go like: 'Here's the blueprint. Do what you want to do with it!'. But If you don't have the people, you gonna miss that essence you gonna miss that realness right? You know I'm saying, it's not the same […] what we always say, like what makes Hip Hop? You can be the dopest DJ out, but if you don't have the people? ... WHATCHU DOIN'?*

According to the political organizers and rappers, the people are thus the centerpiece to the open space of a neighborhood-based cultural center. Here, the ideals of face-to-face Hip Hop and political forms of community organizing merge, as both revolve around engagement.

Two decades earlier, Brooklyn's neighborhood center El Puente was also based upon welcoming young people into their open space to use it according to their interests (cf. 4.1.3). Thus, after its founding in the 1980s and during the media-fueled breaking craze in New York City, the center was flooded with Breakers, DJs, MCs, and writers. El Puente, to this day, opens its space for people to organize events:

> **b-boy and style writer Waaak:** *"[El Puente] also supplied our community with spaces to throw events. We've thrown battles, kids battles and things like that and holding practices, you know, so it's, it was like a.... it was real! My whole kind of experience with Hip Hop has been like very organic."*

Having an open and non-commercial cultural space at his disposal for free makes for what Waaak calls an "organic" Hip Hop experience. All of the participants of the local center I had interviewed recounted how they first joined activities in the center via friends or family, as it builds on local solidarity ties within the neighborhood communities. Nacier spends most of his days in El Puente's leadership center in Bushwick. As a former member and now breaking instructor in his early 20s, Nacier stated that they did the recruitment of new people via cooperation with other community organizations, local high schools, and cultural spaces.

Such openness also relies on trust. Being based in one of the US's most violent neighborhoods in the 1980s, El Puente's cofounder Frances Lucerna recounts that the organization never had the guards, or metal detectors so typical of American High Schools in urban ghetto areas: *"we had none of those traditional trappings of what institutional school and control was all about. We didn't talk about security. We talked about safety. […] there was this understanding among young people that, you know, it's their responsibility to create the safe space of respect and integrity."* According to Lucerna, institutionalizing the open space as a safer space and not meeting the youth with the distrust of traditional state institutions and authorities was the basis for their ensuing relationship-building. The organizers' movement orientation also led to their understanding of the space:

> **Lucerna:** *"one of the signature elements of El Puente was that […] this was not going to be a drop-in center. It's not a place that you come to just take a dance class or whatever. But it really was going to be a membership program where young people came and really understood they were becoming part of a community with a history, with a legacy, with a mission and principles and purpose."*

This focus on the community's history, mission, and purpose played out in their critical education centered around learners' identities, and colonial and neocolonial exploitation in their own high school and after-school programs (cf. chapter 6), and their movement activities.

Inviting "the People" via Neighborhood Interventions

Most neighborhood-based cultural centers invite "the people" into their open space via local interventions, such as festivals and direct actions. El Puente builds on movement traditions of the Black Panthers' and the Young Lords' survival programs by having regular free lunch give-outs or installing a clinic to vaccinate over twelve hundred young people against measles. They also stopped the building of a local incinerator via local protests and media activism, have collectively planted trees, and entertain community gardens. Rosa now works for El Puente full-time and describes her first contact:

> **Rosa:** *"at first didn't want to go because I was like 'after school's not cool', but then I started to see other things that they were doing, my friends were extremely empowered doing, community work, and I just got inspired, became part of that and […] I began to find a voice and that I had meaning and purpose. Even in the small things of like getting trees planted in the community or mailboxes, and now I can still walk down the neighborhood and, like 'you know those trees in there because of us!'"*

The organization also uses many local festivities in the street to reclaim the neighborhood, invite people into the organization's open spaces, and gain more visibility. The small group of young people in a local neighborhood center told me about their "Breakin' 4 Justice" event, a breaking 2vs.2, which was part of the "To Hope, with Love" campaign. After a lethal shootout in local Hope Park, just one block from the organization, the group decided to refurbish the park, reclaim it from the murder scene and make it into a community space. Louis recounts organizing the campaign:

> **Louis:** *"it was a youth-led initiative in which we tried to take back the space after the shooting. […] So we actually went in there, we planted a little garden, we cleaned up, we did a lot of activities in the park. After we were able to talk to local elected officials or other Park agencies... that they can give us funding and resources to get this done, which actually ended up leading to like a capital investment of the park […] it looks completely brand new[…] since 2014, I think we've had over 27 events that we've hosted at the park and these events normally took place over the summer. From book fairs to park jams to*

like back to school fairs, in which we give back like school supplies to community members
in need."

Thus, the organizers use open spaces in their center and its surroundings. Here, public and educational initiatives, art exhibitions, and festivals, as discussed under 7.1 serve the purpose of reappropriating parts of the neighborhood. These are also the occasions for winning interested people over to use the organization's own open spaces and join their membership and educational programs.

G Hip Hop in Dakar's Banlieue follows a very similar tactic. The cultural center, with ties to the Y'en a Marre movement, employs direct action in the neighborhood and ties these initiatives to its own festivals. Program director Young Noble tells about how the staff and its members build on the Senegalese movement tradition of "Set Setal" (Wolof for: clean up your community, cf. chapter 3):

> **Young Noble:** *"We successfully carried through five big clean-ups and creating*
> *playgrounds. One week minimum per project […] Before starting the project, we would go*
> *from door to door and talk to the Imam, the religious leader and also to the leaders of*
> *those neighborhoods and explained them what we wanted to do. And we told them: 'we*
> *need your support to protect it, it is not just for us for G Hip Hop but it is for the whole*
> *neighborhood' And they understand that and help us"*[214]

By using the visibility of such public interventions and cooperating with local residents, religious authorities, etc., the activists gain social capital and legitimacy (as Hip Hop still carries a stigma in Senegal) and engage more people. The latter then spread the word about the center's activities and invite youth into their center and to the regular activities, such as open dance practices, the weekly rap cypher, DJing classes, or recording sessions in their studio. These neighborhood interventions and direct actions thus indirectly serve the different Hip Hop activities and communities of practice. But what happens on a more artistic level in such open spaces? To understand the collective and autodidact processes of learning and exchanging, we will look at a particular open space next: Blaise Senghor.

7.2.2 Stylistic Melting Pot and Interdisciplinary Learning: The Case of Blaise Senghor and Afropop

I had been invited to Senegal by b-boy Seska, b-boy Abdallah, and organizer Gacirah from Kaay
Fecc, whom I had met via the Battle of the Year. Thus, my first go-to address was the place where
they spent almost every day from morning until late at night: Blaise Senghor. This public cultural
center is located in a central neighborhood in Dakar and is one of the top three training spots for
Breakers and the number one space for free dance education overall. Blaise Senghor is a melting
pot of different styles and a primary reason why many dancers in Dakar are so interdisciplinary.[215]

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[214] (cf. the video recording of the clean-ups: Guediawaye HIP HOP, 2015).
[215] According to Gacirah, the center has changed a lot since my last visit in 2019, because of a new director.

The space is divided into four large segments, with a spacious open entry area where large tents are often set up for conferences, festivals or panels, and a small cafeteria serves food and drinks. Behind this entry area are three equally large compartments: The first one to the left is open air, has a large stage, and in front of it, a neat, clean floor where roller skaters practice their tricks all day long. From the afternoon on, movement practitioners share the stage to practice a plethora of different disciplines ranging from rock 'n roll, contemporary dance, different Afrodiasporic styles, (e.g. breaking, popping, krumping, Hip Hop, dancehall, house, etc.), to martial arts, such as kung fu and capoeira. Any night between 30 and 80 people are here to work on their choreography, prepare for a showcase, teach each other steps and sometimes exchange in a cypher format. In the second segment, one-element-based dance organization Kaay Fecc, two more dance-related non-profits, and style writing pioneer Docta have their offices. There is also ample indoor rehearsal space here, which is available upon reservation, and a smaller open-air space where throughout the day and at night, groups are practicing and teaching Senegal's most famous traditional dance form: Sabar. There are usually 20–30 dancers here, moving to the sounds of up to three drummers. The third segment contains another traditional dance space and a second indoor rehearsal room. The technical equipment in the entire cultural center is rudimentary, and there are no mirrors. This makes for a far more communicative way of practicing the different dance styles, which contrasts with the many choreography classes taught in Western dance schools, where dancers often follow someone else's choreography and practice only in one direction – looking at themselves in the mirror.

Since organizers Amadou Fall Ba and Gacirah had asked me to teach a breaking workshop of four hours daily for two weeks at Blaise Senghor, I got to know many dancers. There were 10–30 participants from entirely different backgrounds every day, including traditional, contemporary, Hip Hop dancers and Breakers. Having been so quickly immersed, this triggered an exchange, which according to the other dancers, usually takes longer, but also happened to them the same way and is typical of Blaise Senghor. Upon entering the open-air practice space, after my workshop at night, many of the dancers invited me to their sessions or practice and would offer input in return for my class. I soon realized that while many of the dancers had one baseline style, most danced at least four or five different dance forms on a very high level. Through sharing the same open spaces, participating in workshops together, preparing showcases, and just exchanging with other people, it had, over the years, become normalized to practice many different styles. Fogarty (2020a, p. 103) argues that stylistic developments in dance practices not only depend on individual artists but on "the various institutions that inform the practice[...]. The influence of educational and arts institutions is not always felt directly by participants in local 'subcultures' but ultimately these shape the ways in which their practices are framed" Similarly, one of the first stylistic fusions arising from Blaise Senghor depended both on the cultural institution's set up, as well as the agenda of Gacirah and her non-profit Kaay Fecc.

The stylistic mélange of Afropop had been developed by the late Viera – a b-boy and martial artist who followed Gacirah's recommendations and took a workshop on traditional dance at Blaise Senghor. In turn, Viera began combining breaking with Sabar and other Senegalese styles. He added various afrodiasporic/ "urban" dance forms, Capoeira and Kung Fu, and started learning from the many practitioners at the cultural center's open space. After a while, he named this stylistic mélange Afropop, which, according to Viera and his mentee Pi, is open to any form of movement

and Hip Hop dance style, to be combined and practiced to Sabar rhythms played live by Djembe players.

In 2016, I was introduced to Afropop when Viera, and two drummers approached our circle of b-boys in Blaise Senghor's open-air section and invited the surrounding stand-up dancers to join in the practice. Viera, who had seemed distant before, now approached me and explained Sabar's most basic rhythm ("bummbudummkakak") and how I could signal its debut to the lead drummer of the Djembe percussionists. The task was then to follow the designated rhythm pattern and finish it with a clear movement. Viera gave the simple example of finishing with an airfreeze, a one-handed handstand from breaking. Many different people joined in and celebrated every interaction while the energy of the circle quickly escalated. Having understood the rhythm, dancers would take turns adding to the circle's dialogue by performing various movements from very different styles to this most basic Sabar rhythm. Viera highly appreciated how his proposition was taken up and was happy to showcase his mastery of rhythms and movements from different disciplines. The two Djembe players followed the dancers with a high focus, as in Sabar, the musicians take initial impulses from and follow the dancers, not the other way around. While there was an initial moment of surprise by most people who had been practicing in separate groups before, the dancers quickly appreciated and joined in the playful performance.

I learned later that Viera had not been the first to combine traditional dance styles and breaking. However, he was the one who named and popularized the fusion phenomenon with his theater company "Afreekanam". Today, different event formats, such as the festival Kaay Fecc or the Freestyle Concept Battle (cf. 7.1.3) build on such an interdisciplinary approach. This interdisciplinarity was enabled by the open space connecting practitioners from diverse practices and them spending their entire days there, being invited into cooperation by the different organizations, organizers, and choreographers.

Practitioners also use the open space for teaching and scene-building of styles not yet implanted in Senegal. Viera's mentee (cf. 7.3) and professional dancer Pi teaches a house dance class every Sunday for a group of around 10–15 interested dancers: *"House, I'm teaching too, but for free. It's free, to motivate the youth and to really implant house dancing in Senegal, you see. Because there is just me and another girl, Khoudia, who are dancing house in Senegal."* Being an accomplished dancer, who has won many competitions and toured the world with his dance, Pi clearly envisions scene-building via teaching a new style. He also dances traditional African dance styles as part of the Senegalese "Ballet National", regularly represents the country on diplomatic occasions, and is one of the few Hip Hop dancers in Senegal who live solely off of their dancing. However, he does not charge locals who want to learn:

> **Pi:** *"it is my job, I have to make a living with it. But you see… this is Africa, and there are no youths who are able to pay to learn, it's difficult. […] I won't charge a price, which they cannot pay. I prefer to do it for free. The classes where I charge a sum are when I know it is whites who want to learn. They have cash and a job you see, and then I ask them to pay. But for the rest, I don't."*

An open space, such as Blaise Senghor, thus enables practitioners to do free community-building work and earn a small amount of money[216]. At the same time, dance theater companies also rehearse pieces here, and some receive invitations to festivals outside of the country, where cultural budgets allow for a larger income. An open space thus helps a community of practice exchange in a face-to-face format, learn and develop interdisciplinary styles, organize events and workshops, earn some money, and professionalize themselves to some extent. Open spaces are thus a prerequisite for an active scene, or in Amadou Fall Ba's words, for a "functioning ecosystem."

7.2.3 Hip Hop Nostalgia & How Gentrification Threatens Open Spaces

According to most HH activists, such face-to-face practice makes up the core of their artistic communal activities. Many American and Senegalese teaching artists share this somewhat nostalgic ideal of Hip Hop as multiple art forms practiced live and in the community. In Senegal, this nostalgia often combines with a reminiscence about the era when Senegalese rap was mainly happening live in the neighborhoods. During these times, the mainstream of rappers was far more political than today's generation, and could earn little to no money from their practice. In New York, this element of nostalgia for the times of informal practice on the street and in open spaces is equally present. However, it does not carry the same connotation with most early US rap not being as explicitly political as Senegalese rap music.

   This becomes clear when looking at the statement by teaching artist Spiritchild:

> **Spiritchild:** *"There's 'Legendary Cyphers' on Fridays […] you gotta go … They usually start around nine, Union Square on 14th street. It's one of the only… it carries the essence, when you go there, you'll feel it. You'd be like, 'Ohhh this is how it must have been in the 1990s!' They don't do that anymore."*

This is paralleled by Rabbi Darkside's account of his first Hip Hop experience in New York in 1999:

> **Rabbi Darkside:** *"It was like the best summer ever for underground Hip Hop in New York. It was a really legendary summer. And yeah, it was crazy. It was like Black Star at Central Park, the Wetlands was still poppin' as a venue, bragging rights battles were happening, the Black Lily Jam Sessions were happening that summer, [...] and the house band was The Roots, and like, every Sunday night it was like Common was there, Black Thought was there, Mos Def was there [...] there was no doubt in my mind that I was immediately coming back to New York City when I graduated from school."*

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[216] According to Pi, his classes in traditional African dance styles *are "paid, but you earn almost nothing. Because it's 5000 Francs CFA [around 7€] per person and you have to pay the drummers."*

Most of the teaching artists and practitioners I met share this 1990s nostalgia and attribute the change in New York's Hip Hop scene(s) to a changing city.[217] Since then, many of the original cultural open spaces have been closed down as gentrification advances further and further. It is not only the spaces but also the practitioners who are pushed out of their original inner-city neighborhoods as rents soar and housing has become a financial investment for the hyper-rich and corporations (cf. Harvey, 2003, 2012).

As mentioned in chapter 4, the shut-down spaces include the Rebel Diaz Arts Collective, the occupied candy factory in the Bronx, and the aerosol art space 5-Pointz, which also housed regular rap concerts and breaking events. They were subject to political repression and the real estate owner's profit interests, and with no state intervention to protect them, such centers become rarer and rarer. In the above cases, state authorities have instead enforced contracts and the hegemonic political order and ownership. Legal ownership questions are thus essential to enable scene-based, face-to-face Hip Hop learning and practice.

7.3. Scene-Based Mentoring: Stylistic Legacies, Professionalization, and Political Education

Besides the autodidactic learning happening in open spaces, another route of scene-based learning is mentoring. In chapter 5.4, we have already seen how Hip Hop mentoring can redistribute cultural, social, and aspirational capital among practitioners and how the teaching artists try to reproduce such relationships in a classroom setting. The chapter discussed two ideal-typical models: firstly, the egalitarian and dialogic model practiced by MC and beatmaker Y? and his *mentor-mentees,* and secondly, the more structured and hierarchical social reinsertion program for ex-juvenile convicts, the YUMA. The following subchapter will analyze two specific instances of mentoring outside of classrooms and in scene-based settings. The first one is the institutionalized mentorship practiced by the members of dance organization Urban Artistry, revolving around professionalization and questions of style and culture (7.3.1). The second is the distinctive mentorship between the late Senegalese dancer Viera and his mentee Pi. Their story treats questions of national and pan-African identity and stylistic legacy (7.3.2). Finally, in 7.3.3 the dangers of mentor-mentee hierarchies will be summarized shortly.

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[217] Some of New York's older practitioners revive the spirit of the 70s-90s. E.g. Popmaster Fabel and his ex-wife Christie Zee organize regular park jams via the "Tools of War" collective (cf. *Tools of War Grassroots Hip Hop | Facebook*, n.d.)

7.3.1. Urban Artistry's Mentoring for Stylistic Development and Professionalization

Industrial house music is thumping, and I feel the bass going through my chest. We are a group of 12 people forming a circle inside a dark club in downtown Washington DC. I had to push and budge through two really crowded floors, playing trap music and RnB, to arrive at the house floor, which has a lot more space. It is not my favorite type of house music as I prefer more soulful variations layered with vocals and instrumental samples, such as flute, violins, or piano. However, once I see the round of dancers express themselves inside the cypher, and how they interpret the polyrhythms with their many different ways of moving, I start to understand the music better and take a liking. The colorful bunch forming the cypher is composed of ethnically diverse dancers in their late 20s and 30s. There is Hannah, who has a partly Arabic background and is on fire tonight, her arms flying all over the place in vogueing fashion. Leslie, the nice Asian American dancer, is showing her very chilled, distinguishable, and funky style. Tyrone, another Black member of Urban Artistry, dancing very energetically at a house battle earlier that day, now goes in for a few more relaxed solos with many isolations and smaller steps, and there is Junious 'House' Brickhouse. Junious – as always – is well dressed in white linen pants, shirt, and vest. He is sporting dancing shoes and a hat and portrays a level of mastery and control on the floor that can only be reached after decades of dancing and having practiced multiple styles. He showcases experience, and moves with ease, calmly, and with a high level of detail. There are whoos and awws and other encouragements for everyone entering the circle. A few people come around to witness the very intimate exchange, and even one or two outsiders enter to dance a solo. I watch as the group that is Urban Artistry takes turns, never leaving the cypher's center empty. Even though every dancer moves differently from everyone else, there is a lot of communication and a collective conversation going on. Each group member tells their own story, incorporating elements that the others hinted at during their physical narrations. Handstyles and gestures are picked up, step patterns and footnotes are referenced as their plots thicken, twist and turn, and after moving through different levels, mostly find an elevated climax phase. In the many hugs and encouragements, it becomes clear that these people who use their bodies to tell stories feel trust and affection for each other and have shared many ecstatic moments like this. They have practiced the Sunday-night club session as a weekly ritual that lasts into the early morning for at least the last decade. The group sees cyphering not only as an important part of learning and practicing their different dance styles, but also as a resource that is scarce in individualized western societies: togetherness. Everyone knows and greets the club's bouncers, bartenders, as well as the DJ, who I learn later has been taking care of Junious a few decades earlier during rough times of his youth, giving him a space to do his homework and letting the adolescent enter clubs, where he was mixing.

On my last day in Washington DC, in this dark club setting, I witness the intimate cypher of people looking for every detail in each other's movements, reading each other on a physical and an emotional level. I begin to understand what Urban Artistry means for these people: It is a community where relationships have been forged over the years in many such circles. They have spent endless hours in their dance studio, shared stages and battle grounds, organized and visited festivals, and are collectively researching the history of the dance forms they practice. They have

mentored one another in dance and in life, they have been through serious fights and arguments, they have been down and out, realizing there was not enough income to pay studio rent. They have united closer in conflict with other dance organizations in the area, and they have traveled the globe together – establishing new friendships and mentorships in different countries. Urban Artistry is thus a merger between an organization, and a crew, bearing many of the Hip Hop collective's characteristics, which are central to their member's identities.

Here, the club setting is central to reinstating such a group identity. It is also an essential space for the organization's centerpiece: scene-specific mentoring. Hannah, a long-time member of Urban Artistry and one of Junious' many mentees, recounts her mentoring:

> **Hannah:** *"It happened in the [dance] studio, where he saw me moving. He saw how I progressed regularly. But a lot of times, the one-on-one advice would come at the club or at open session. So usually, I would ask. Like, 'Oh, yeah, I have to ask, if I want feedback', or sometimes he would initiate it say – 'I want to work with you on these things.' And he would give me like, one idea or two ideas to work on. Usually a concept or a rhythm pattern. And then in all styles, in house and breaking, in whacking, vogue, he's... yeah... he's helped me in all of those styles."*

Hannah here mentions some specific features of developing one's style at Urban Artistry. In contrast to her prior training in gymnastics and salsa and their hierarchical and top-down settings, she remembers how in Hip Hop dance scenes, it is her responsibility to step out of the collective cultural practice to ask for feedback. In Hip Hop, it is often up to the mentee to reinitiate the mentoring relationship. Urban Artistry's mentoring approach requires its members to dance more than one style and thus create synergy effects. While Urban Artistry has its studio classes structured as, e.g., "Intro to House" and "Applied House," their mentoring goes beyond just learning and drilling new steps and applying them. It also means accompanying the mentee's stylistic approach. Hannah recalls Junious' feedback:

> **Hannah:** *"He'd say: 'in your gymnastics, you had certain positions you would hit with your arms. Try that in your floor work. And try slowing down!' That was one example, and it felt really weird. And then [...] I'd be like 'So how was that?' And he's like, 'Yeah, keep doing that, keep working with that!'"*

In contrast to the studio, the club is a scene-specific setting where the dancers dance without a certain task at hand in the cypher. Therefore, a mentor's personalized feedback makes the most sense after seeing the mentee practicing in this culture-specific setting for hours. Junious encouraged Hannah in HHC's central challenge of finding one's style by drawing on her unique resources and movement vocabulary.

The club is also a space where mentorship can be initiated. This was the case for Russell aka "b-boy Iron Man." The skilled Black b-boy, DJ/host, recalls calling out Junious to battle in a club cypher:

>**Russell:** *"every time this guy danced, he would show me something new that I was like 'Whoa, maybe I wasn't ready for this' [laughter] I mean House was doing house dance, he was locking he was popping, he was breaking, he was doing all these things and I was like 'Wow!' But I didn't know at this point I was looking for a mentor. So he, he hits me up and he's like, 'Hey, man, I want to have a meeting with you.' I was scared out of my mind. 'What does this guy want?' You know? So we went to a club called Modern and we sat down and he was like, 'Yeah, you, you know, you're pretty much asking for a mentor. You just don't know that's what you need.' And that began the mission for me."*

Through this scene-specific exchange of a club battle, Russell realized their skill difference, and Junious concluded that Russell was asking for guidance. A high skill level in Hip Hop transports authority, and both Hannah and Russell describe being intimidated after Junious asked them whether they wanted to be mentored. Junious' mentoring relationships are numerous and include many of Urban Artistry's over 40 members, as well as dancers from the prestigious cultural diplomacy program "Next Level" he now directs. But where did this mentoring approach come from, and how did Junious institutionalize it?

The Origin of Institutionalizing Mentoring: An Experience Abroad

Growing up Black and poor in the US South in the 1970s, Junious had practiced different African-American dance styles that predated Hip Hop. He realized the culture's importance only in 1997:

>**Junious:** *"I got stationed in Germany, like for NATO duty, I met all of these Hip Hop heads and they got it. […] They understood the way we dressed, the way we talked and they understood the movement and the music. So it was really strange because I had to go all the way to Germany to meet myself you know what I mean? You know so it was really strange in that way, but it was really helpful."*

He contrasts this experience with his army assignments in Mid-Western U.S, where "they did not get it." It was especially in the South of Germany, where not only Hollywood blockbusters such as Beat Street, Flash Dance, or Breakin' informed the Hip Hop practice. The stationing of African American GIs, who had introduced their cultural formats themselves in local nightclubs, was equally important. The result was that in addition to cultural appropriation, there was also cultural appreciation, with the German practitioners knowing many of Hip Hop's inside codes and details of practice.

During the following years, Junious witnessed a vast network of relatively structured Hip Hop cultural events and institutions in Europe. There was still far more public funding for youth clubs and culture here than in the post-Reaganomics USA,

where neoliberal austerity politics reigned supreme[218]. These open cultural spaces had ethnic implications similar to how Chang (2006) describes the early 1980s club phase as being one of the most ethnically integrated eras for NYC Hip Hop:

> **Junious:** *"Where I grew up, there were people of different races dancing. They just didn't dance together. And frankly, they weren't as good. […] Round about 85, 86. Let's take b-boying and b-girling. There wasn't a lot of people still b-boying and b-girling [in the US]. But in Europe, they were, and they were still training and building.[219] […] So by the time it became cool again in the US, you guys had all of these... You had infrastructure already. You had dance schools. You had competitions. Everybody can go to their local "Haus der Jugend" [youth club in German] and have a jam session and a practice, but that wasn't very common here in most places in the United States. To answer your question, when I got there I was like: 'Wow, this is great!' Yes there were some things that made people differently racially, and people were separated. But [...] people could still dance together and respect each other."*

This surely is an idealization of sorts since many stories of German Hip Hop and breaking pioneers from the 1980s and 1990s are full of violent conflict. However, it does mark a difference towards a US context where the country's history of slavery and more recent waves of labor migration and super-exploitation have made for an ethnically very segregated society (Chang, 2014; Fraser, 2016). For Junious, the normality of this ethnic pluralism played out in the fact that he received mentorship from many of the people surrounding him, some of whom were white, such as b-boy Scotty from Germany's South Side Rockers or locking dancer Thomas from Denmark's Out of Control Crew. Most importantly, he describes that these two dancers taught him *"to take my own culture more seriously."* Apart from these mentoring relations, it was specifically well-funded European cultural institutions, events, and spaces that enabled such relationships. These left a lasting impression on Junious and, in turn, informed the basis of Urban Artistry's organizational approach. After his stationing in Europe, and war deployments in Bosnia Herzegovina, Kosovo, Afghanistan, etc., Junious returned to the US, where a few younger dancers approached him. They had seen him in video footage from European events and wanted to learn from him in terms of the cultural capital of dance skills, as well as on an economic and career level:

> **Junious:** *"more than anything, they wanted to learn how to make a living dancing […] I thought about all the privilege I had, like all the help I got from Scotty and Thomas, and*

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[218] For the role of German Youth clubs in providing spaces for scene growth and Hip Hop practices cf. Verlan et al. (2015) Kaya, A. (2001), Kaya V. (2015), and Caglar (1998) and for French funding for urban dance theater etc. cf. Durand (2002).

[219] Two of the many telling accounts of how breaking was out in New York in the period following the 80s media hype and cultural exploitation are given German and US b-boy pioneers Storm and Rocksteady Crew's Mr Wiggles. Coming to NYC in the early 90s Storm was shocked upon encountering "the last active b-boy of New York" b-boy Quickstep. (Mr Wiggles, n.d.; cf. Robitzky, 2000 and personal correspondence).

all the opportunities that they created for me, and I was like, 'Bro, I gotta pass this shit on, you know. I can't rob like that, it's not right.' So […] I dedicated myself to these guys. So the deal was simple: it was like, 'Hey, I'll teach you how to do this thing that you wanna do with dance, and I'll do it for free, but you'll just have to do it for other people. If you want someone to mentor you, understand that there will be other people who will need to be mentored.' We have to keep reaching out and keep helping."[220]

In a highly competitive culture of auto-didactic learners, Junious defines cooperative learning as a "privilege," which included mentoring, guidance, and being offered professional opportunities of dancing shows, judging events, and teaching. Aside from its very competitive structure, Hip Hop as a set of cultural practices revolves around normative guidelines, such as "Each One Teach One" and the often-heard slogans "for the culture" or "keeping the culture alive." As Junious mentioned earlier, breaking had died out in the US during the late 1980s and early 1990s, as the media hype receded and it had become unpopular. Many practitioners, therefore, reflect upon ways of establishing what Amadou Fall Ba calls a "functioning ecosystem" to become independent of media fads. According to Junious' analysis, this kind of mentorship enabled by well-funded institutions kept the cultural practice afloat in Europe. Receiving such free guidance and mentoring without passing it on would mean "robbing" from the self-perpetuating system. He equates mentoring with altruistic ways of "helping," "reaching out," and with a long-term "dedication," as he defines (as already stated in chapter 5) that *"mentors are for life. You don't shake 'em"*. However, this is not a one-sided equation since the mentor in such a relationship equally learns and receives admiration and praise both by his mentees and for his mentees' achievements.[221] However, the semantic distinction is clear: Those who do not mentor and do not contribute to the collective processes of teaching and learning, who instead just follow the battle or business route and do not contribute, are "robbers." With learning in Hip Hop comes a responsibility of teaching, and in addition to other normative orders, there is an ethics of non-monetarized, mutual aid. Junious assigns these ethics by calling Urban Artistry's members "culturalists". Via founding Urban Artistry in the mid-2000s, Junious's goal was to institutionalize this broad and culturalist mentoring approach to recreate his European experience. Dance-based non-profit Urban Artistry has invited many of Junious's mentors, such as Scotty and Thomas, to their annual festival for Junious' mentees to also learn from them.

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[220] Fogarty (2012c) speaks on three styles of learning in breaking: peer-to-peer, self-taught learning, and mentoring. As experienced dancers age, they switch more towards mentoring roles, as they cannot perform at the top level themselves anymore. At Urban Artistry, all three types play out. For learning in breaking cf. also Schloss (2009).

[221] Many of Junious' mentees have won prestigious battles, such as Juste Debout, and are important voices in their scene/s.

Learning "How to be 360" and Culturally Preserve Black American Art

This culturalist approach implies that there are multiple aspects of mentoring at Urban Artistry that participants should pursue. Hannah describes these as their organization's mission:

> **Hannah:** *"cultural preservation of Black American art, particularly dance but also DJing and visual art and spoken word. [...] to preserve that culture… we do that through research. So learning as much as we can by watching videos, by meeting as many elders in the community, documenting their stories, doing interviews like this. […] so one is getting a record of what happened, right? And then teaching that. So the education portion, I have to say we've been really focused on education for the past number of years, ever since we got our own studio. It takes a lot of time and energy to run the studio. And we offer classes six days a week, sometimes seven. So we've been really pushing the education piece. And then, of course, participating in the culture, so training ourselves and performing, creating theater shows, battling, throwing events. Yeah. So, [...]a lot of different activities to preserve the culture."*

Their approach of cultural preservation includes five aspects, which are all to some extent guided by one's mentor: performance, participation, education, organization, and documentation. Urban Artistry's broader focus on Black American art enables them to include all Afro-American music and dance styles, including but also going beyond Hip Hop cultural formats. Being part of the team and being mentored by Junious, Hannah and Russell take part in many of these aspects. They teach breaking classes, the Funkateers youth team, help organize their annual festival "Soul Society," do administrative work at their dance studio, perform and cypher, and conduct and edit interviews. On a career and income basis, this meets almost all seven career paths, which Fogarty (2010) identifies for Hip Hop dancers.[222]

They always include the musical and societal background of these dances as a foundation for their classes. More recently, they have researched musical and dance styles which precede the funk-, house-, or rap-based dance forms taught at their studio. Thus, many team members have been studying African- American dance forms tied to blues, such as buck dancing or flatfooting[223]. Through Junious' contacts, they could reach musicians and researchers from the Smithsonian network for museum and research institutes to learn how to do archival work. They then started doing interviews with Blues dancers (among others), some of whom are now over

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[222] These include judging competitions, dancing for live music acts, Hip Hop dance theater, music production, organizing and managing events, engaging in physiotherapy/ the fitness industry, as well as teaching/education. Urban Artistry's members are involved in all of these areas via their own organization or freelance basis (cf. Fogarty, 2010, p. 31f.).

[223] In addition to code-switching in front of funders and the more formal interview setting, this broad cultural focus might be one of the reasons Hannah does not use the term Hip Hop when describing UA's manifold activities.

90.[224] Together, they looked at their dance footage, noted the steps' names, and started to revive the practice, organizing and participating in Blues festivals in the DC area.

> **Russell:** *"what's really cool about it is that when we talked to some of these older people about what their contributions were, it, it re-energizes them, so they start coming back, and they're like 'Ooh we have so much more to give.' because […] they understand that if they leave […] a foundation is lost"*

The mentoring at UA is, thus, an encompassing, inter-generational project of preserving Black American art forms. It remains multi-ethnic according to a universal ideal of Hip Hop while acknowledging the culture's roots as an Afrodiasporic format in a historical lineage to West Africa.

For Hannah, who has an Arab-American mother and a white father, this is essential:

> **Hannah:** *"I didn't grow up with the Hip Hop struggle […] that some people in Urban Artistry did. So, to open up their culture to me, invite me to come and learn […] and to be in a group that is diverse, is really important to me. […] I don't think I exactly know where I want to go with all of this, but I believe in the mission of Urban Artistry, I believe in the people. They're some of my closest friends."*

The Hip Hop struggle here clearly signifies the Black/Brown American experience of racism, super-exploitation and expropriation. While not having had to face this struggle, Hannah feels privileged for being part of the diverse group, which is common in the dance world but uncommon in large parts of highly segregated American society. The mentoring practices at UA can thus somewhat bridge ethnic divides by inviting everyone into the community of practice while still addressing its Black roots. The plethora of cultural practices ensure a holistic experience and a high level of identification. Such mentorship-based participation in Hip Hop can create a sense of identity and community for practitioners.

7.3.2 Afropop – Mentoring to go Beyond one's Discipline and Become Stylistically Universal

I got to know a different variation of the mentor-mentee relationship in the Senegalese dance scene. As described in the previous subchapter, Afropop's stylistic mélange between Afrodiasporic and traditional African dance styles, as well as Eastern martial arts, was developed and named by Viera. The late innovator started as a Kung Fu instructor and was one of the earliest b-boys of the second wave of breaking around 2000 in Dakar. His mentee Pi, a professional dancer, is equally versed in a multitude of styles and has won the concept battle described under 7.1. He admits

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[224] Cf. www.facebook.com/Urban-Artistry-Preservatory-Project-1810691442519569/ (last accessed 11/25/2022).

owing this victory and his full-time professional employment in Senegal's national ballet[225] to his mentor Viera, who had introduced him to Afropop. Pi describes seeing his future mentor for the first time on TV: *"he was mixing things, and I said to myself, 'What is this? This is crazyyy. I would love to.. This is the vision that I have of dance. Ahhh, this means being truly universal, being able to talk and communicate with all of the dancers through our bodies, you see.'"*This communicative aspect described by Pi is essential in the realm of culture-oriented practitioners and marks a break from the competition-based mode of today's generation.[226] As in the previous case, the initial amazement with the mentor's style sparks the mentee's desire to learn from him or her. Pi, who had already been practicing krumping, popping, and Hip Hop and had just started learning Western contemporary dance, took Viera's Afropop workshop at Blaise Senghor. At the end of the multiple-week-long masterclass, Viera invited Pi to become part of his dance company Afreekanam based on Afropop. Today, a decade later, Pi defines Afropop's approach as follows:

> **Pi:** *"Afropop […] It means taking root and opening up to the world. To take root means to be able to take your culture, everything that is you, the dance which belongs to you, your base, and to open up towards other dances, to become universal, to have the same body, the same language with any dancer that you meet. […] and you know then it becomes a thing, where there are no boundaries, no limits, where you cannot say 'I am a contemporary dancer, I am this or that.' Afropop means that you are a dancer, period. […] you don't have the time to classify yourself via one style. It's universal."*

This philosophy of movement requires mastery of specific genres first to then leave their rules and boundaries behind. This is rather close to Bruce Lee's interdisciplinary philosophy of martial arts. Its desire to take root also mirrors some of the drive behind Urban Artistry's research into the Blues dance formats. Afropop's universalist vision also has no exclusive Hip Hop focus and opens up the many pathways Pi and the rest of Viera's former dance company Afreekanam follow. Pi tours the globe performing traditional dance styles with the National Ballet while teaching house dance for free at Blaise Senghor. At the same time, he wins international battles in different categories, such as Hip Hop, or house, regularly performs in theater pieces that include a fusion of different dance forms, and shoots short movies and video clips. He teaches paid workshops at home and abroad in a variety of dance styles, including Afropop. It becomes clear that this stylistic opening also meant more professional and career opportunities for him because he can respond to almost any genre-specific demand. I argue that apart from being stylistically intriguing, this fusion of traditional and Afrodiasporic dance forms also meets the

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[225] Again, the National Ballet has nothing to do with Western Ballet but performs Senegalese traditional dances and music.

[226] Breaking's competition dominance with round-for-round judging, large stages, cameras, etc. diminishes the oral cultural call-and-response mechanisms. Freestyling in breaking battles has become rarer and rarer (cf. B-Boy & B-Girl Dojo, 2018).

demands of many Western cultural institutions and their exoticizing and fetishizing gaze.[227] The approach of Hip Hop dancers all around the globe looking to "take root" and become interdisciplinary in their stylistic approach has become more common during the last decades.[228] In the late Viera's case, his stylistic legacy lives on through his mentees of the Afreekanam company, who still practice Afropop.

I could glimpse the emotional meaning of Viera, who died very young, for his mentees and colleagues when visiting a documentary screening at Dakar's French institute in 2019. Among the 100 people who came to see the movie, the former members of Afreekanam were either in tears or drunk. Almost all of them were visibly shaken before and after the movie, showcasing the whole group together. Viera's mentee describes the emotional depth of the mentorship in and beyond Hip Hop:

> ***Pi:*** *"I went more towards the traditional dance forms, which I have mastered here in Senegal […] Viera, he told us to do so, he was the initiator of Afropop… He was a big brother, a maestro, he was everything to me. He's… I can't even say... This is our relation for real because he was more than… more than the dance, he'd become family."*

After his mentor's death, Pi realized that he owes his mastery, his job, and large parts of his artistic recognition to Viera and therefore sees it as his mission to pass on this stylistic legacy. He and two former members of the theater company Afreekanam are the only ones who continue to practice and teach this approach of stylistic universalism with a foundation in Hip Hop and traditional Senegalese dance styles. However, crossing stylistic boundaries does not go without conflict. This is especially the case in Hip Hop since it is a cultural practice, where mentoring often ensures cultural practice is reproduced along a stylistic foundation and adhering to traditions. The question of canonizing and preserving, or innovating upon oral

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[227] While European theaters and other performance spaces have a demand for "authentic" foreign cultural exoticized traditions, the systematic expropriation and super-exploitation of Black and people of color remains intact and stabilizes the capitalist order. The "ascriptive hierarchies" of racialization are not toppled while the ethno-fetish of the liberal, middle and upper classes is catered to in "high" cultural institutions (cf. Ege, 2007; Fraser, 2016; Said, 1995).

[228] My largest inspiration, Kadir "Amigo" Memis, who started out as a b-boy and a popping and locking dancer, has taken a similar path after having won the most important breaking competitions: His first piece "Zeybreak" focused on a mix of Hip Hop dance styles and the traditional Turkish "Zeybek" dance, named after a small group of outlaws living in the mountains during the Ottoman empire. The fusion of the Western Afrodiasporic and traditional Turkish dance and musical formats struck a chord with the German theater scene and opened many doors for the versatile dancer to enter a large array of "high" cultural institutions all around Europe and Turkey. Without any formal training as a choreographer, this even lead to a large-scale production of a touring dance show called "Anadolu Break," which despite some queering aspects, was highly popular in Turkey. Such fusion phenomena can "transculturally" transcend boundaries (cf. Mecheril, 2010). The way "high" cultural institutions are set up often favors an "ethnicization" of art and essentializing of ethnic identities (cf. Sakolsky & Ho, 1996).

cultural formats and who retains the authority to do so is a recurring conflict in the scene.[229]

We have now seen two interrelated stylistic and career-based instances of scene-based mentoring with Urban Artistry's more institutionalized version and Viera's informal approach of Afropop – and how these contribute to sustaining a cultural practice. Hip Hop mentoring and its hierarchies, however, do not only contribute to continuous cultural practice and community-building but also carry dangers of abuse.

7.3.3 Cases of Failure in Mentoring: Conflicting Claims, Idolizing, Abuse, and a Hip Hop #metoo

Like any relationship, Hip Hop mentoring and bonds of learning are not free of conflicts and power play. In New York and Dakar, I faced multiple instances where the stories of self-proclaimed mentors did not match the stories of their supposed mentees. Sometimes, an artist of an older generation would tell me that they mentored another person. In contrast, that younger artist did not agree with this framing of their relationship. An elder claiming a mentoring relationship also exerts a claim to parts of the fame and accomplishment of the alleged mentees. Instead, the alleged mentees often contested having progressed in their artistic craft on their own and being taught only in minimal scope by various persons. In a Hip Hop cultural microcosm, the originality principle obliges you to create your own style. Acknowledging the indebtedness to one's teachers partly contradicts the independence narratives of Hip Hop artists pulling themselves up by the bootstraps out of the swamp of oppressive surroundings. Such stories are often marked by the bragging, boasting, and bravado statements of lower-class youth of color who have become socially upward mobile, who "have made it" via their artistic accomplishments. Following neoliberal individualizing tendencies, the artists often stress individual achievements. Not everyone carries out the humbling acknowledgment of one's teachers or mentors, especially since many people navigate their way through the artistic fields without one exclusive guide. It is part of the blueprint of what it means to be a Hip Hop activist, to have students who follow in your stylistic legacy, and for you to have shaped and contributed to the scene's growth. Hip Hop culture is a self-perpetuating community of practice, and contributing to its further growth through teaching and organizing jams and keeping some of the youth in the culture is a critical achievement within this system. Even my breaking students in Berlin had realized this and half-jokingly struck a chord when they sometimes told my fellow teachers and me that we were not doing it for them but to grow our own reputation when they battled, won prizes, or danced showcases "for us". Such conflicts

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[229] During a panel at a festival, I witnessed a long debate between a German pioneering dancer who took a preservatory stance and questioned Viera's ability to define a new style. In a culture of practitioners with little financial capital, the symbolic capital that comes with defining, naming, and claiming a style is quite disputed.

between learners and teachers are bound to happen in a field, which is highly competitive and has such an eclectic mix of neoliberal stories of individual success and collective and mentoring trajectories. Conflicting claims towards indebtedness or independence are just one failure of Hip Hop mentoring. Let us look at some more serious cases in the following.

Patriarchal Hip Hop and Sexual Abuse via Mentoring

HHC's power play and hierarchies are often gendered, and during my research and my own Hip Hop experiences, I have witnessed very few female mentors. Gendered upbringing and patriarchal cultural aspects, such as "mansplaining", are the lighter form of discrimination and abuse witnessed in the culture and the larger society. During my teens, I overheard many comments by some of the top German b-boys, such as *"Whenever a b-girl is up for a battle, I'll go straight to the bar."* The failure to recognize female artistic achievements is one of the less severe forms of abuse in HHC. More serious cases claim male ownership of women in the culture. One example for this was when an older and "socially conscious" Senegalese rapper had "offered" me another female artist – telling me: *"you can have her, she is mine, but you can have her."*

Other, more severe instances directly link to mentoring: During the talk show night of the "Queen16" b-girl festival, an accomplished b-girl from Sweden retold how she had suffered different forms of abuse by her mentor b-boy Freeze in the well-known Swedish dance school ASA. She retold how, during her teenage years, she had idolized her breaking mentor at this school where students live in the woods for at least a year to learn different styles. Upon her turning 18, he and a few other older b-boys (more than double her age) took advantage of her idolization and trust and abused her both sexually and emotionally. Years later, she started a campaign against him in the wake of the #metoo movement. After publicly apologizing and telling everyone that he would not repeat this action, she saw that he continued to offer massage courses at the school. She realized that he followed a structured and manipulative preparation approach and then took advantage of his female mentees as soon as they turned 18. Many other b-girls in Sweden confirmed this story, which sadly comes as no surprise since many men in positions of power abuse these. Hip Hop mentorships are one of many such relationships of power. Further examples of such abuse of a mentoring position are the numerous accusations against b-boy Crazy Legs, who – in his 50s – had offered many young b-girls around the globe quick ways towards fame, or entrance into the legendary Rock Steady Crew if they agreed to regular sex with him. He had also sent "dick pics," not accepted "no" as an answer, and pressured the girls to "consent." A wave of public outrage at Crazy Legs' behavior on social media happened in 2020, three years after the height of the #metoo movement in Hollywood had started to normalize the publication of such cases of abuse against women*. This illustrates how movements like #metoo influence all layers of patriarchal society including HHC.

Perhaps the most prominent example outside the current rap industry, where such cases are manifold[230], is the one already discussed of systematic abuse of younger boys and mentees by Hip Hop pioneer Afrika Bambaataa. What unites all these cases is that men of prestige and status in the culture, who could be possible mentors, abuse their positions of power and possible mentoring relationships to pressure women* towards sexual acts. The abusers promise either quick roads to fame or threaten the survivors to never be able to accomplish anything in the scene. Misogyny, homophobia, and toxic masculinity still reign supreme in many spheres of society, including large parts of commercial and underground Hip Hop (cf. Love, 2012; Rose, 2008). These are not individual problems, as the hierarchies and specific forms of today's patriarchal relations have been determined by different stages of capitalism. The gendered relations of exploitation and care work in capitalism pervade all spheres of society and dialectically influence more cultural and individual forms of discrimination and abuse (cf. Federici, 2014, 2021; Fraser, 2016; hooks, 1994). These structural issues cannot be resolved in or via Hip Hop cultural practices alone but require systemic transformation (cf. Tlustly, 2021). At the same time, some strategies for transformative change inside the culture are the same as for general society: movements, education, self-organization, and proposing a different and queer-feminist approach. One small-scale answer to Hip Hop culture's patriarchal structures, which could be part of a larger strategy, is the Senegalese female federation "Genji Hip Hop." Next to this specific strategy via federating female* members of a scene, the following subchapter will examine the strategies of Hip Hop federations more generally as a means for professionalization.

7.4 Professionalization and Self-Representation via Federations and Non-Hip Hop Skills

In both the US, as well as in the Senegalese context, the practitioners and teaching artists strive to live off of their artistic and pedagogic practice on the one hand and sustain their cultural practice on the other. Prior chapters already discussed part of their strategies of classroom teaching, founding non-profits, organizing own events, and scene-based mentoring in career choices. Another prevalent aspect is more formalized teaching of cultural marketing and management for individualized career planning to be discussed in the following (7.4.1.). Practitioners also build networks and federations to further their professionalization. First, the all-female federation Genji Hip Hop, (7.4.3) is analyzed, followed by cultural manager network Wemanagement (7.4.4), and thirdly a breaking federation – including the typical problems of federating a competitive field (7.4.5).

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[230] In 2021, Germany saw a #Deutschrapmetoo moment after a famous rapper raped a female influencer, who went public. Many testimonials followed with a masculinist backlash from some German rappers (cf. Baghernejad.de & Böttcher, 2021).

7.4.1 Individual Professionalization for Career Planning

Hip Hop non-profits have different approaches to helping their members and the scene more generally to develop career paths as artists or teaching artists. In its many neighborhood centers, El Puente offers career help for upcoming visual artists (aerosol or others). 20-year old Manu thus describes her work: *"at the Williamsburg HQ center I do portfolio prep help for anyone who's a high schooler applying to college. So that incorporates like giving them prompts and a couple of like homework assignments to like develop their portfolio so that it's more desirable for applying to art schools".*

In addition to this individualized hands-on, and pragmatic approach, she also situates her work as being political in balancing out inequalities due to *"systemic racism within the arts."* She states that poor youth of color *"applying to art school or […] whatever schools.. they don't have, They're not on the same playing field as someone who was a born in Park Slope and their family could afford to send them to these art classes."* Many actors see such leveling the playing field by better positioning poor youth of color in education and the job market as a small-scale political effect of their work.

Parallel to this, but without addressing the context of systemic racism, the director of service-providing organization BEAT frames their approach as advancing careers. This is illustrated by their cooperation with commercial recording studios and their principle of *"we don't work with hobbyists."* Instead, they only employ full-time, professional artists. The resulting professional implications go beyond just Hip Hop skills. Director James Kim describes a program bringing youth from different projects in Harlem together to cooperate in a commercial recording studio:

> **James:** *"it's a lot different from a professional producer to come to your school and teach you on an ipad or a laptop as opposed to you going to a professional environment and like also learning how to conduct yourself. You don't give the guy your mixtape and be like 'Yo B, listen to this son! You know I got beats!' [mimicking ghetto vernacular]. You gotta learn how to show respect and conduct yourself and again opening their eyes to all of these different career paths that they don't even have access to"*

For the head of the non-profit, who comes from a background of corporate event organizing, a large part of the professionalization comes via acquiring proper manners of conduct and expression. The cultural capital of polite/professional behavior is usually acquired in middle-class families and upward. Making music in a professional environment enables participants to (re-)learn this. His mock statement in Hip Hop lingo, addressing a music studio executive, illustrates the class gap between lower-class youth of color and these professional realms.

In parallel, Amadou Fall Ba of Dakar's Hip Hop hub Africulturban points out that learning French and English as part of their Youth Urban Media Academy provides equal access to more professional realms. These are often operated by Western institutions and require language mastery and soft and hard skills:

> **Amadou:** *"One of the biggest problems, which we have, and that's not only Africulturban, but Hip Hop, is about human resources. That's the capacity of preparing*

the necessary documents, writing reports, doing the accounting, you see... To go and do fundraising, to go and talk with politicians, with sponsors, we suffer from that as well. That goes for all the Hip Hop structures here in Senegal. We have this problem of human resources... the people who understand and master the different language elements and know what we mean when we speak of an ecosystem, a business model, etc."

The organizer describes the different tasks required by the non- and for-profit Hip Hop cultural sector and its donors, which, in their case, are over 90% Western, public, and private foundations. The work of career planning and professionally organizing Hip Hop events and earning a living, therefore, requires the skills to negotiate and come to terms with these Western institutions. Among these skills are the mentioned accounting, report writing, and soft skills of communicating with these donors. At the same time, the organization aims to diversify its funding, include more state money, which many of its partner organizations in Europe receive, and establish other for-profit ways to earn a living from the Hip Hop practices. When talking about their mission, the organization's president and MC Matador specifically names creating self-owned and operated Hip Hop media, and their main mission as follows: *"to give work to the youth, to more youth who are in the 'cultures urbaines' and really create a business and an industry around it, that's the objective with the non-profit Africulturban."*

Their attempts at creating "a business and an industry around it" include the organization's own booking agency, "King Booking," and their own label structures, where they have negotiated contracts nationally and internationally for some of the country's most renowned artists, such as pioneering MCs Awadi, Xuman, Keyti, as well as DJs Nina, Zeyna, or aerosol artist Docta. However, most actors in the Senegalese field state it is tough to live off of the artistic practice alone. The non-profit sector and NGO funding are often seen as more stable than trying to access routes of industrial revenue.

To open more professional routes, Dakar's Hip Hop non-profits often offer courses in project and cultural management over multiple months. Having started as a b-boy and a cultural manager, Africulturban's Omar explained the founding of their Hip Hop Akademy for professionalization during an interview:

> **Omar:** *"As KRS-1 says 'in the beginning you enter into Hip Hop because of your passion, but you finish becoming a professional'. Thus there were a lot of youth like me, and there were a lot of demands of the youth who were behind the rappers, supporting artists without any education. Thus, there was a really strong demand. Thus, we told ourselves 'ah ok, alright, in the domain of management we have to educate these youth, in the domain of marketing, in the domain of communication, in all of the domains which gravitate around Hip Hop, we have to boost this.'"*

Omar evokes KRS-1, who, as a 'true school' pioneer, lends legitimacy to their approach even from a cultural and underground Hip Hop perspective to then mention the different professionalization aspects. The demand coming from the youth to

become more professional is also equally a legitimizing strategy. At the same time, this goes hand in hand with some of the more business-minded foundations (cf. 7.1 Urban Woman Week). The different organizations have held various daily workshops for professionalizing youth with teachers from business faculties of different universities and employees of the national culture ministry. One aspect of these educational initiatives was a female focus. Africulturban started what Omar calls "positive discrimination" by ensuring that half of their participants are women* with a female Hip Hop Akademy edition in 2015. But what do such seminars look like?

7.4.2 Urban Woman Week's Personal Development and Business Coaching

In 2019, during my second fieldwork, I visited the 7th edition of the women-focused week-long festival described in subchapter 7.1. Building on the Hip Hop Akademy, the festival has included project management seminars, where female Hip Hop artists and affiliated managers, journalists, etc. learned to lay out their envisioned projects in a structured way. They set up larger objectives for the following years with feedback loops, where they would meet again and discuss their progress, setbacks, and further goals. The following description of my participant observation of some of these project management workshops in Dakar shall illustrate the nature of these workshops:

During the first day of the Urban Woman Week's educational program, I was allowed to enter the seminar focused on project management and personality types, as this was open to both men and women. The other parallel classes included a rap and stage presence workshop taught by Matador, Photography, and a DJing class taught by DJ Geebayss. In contrast to the prior and later years, the participation in the seminar I visited was rather low since the online photos of the workshops usually show around 15–20 participants minimum, while we were only seven. The four women included non-Hip Hop affiliated Ana, and her flatmate Ngone, producing clothes and accessories under the label "Urban Fashion." The third woman, Ndeya was involved in managing a famous rap artist, stage management, and hosting her own radio show, while Ina Thiam, the festival's organizer, was also present most of the time. Initially, everyone had to name their goals, and Ina stated that she wanted to professionalize herself more in photography and exhibit internationally while building the movement and institutions around Urban Woman Week and the all-female federation Genji Hip Hop. Next to me was Africulturban's white intern Charlélie from France, and Xadim, a timid 19-year-old, who wanted to open up a cafeteria in his Banlieue with a concert stage for his friends, who were rap artists.

The coaching/personal development session was based on a personality type test geared towards better understanding oneself to choose personalized work methods. The workshop started with a five-year vision presented by everyone in a very supportive atmosphere. The rest of the day-long seminar consisted mainly of the personality test and people deciding where to place themselves on different spectrums, such as intuition vs. beforehand planning etc. The woman who held the workshop said that her organization usually charged around 350€ for such an event, which of course, she did not charge here, but made sure that the people understood the value of the exercise. She gave

many examples specific to Senegalese culture and local social contexts[231], and everyone participated in a lively manner. During the lunch break, the participants discussed and exchanged their plans. At the end of the workshop, everybody received a four-page summary with the test result concerning their personality type. This material explained how and when one would be efficient, how one perceived work tasks and social situations and relations, what made one happy etc. I could identify with it and the accompanying advice when reading this myself. While many leftists are often skeptical of such tests, this one did not transport any ideological messages and non of the business orientation that usually accompanies them. After reading these character assessments, the feedback round was full of emotional statements, as all participants shared the amount of understanding they gained from it. The event's organizer Ina Thiam, after having found out her personality type said this meant a lot to her, as she had always thought of herself as bizarre. She now felt relieved as she could identify as an introvert and thus feel normal, knowing this was a common personality trait. She then reflected on how this assessment made sense and explained her arrival at Africulturban, where she had been initially timid and observant and only finally talked to the people she had identified as the right ones. This eventually led her to become a full-time employee of the most prestigious Hip Hop organization in Senegal.[232] The others shared similar statements of gratitude, and after an afternoon of chatting, we finished the day by watching various performances at the MCU.

Objectives and Business Coaching Workshop

On the second day, a colleague of the first teacher taught a two-hour-only workshop on coaching and setting objectives. The instructor's slightly different approach followed the usual rhythm of neoliberal and hyper-individualized coaching. She gave many examples of the ingenuity of Steve Jobs and how all one needed was "crazy visions" to have a vast impact and "change the world," as she told us he had done through Apple. This struck me as funny for several different reasons[233]. Most strikingly, she established Steve Jobs as a role model without mentioning the difference in the structural positions, which disadvantaged all of the people in the room compared to the late business guru. Compared to the participants, he had high levels of social, cultural, and economic capital, was white and male and, most importantly, had a privileged class positioning in the global

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[231] E.g. she told us about giving the same seminar to farmers in Casamance region (a rural and poor part of Senegal regarded as backwards by many of Dakar's inhabitants) and about their goals and plans for equitable farming.

[232] *Ina and I joked about now being able to understand each other better, after I had disturbed her in the morning, which apparently is part of my personality type. Me being an extrovert and her being an introvert, she was stressed by my jokingly insisting on joining the workshop despite being 10 minutes late. She finally sums up "I can make peace with you now."*

[233] She did not mention the ecological, impact, the exploitation of cheap labor, the conditions of Coltan extraction, and Apple's competitive methods typical of large-scale corporations aiming for monopoly status. Instead, Steve Jobs was presented as the single individual who had succeeded at "changing the world," while most of the technology used for iPhones, iPads etc., such as GPS is developed by state-funded, civil and military research institutions.

North.[234] *Despite my leftist skepticism, I, like many participants present, could still draw some-thing from the workshop. The proposed project management practices of setting goals, which are SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound), actually work for business, artistic, and emancipatory projects and doctoral theses alike. Participant Ndeya stated during the feedback round that during an exercise of prioritizing one's goals, she had found out what she really wanted to focus on in her career in the "Cultures Urbaines" sector. She said she would take a step back from demands to manage further artists and from her radio hosting to focus on event produc-tion and stage management, seeing herself more in this career path.*

When I met female MC Toussa four years earlier, she had also told me that a similar project management seminar during the Urban Woman Week helped her found her all-female studio structure, "Fam Musik." They had formulated initial goals during the festival's workshops and met twice afterward to discuss the progress and possible next steps in the same round of participants.

The ideological base of the workshops about society, global inequalities, and the individual's responsibility is in line with "progressive neoliberalism" (Fraser, 2019). They focus on liberal feminism and emancipation via career enhancement instead of naming and collectively tackling patriarchal capitalism. Secondly, they follow what Boltanski and Chiapello (2007) call "the new spirit of capitalism," which has incorporated and thereby defeated the "artistic critique" of the 68 generation[235] of the systemic alienation and lack of self-determination of laborers' lives. In the West-ern industrialized world, this new and neoliberal spirit of capitalism is now based on individual self-fulfillment via flexible, project-based work. The entrepreneurial ethos, combined with finding "one's purpose," can, at times, provide a somewhat insecure but more flexible work life with areas of self-determination for a small elite. However, this new spirit is used in the corporate world to make workers exploit themselves more, and work over hours "for their passion" and "for personal devel-opment," while it often provokes material insecurities, burnouts, etc. Such manage-ment and leadership[236] workshops do not address such downsides, following the funders' agendas instead (cf. Incite!, 2017). During the press conference (7.1), this workshop's sponsors only evoked creating creative industries and GDP as their goal. This starkly contrasts Senegal's neocolonial realities and its vast poverty but

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[234] I resisted the urge to protest the slogan of *"we should all just follow his example to become rich,"* since this interference would not have been according to fieldwork protocol and might have hurt my relations with the other participants.

[235] The two theorists name particularly the 68 movements' demands for *autonomy, creativity, authenticity* and *liberation* as being essential for the new structuration of project-based work (cf. Boltanski & Chiapello, 2007, p. 326).

[236] Freire (2000, p. 142) has a drastic critique of such workshops and states that a "*divisive effect occurs in connection with the so-called 'leadership training courses', which are (although carried out without any such intention by many of their organizers) in the last analysis alienating. These courses are based on the naive assumption that one can promote the community by training its leaders [...]As soon as they complete the course and return to the community with resources they did not formerly possess, they either use these resources to control the submerged and dominated consciousness of their comrades, or they become strangers in their own communities and their former leadership position is thus threatened.*" I will further discuss such effects in the next chapter in the context of the "NGOization" of social movements and its actors.

did not seem to bother any of the participants. The workshops' ideologies, however, not only conflicted with my leftist ideals.

The same night of the second workshop, the poetry group "le Duo"(composed of Senegal's first female style writer Zeinixx and her male partner) gave a slam poetry performance, which received standing ovations. Their 15-minute-long, highly interactive, and entertaining poem focused on remnants of colonial inequalities, the Western and white gaze upon Africa, the continent's material and cultural realities, contradictions and potentials, and love or the lack thereof. They playfully but harshly named the ongoing economic exploitation and oppressive trade regimes that Senegal suffers from today. This critical artistic performance included what Boltanski and Chiapello (cf. 2007, p. 324ff.) call the "social critique" of capitalism's exploitation and inequalities and stands in a tradition of the 1990s and 2000 generation of Senegalese rap. It posed a stark ideological contrast to the "Steve Jobs individualized mindset" messages earlier that day. This seeming opposition illustrates the different influences of the field between social movements decrying the vast inequalities and oppressive structures on the one hand and Western foundations and popular culture imposing narratives of individualized entrepreneurship on the other. Both normative orders are typical of both Hip Hop's contradictions and of such non-profit programs for professionalization.

While my leftist convictions made me very skeptical of these individualized and somewhat neoliberal seminars, the participants said they did feel a positive impact on their personal career plans and the skills necessary to carry them out. One aspect that all of them described as essential and which somewhat goes further than the "everyone for themselves" message of modern social Darwinism was the further networking happening at the educational programs. In contrast to the DJing and rap workshops, all management participants were adults. Most of them got to know Africulturban's organizers and planned to stay in touch with each other, furthering their social capital and further job opportunities. The following subchapters discuss two cases of how such career planning workshops have extended beyond individualized perspectives and led to a collective building of federations and professional networks.

7.4.3 How a WhatsApp Group Turned Non-Profit, Turned Female Federation "Genji Hip Hop"

The participants of the workshops described above, i.e., fashion designer Ngone, radio host, cultural manager Ndeya, and Urban Woman Week initiator Ina, are all members of the female network organization "Genji Hip Hop"[237]. According to female MC Sister LB, this female federation has taken shape following the initiative of Ina and her festival, which created initial links between the growing number of women in the scene. The event had also created visibility for female actors and thus

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[237] Genji is a slang (verlan) form of Jigen, which is the Wolof word for woman.

encouraged younger girls to take on similar roles in the culture. Once more, role models are critical for Hip Hop engagement. After the Urban Woman Week's first few editions and Africulturban's three-month-long, women-only Hip Hop Akademy, another female rapper contacted Sister LB. She recounts that *"all the time we find ourselves in concerts, we find ourselves in Hip Hop events. But after it's over, we don't see each other anymore. We don't talk anymore and that, that does not help us."* Thus, to institutionalize these elements of self-help and professionalization more sustainably, they first invited many women from Dakar's Hip Hop scenes into a WhatsApp group, with regular meetings and exchanges about jobs and topics. After a short while, they decided to found a non-profit, which they transformed into an Economic Interest Group with an office in Dakar's city center after the first year. This legal status allows them to pay full-time employees to organize job trainings, take care of administrative work, or apply for funding. When I interviewed three Genji members in 2019, the organization counted 69 registered members, including managers, technicians, journalists, rappers, DJs, and style writers, but no dancers[238].

The three members said the organization and Hip Hop posed an answer to Senegalese women's traditionally subordinate role in HHC and society, which their colleague, female MC Toussa, confirms:

> **MC Toussa:** *"We all know that African society, well the woman she stays at home. Thus we're not really on the level of education, you see like getting grades, going to the offices, leading enterprises [...] and there is also our reality... our religion, which makes for the fact that.. well the woman has to submit to the man. [...] Thus, for me – the way I see it, rap is just an instrument, which allows us to say what we think, to share our lived experience"*

Genji Hip Hop has enabled women* in Senegalese HH to collectively reflect on their discrimination and exploitation. The organization has also published a rap compilation focused on sexual harassment (cf. Shryock, 2019). Rap let the MCs address their experiences bluntly and speak about feminist issues that are often taboo in Senegalese society.

Female practitioners described having to fight their family's conservative prejudices to pursue an artistic career and then fight for their role in HHC, too. Radio host/manager Ndeya said that:

> **Ndeya:** *"Well, the difficulties we have encountered in the milieu is like stigmatization. We are stigmatized, 'she's a woman… she's just a woman, so a woman shall not rap, a woman shall not sing, a woman shall not dance, a woman shall not be in the production, a woman shall not be a graffiti writer' NO! That's over! We have something to say. [...] Men have to know that. They have to accept us in terms of professionals and not as women. That they change their view of us. We have paid our dues really"*

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[238] This might be due to Genji HH's roots in Africulturban's and G Hip Hop seminars' focus on the music sector.

When I inquired how this stigmatization played out in Hip Hop, she said that in a concert lineup of around 20 male artists, only two might be women. Genji Hip Hop thus demanded higher female participation quotas and organized their own female festivals. Ndeya further described that she could only start accepting herself as a professional via small-scale learning processes and being allowed into a professional stage and event manager position. Having to "prove oneself" or paying one's dues is inherent to Hip Hop's meritocratic ethos. Therefore, creating quotas and allowing women to prove themselves in these professional realms is one strategy for creating more subcultural equity. Ndeya and her colleagues described that their federation, collective self-organization, and professionalization gave them more confidence and enabled them to demand acceptance as "professionals" by the men. They reported entering Genji HH via staff recommendations and seminars of neighborhood-based cultural centers Africulturban and G Hip Hop in Dakar's Banlieue. Ngone stresses Genji's importance of mentors:

> **Ngone:** "Since I have joined the structure, I have profited from it a lot. […] I have applied at Sinaf center with the photos I have done at Genji, and I have done there an education of six months, and I have gained a lot in professional opportunities. I've had a job before, but now I have a lot more. So I'd say that's thanks to Genji, so Bravo to Genji […] Tipo, me I call her Tipo […] she boosts us all the time in what we do. She's the general secretary of Genji and there are always opportunities. And she always forces you, to go and train. […] It is because of this that you develop and start fixing objectives"

Genji Hip Hop thus focuses on mentorship and professionalization including career advice, encouragement, taking professional photos for job applications, and its members profiting off of a network of information. Cultural, social and psychological capital are passed on via the federation. At the same time, the organization picks up the goals of the Urban Woman Week of creating more platforms for women in Hip Hop via their own events, albums, video production, and social media campaigns.

The federation wants to grow in numbers and Ndeya describes their recruitment process: "every time we discover one [woman] who is part of the urban cultures, we ask her 'Did you join Genji?' And she will say 'No!' And we ask what she's waiting for, and she'll ask questions and then she'll eventually join." In addition to such personal invitations, the group also organizes workshops in cultural management, or entrepreneurship, by women for women in different regions of Senegal to grow their network.

The group, however, receives quite a bit of criticism from different male actors. Despite being part of a social justice movement, one activist said that the women-only spaces, such as female studios, created an unnecessary division in Hip Hop. Other male organizers have told me they found Genji Hip Hop all right but insisted that "we don't need a #metoo for Hip Hop." Such statements stand in stark contrast to the experiences of the Genji members, who described being blackmailed in

and outside of Hip Hop[239] and that this women-only space helped them develop more confidence.

However, the division between support and critique is not as clearly gendered. The three interviewees said that they also received extensive support from male organizers and female negligence or sabotage:

> **Sister LB:** *"the difficulties that derange me most are those which you create yourself because you're a woman. I'll give an example: we have a festival representing women. And you see men tiring themselves more for this to advance. So we are behind […] We want to advance but don't claim the means to do it. We're given a platform, and you don't enter? If it was men, you'd say, 'Why don't they invite us?'."*

Ndeya and Ngone agreed that many women's competitive attitudes prevented Genji HH from progressing faster. However, this competition is not necessarily the women's fault in a field with few spaces for women and male gatekeepers. Other women often critiqued who received opportunities in the field:

> **Ndeya:** *"Sometimes Amadou [head of Africulturban] has the possibility of sending off people to get an education abroad. So if you are not always present, how do you want to benefit from it? [...] It is a lot of word of mouth because many NGOs set aside budgets to support urban cultures and dedicate themselves to supporting women. So if you're not present, you can't benefit, and you can't come and criticize people."*

Their female federation has found out how to use these funding opportunities, which often follow Western funder's hegemonic agenda of "progressive neoliberalism" and "liberal feminism"(cf. Fraser, 2019). This agenda, e.g., leads to such individualized business foci of the workshops described earlier.

The active presence at these workshops opens opportunities even for Ndeya's artist. She stated that *"every time that Africulture organizes something, I see in which domain I can help and I do it without even asking them their opinion. […] You know who benefits from it? My artist, because every time there is a concert organized by Africulture they call my artist."*

This illustrates how active participation in the federation and its wider network can fuel an artist's career via acquiring social capital, e.g., from aforementioned hub organizations. Of course, this active participation is not equally open to everyone when looking at the economic context: Many women have to provide care work at home and work multiple jobs in the informal sector.[240] This does not even address the concerns of non-binary, LGBTIQA+ practitioners forced to hide their sexual and gender identities in highly religious Senegal. Here, Hip Hop does not open alternatives, aside from all practitioners read as women being able to somewhat queer

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[239] They did not specify, but as sexuality is a taboo topic in Senegal one might assume this entailed sexual harassment.

[240] This is similar to movement activism, where middle class and privileged actors, often end up higher in the hierarchy and occupy important positions, since they have more social and cultural capital and more time on their hands (cf. Incite!, 2017).

their identity into what is read as male: baggy clothes and aggressive rap/dance, or other practices. Nevertheless, for those women* who find the time and resources, the network does open career routes and a way towards empowered cultural practice, stronger female voices, and better but binary self-representation of women in Senegalese Hip Hop.

7.4.4 "Wemanagement": Professionalization vs. Each One Teach One

Laughter fills the rundown hallway. We are a group of five sitting across a sofa and three chairs quickly pulled together in the wide corridor of an NGO and office building in the middle of Dakar. The ministry of Youth provides the space, which today hosts the weekly meeting of the federation "Wemanagement" that unites over 60 cultural managers of Senegalese Hip Hop. I was invited by Maman Faye, one of the only seven women in the organization[241], who, in addition to being a Hip Hop journalist and TV host, is also the manager of a well-known Senegalese rapper. Three more men complete the round: a manager of the famous political rap crew Fuk N Kuk, a style writer of Senegal's longest-standing writing crew Doxandem Squad, and a stage manager and event producer. These four, I learn, are the "presidents" of the federation's different departments, such as finances, teaching, public relations, and event organizing. The conversation switches back and forth between Wolof and French, and Maman Faye quickly translates bits and pieces for me. The group of four jokingly tease each other during their more focused discussion. The first long point of debate is their own annual event "la nuit des cultures urbaines," which is supposed to take place at the end of 2019 to celebrate the winners of the various competitions in all artistic disciplines of Senegalese Hip Hop. They are discussing different spaces and formats for this year's edition, which is supposed to grant them more visibility and establish them in the field.

After the first topic, they also discuss Wemanagement's participation in the events of the upcoming weeks, such as style writing festival "Festigraff" organized by the president of the finance section and his crew. The manager of political rap group Fuk n Kuk proposes a new structure for their cultural management workshops. They half-jokingly question whether they will ever be paid for their education, which they have provided for free up until now. At this point, the four start arguing between two approaches:

1. Their teaching of cultural management could be provided for free, which would be according to Wemanagement's founding mission of "accompagnement". Maman Faye argues that this aligns with Hip Hop's Each One Teach One ideal and their patriotic goals of developing Senegal's cultural sector.

2. The head of finances counters, with support from the others, that if someone had a festival budget but did not want to pay for their cultural management workshops, they should refuse. Wemanagement should instead acknowledge the value of their contributions and demand adequate pay,

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[241] Inspired by Genji Hip Hop and a few managers being members of both organizations, these women had just finished a short image film, which Maman Faye proudly showed me prior to the meeting. The film portrayed these women and highlighted that it was possible for them to be successful in the male-dominated field of Hip Hop cultural management.

especially since the newly established state fund "fonds de développement des cultures urbaines"[242] had doubled in size during the last year and now equated to 600.000.000 Francs CFA (around 400.000€). The manager of rap group Fuk N Kuk joked about monetizing themselves and becoming capitalists, while Maman Faye continued advocating for a social approach. At one point, the group agreed that they could already design the educational modules and look for financing with larger sponsors from the non-profit sector. At the same time, they did not agree on the charging of money from organizers of smaller festivals.

This debate between the two logics of free knowledge exchange on the one hand and professionalization and adequate pay on the other is critical in the field of Hip Hop activism. Hip Hop artists are often not fully recognized by institutions and authorities of so-called "high culture". While theater, ballet, and orchestras receive large-scale public funding in Senegal and most Western countries, Hip Hop arts are often excluded from these same finances and are seen not as legitimate art forms and might receive smaller sums of funding as "street" activities or social work. Again, this is partly a question of class and racism because Hip Hop art forms stem from lower-class Black and people of color. The racialized component plays a smaller role in Senegal where Hip Hop art is not produced from a minority position but remains stigmatized as "low culture" with both Eurocentrist cultural and conservative nationalist logics at work. According to the activists, the colonial logic of European classical art's "larger value" is still prevalent in most cultural institutions and cultural state financing. Traditional music, dance, and culture are also funded in Senegal– Hip Hop, however, had not been a that point in time. Funding shows the official validation of art – another reason why Hip Hop practitioners fight for state funding

The conflict described above thus follows the more general discursive and identity lines structuring the field. One camp of Hip Hop proponents follows the logic of Hip Hop as a culture, practiced face-to-face, as community-based art. For these underground purists, the art here is practiced for its own and for the community's sake and to serve social purposes. On the other side of the debate are the different discursive and industrial realms of achieving acceptance of Hip Hop and its mastery by the larger society as reflected in adequate financial compensation. A further discursive strand is that of the business man, most dominant in rap music, aligning with the clichéd drug dealer. Art here is mainly seen as a product to sell and to "get rich or die trying". Most organizations wanting to professionalize the artists and managers have to situate themselves between those discursive lines. Federations, such as Wemanagement, have to constantly debate and navigate the implications of these discourses and the field's forces and renegotiate their own position and actions accordingly. In addition, Wemanagement makes artist-managing practices more visible, enabling more cooperation and knowledge exchange in a highly competitive field.

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[242] The political implications of state funding of Hip Hop projects are further discussed in chapter 8.5.2

7.4.5 Olympic Breaking, Internalized Capitalism, and Trying to Unite a Field of Competitors

The following case of dance federations illustrates an aspect that runs parallel to federating attempts in other Hip Hop disciplines: the near impossibility of uniting and federating a field characterized by fierce competition. A look at one particular federating effort shall illustrate this: that of the breaking-based non-profit UDEF (short for "Urban Dance & Educational Foundation"). To do so, we start by looking into the context of the global, competitive field of breaking.

The attempts to professionalize and create institutions in many national breaking scenes have vastly accelerated since it was announced in 2016 that breaking would become an Olympic discipline. The dance was first featured in 2018's Youth Olympics in Buenos Aires[243] but was officially confirmed only two years later for the adult Olympics in Paris 2024. From the first announcement on, however, the fact of breaking becoming an Olympic discipline sparked both institutionalization efforts and controversy in the scenes. Proponents of professionalization now opposed more underground-oriented practitioners with many shades in between. This debate became more heated since the whole Olympic endeavor was organized under the direction of a foreign institution – the World Dance Sport Federation (WDSF). This professional ballroom dance organization had no competencies in breaking whatsoever. Practitioners criticized the organization as cultural outsiders who wanted to exploit breaking's popularity for their own goals of making ballroom dances Olympic.[244] Instead of outsiders taking money and decision-making power, critics demanded that the representation of the art form should remain with the community of practice. Many proponents of Olympic breaking from within the scene see it as an opportunity for financial and institutional recognition of their hard work. However, they demand proper representation.

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[243] The event itself and its qualifiers were mostly organized via scene actors and companies, such as 6-Step agency, which organizes the Battle of the Year. Even though there were discrepancies and conflicts with the different actors, the final decisions on how the competition was run, remained with scene-based actors. This meant money could be earned via event organization, writing of the rule book, judging of the competition, and establishing a judging system. While many in the scene expected the event to fail, most dancers who had attended were positively surprised. I myself am highly critical of large-scale private sponsors, and national categories in Hip Hop Culture, but I also see the opportunities, that the Olympics bring: better pay, medical care, and possibly legal practice in countries where breaking had been illegal (e.g. Iran).

[244] According to activist and b-boy Midus, who had started an online petition, against the WDSF's involvement, the organization *"attempted to exploit breaking as a Trojan horse to get its foot in the door of the Olympics […] The WDSF is a competitive ballroom dance organization. It has absolutely no connection or credibility with any legitimate entity in the worldwide breaking community. That […] the IOC [International Olympic Committee] have allowed these impostors to oversee breaking at the Youth Olympics is a travesty and a scandal. Would the IOC allow the Badminton World Federation to oversee baseball?"* (cf. http://chng.it/QgchdpXfFr, last accessed 03/23/2021).

According to professional organizers (e.g., Battle of the Year), breaking became an Olympic discipline mainly thanks to the financial investor and equity trader[245] Steve Graham, who had been breaking shortly during the early 1980s and rediscovered the dance in his 50s. Graham had worked towards this goal via his organization, the US-based non-profit UDEF[246]. Through this non-profit, he lobbied, acquired sponsors, and found funding and support for numerous large events. These mega events had some of the highest number of international participants of any breaking competition worldwide, excessive media coverage, and comparatively large amounts of prize money. Such funding of breaking events, still respecting the original aesthetics and not only its marketable elements, marks a clear break with the "Breaksploitation" of the 1980s. It also differs from the late 1990s and 2000s when breaking often received no funding since "high cultural" institutions did not consider it art (cf. Fogarty, 2020a).

All the dancers had to register with UDEF to compete in their events, making for over 10000 registered members globally. This is an effective strategy for gathering more members and federating the diverse actors of the global scene. While the WDSF was criticized as cultural outsiders, Steve Graham partnered with some of the largest breaking events globally. He received their credit for providing a professional framework for many dancers and uniting large parts of the scene behind that goal. The late Mex One of underground institution "TheBboySpot.Com," whose official motto is "By the Community, for the Community," had finally endorsed Graham, not as a pioneer, but as "one of us…A BBOY" (Mex One, 2015). The practitioner vs. non-practitioner divide here assigns discursive legitimacy.

However, competition and different camps always abound in Hip Hop realms. It was organizer and founder of the most important online platform for breaking of the 2000s "Bboyworld.com" Erwin, who published documents on Graham's fraudulent tax declarations. Facing legal consequences, the equity and finance professional, in response, left UDEF and his efforts to professionalize breaking. He said he did not feel enough respect and recognition from the scene necessary to continue. Since then, UDEF has stopped and only took up its work again in 2022. The field's competition hindered the creation of a sustainable federation. At the same time, one of its main projects of making breaking an Olympic discipline is becoming real and will take place in Paris 2024.

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[245] Graham is not the only banker and investor taking an interest in breaking. The huge V1 festival in Russia, is equally sponsored by one rich donor. Breaking's hard work ethos, its meritocratic ideology, its fierce competition, the superhuman acrobatics, as well as its strong emphasis on performed masculinity seem to impress men from realms where similar values abound (cf. also Storm interviewed by former banker Brian Rose: London Real, 2017).

[246] The mission statement on its website reads *"UDEF is an educational foundation with the primary purpose of helping street dancers establish business opportunities and jobs through the athletic dance of breaking, which was created in the streets of South Bronx, New York in the 1970s and has recently been incorporated into the Olympic movement […]"*

While the organizers of the largest events in the world cooperate and even run the annual evebt "Undisputed World Bboy Series" collectively, competition and disputes remain common. In the global breaking scene, it is not only dancers who battle each other, but also organizers compete for the same resources: funding, recognition in the scene, media attention, official status with the state and other bodies such as the Olympic committee. Such conflicts have heightened and grown more numerous with more resources entering the field via the Olympics' perspective. Old conflicts are renewed, and multiple federations are founded in one country to compete for the official status of the national Olympic federation and the ensuing state funding[247]. In these different camps, there are different goals, strategies, and personalities at work. These lead the actors framing their conflicts along different discursive lines of legitimacy, such as "practitioner vs. non-practitioner," "underground/cultural vs. commercial," "political vs. sell out," "Black vs. Non-Black" (a particularly recurring topic in Hip Hop studies). While most of the organizers I met in Senegal and the US stated that the competition was good for the community, since it led to a higher number and level of events, they nevertheless did not talk fondly of their competitors. Market competition defines this field as typical in capitalist entertainment industries.

Conclusion: Scene Structuration and Organizing Factors

As we have seen in this chapter, the organizers and non-profits use events to structure the scene, bring together all of their participants via large-scale festivals, and organize particular competitions to further different qualities in artistic practices. Some organizers focus on more cooperative or even political event formats to counter the competitive tendencies and further cooperation and communal aspects. Open spaces for collective and individual training are another prerequisite for Hip Hop's peer-to-peer and autodidactic scene learning. Hip Hop organizers use various interventions to invite people into their open spaces and gain local legitimacy. Inside such spaces, practitioners exchange styles and develop fusion phenomena like Afropop, teach paid and unpaid classes, and reinstate the community. At the same time, such open spaces are threatened by gentrification in New York. Their vanishing changes the scene and creates nostalgia among practitioners for the era of open spaces and cypher and jam culture.

The pedagogic counterpart to such peer-to-peer and self-taught learning is Hip Hop mentoring. Junious' experience of being mentored in Europe translates into Urban Artistry's whole mentoring-based organizational model. Mentoring here includes various aspects of the artistic practices, event organization, teaching,

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[247] Multiple organizers competed for the official status of the national breaking federation e.g. in Germany, France, the US, and Senegal. Similar cases were described by Junious concerning the Hip Hop cultural diplomacy program "Next Level," and by the Battle of the Year team and its national qualifiers. When cooperating with one camp of Hip Hop practitioners in one country, the other camp(s) would oftentimes boycott and start publicly denouncing the projects.

researching, and "preserving Black American art." At Blaise Senghor, the open space and dance non-profit Kaay Fecc's agenda led to Viera creating the stylistic fusion of Afropop and passing it on to various dancers via a mentorship approach focused on "taking root" and "branching out." At the same time, Hip Hop's mentoring hierarchies, men in positions of power, and gatekeepers also lead to recurring forms of sexual harassment and abuse. To prevent this, scene hierarchies have to be diminished, and women* and marginalized groups have to follow stronger forms of self-organization.

One of the forms which such self-organizations take is as federations for self-representation and professionalization. These Hip Hop style federations can provide new career opportunities for practitioners, empower them, further knowledge about the practice and strengthen the community of practice's position vis a vis state and high cultural institutions. As in the case of Genji Hip Hop, it can lead to female self-empowerment and shared social capital for the participants. The case of Wemanagement showed the often relevant contradiction between financial compensation and free underground Hip Hop in the spirit of the Each One Teach One principle. The UDEF federation shows how external structuration can help a competition circuit and better represent the practitioners when faced with such large-scale ventures as making breaking an Olympic discipline. However, a highly competitive scene also leads to competition among organizers and different federations. This is a logical consequence of the larger economic context built on competition and exploitation. There are, however, also explicitly political Hip Hop initiatives closely tied to social movements. The following chapter shall shine a light on the different practices of learning, organizing, and protesting via Hip Hop in the social movement realm and as part of Hip Hop's public pedagogy.

8 "Y'en a Marre": Public Pedagogy via Rap & Social Movement Actions

Y'en a Marre's (YEM) long-time coordinator Fadel Barro (2019):
"We have opened up a space of possibility for Africa's youth. […} we have shown that from a position of the dominated, our situation of the poor, of poverty on all levels, intellectual poverty, material poverty, physical poverty you see and most importantly of our problems of misgovernance, of corruption from there we have shown a different imagination. We have allowed the youth a new imagination of action, of action to help evolve things, and from my point of view, that's the most important."

This chapter discusses Hip Hop's public pedagogy by looking at the case study of Senegal's Y'en a Marre (YEM) movement, which was founded by some of the country's most popular rappers, journalists and activists. Former movement coordinator Fadel Barro's above statement states that their approach of an imagination of action marks a break with Senegal's prior Hip Hop activism, which was mainly about raising critical consciousness. As described in chapter 3, Senegalese rap has carried political messages for a long time, and MCs have contributed to the first legal change in government in 2000 by mobilizing the youth to vote via concerts and music. Journalist Anne recounted this period during a panel:

> **Hamidou Anne:** *"in 2000, [...] we intensely followed the debate, the campaigns, until [president] Diouf's departure, even though we couldn't vote yet. And that was because Hip Hop had ingrained something into our consciousness. It was this condition, anyways, this political education...".*

The ensuing disillusionment with the new president Wade and his liberal government's equally corrupt and authoritarian tendencies led to a new period in Hip Hop Galsen. During a talk at Dakar University, political MC Keyti had called the 2000s "a period of proposing" of one's solutions exemplified by the founding of cultural centers Africulturban and later G Hip Hop. After ten years of Wade in government, the livelihood of the poorest parts of the country and the youth had not improved. In January 2011, a group of friends thus founded the Y'en a Marre movement (quolloquial French for "We've had enough"). YEM marks a shift from how rappers had, up until now, politically educated the public via their lyrics, albums, pedagogical concerts, and music videos. Movement founder Thiat from rap group Keur Gui describes his educational approach as practical:

> **Thiat:** *"I'm giving panels a lot. But for me the best way to educate somebody is to show him because [...] The world has changed. Things don't have to still be theory. Things have to be actions."*

In a country where only half of the adult population is literate (UNICEF, 2012), the artists and activists have decided to undertake education via rap music and movement actions. This public pedagogy is in line with Hip Hop's imperative for practice that we have already seen in classrooms and the scene(s).

But how does this Hip Hop action principle play out in a social movement context? What are the possibilities and limits of movement organizing via rap and launching educational and developmental projects via non-profit structures? In this chapter, I attempt to provide partial answers to these questions through a case study of the Y'en a Marre movement and its public pedagogy. The chapter first describes the movement's founding, and its protest activities against then-president Wade and his authoritarian attempts to undermine Senegalese parliamentary democracy (8.2). This section will be guided theoretically by Eyerman and Jamison's (2000, 2007) framework of a movement's "cognitive praxis" and its different phases (8.1). The second half of the chapter shall highlight the period after Wade's third term in office had been prevented in 2012. In line with their pedagogy of action, YEM's activists decided against parliamentary offers and institutionalizing their movement in state institutions (8.3). Instead, they chose another route of institutionalization: founding their own non-profit and project bureau (8.4). Subchapter 8.5 applies theories[248] on

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[248] This chapter relies less on participant observation and more on interviews, academic literature on Y'en a Marre, and theory for two reasons. First of all, during my two instances of fieldwork I had little chance of participating in movement activities since they were no periods of active mobilization or organizing. Secondly, the focus here is more on structural developments and therefore requires more theoretical guidance.

NGOization (cf. Choudry & Shragge, 2011; Incite!, 2017; Ismail & Kamat, 2018) to analyze the movement's institutionalization and how this has affected its potential to educate and mobilize the wider public.

Additionally, a focus shall lie on how the activists navigated the dangers of estranging the movement from the population because of external funding and the more oppressive strategies from the new government. Since the research-ethical stakes are high when discussing/critiquing the more problematic sides of the movement's activism, I will rely mainly on creating a dialogue between voices from the field and theory (cf 8.5 for a further reflection of these research ethics). Finally, 8.6 briefly looks at Hip Hop-based journalism to determine rap's potential for political activism and public education beyond actual movement organizing. Before getting into YEM's public pedagogy of action, we will briefly examine a part of this chapter's theoretical framework.

8.1 A Movement's Cognitive Praxis, its Lifecycle, and Musicians as Intellectuals

In contrast to more functionalist approaches, Eyerman and Jamison (2000, 2007) see social movements as knowledge innovators and educative, transformative forces in society. Movements thus change society by transforming culture, ideas, attitudes, structures of feeling, and larger social structures, and sometimes via revolutions. They thereby transcend the theoretical structure vs. agency duality. Since movements are innovating new practices and ideas, they are often the first to put this new knowledge into words. Eyerman and Jamison, therefore, argue against ahistorical, positivist theories of how society, politics, and movements work. Instead, they recommend studying movements in their own terms while situating the movement's knowledge and practices in a socio-historical context and theoretically. For this analysis, the two theorists (/activists) introduce their central concept of a movement's cognitive praxis, which has three dimensions. These *"cosmological, technical, and organizational"* dimensions can be read empirically from movement documents and statements (Eyerman & Jamison, 2000, p. 21). The cosmological dimension contains a movement's historical project, that is, its worldview, utopian vision and self-proclaimed mission, its identity, and the main antagonist or historical Other. Secondly, the technological dimension analyzes how these Utopian visions translate to the practical level and *"the specific technological issues that particular movements develop around."* (Eyerman & Jamison, 2007, p. 69). Technology here means a movement's everyday social and institutional practice and how its members define the most pressing problems and which techniques to use to address them (cf. Hamdi, 2013, p. 33). Thirdly, the organizational dimension focuses on a movement's institutional setup, the organizing of its members, and the distribution of knowledge. These three dimensions

will guide the analysis of YEM's early stages under 8.2 and 8.4.[249] They will help analyze YEM's educative mission, the practical problems, and its organizational build-up in a larger historical context (cf. 3.2). To analyze a movement's life cycle, the theorists propose different phases which will structure the following analysis. They include the movement's gestation, its formation, the following phase of consolidation, and finally, the movement's dissolving into the larger society, institutions, etc. These stages are no theoretical absolutes, and I will adapt them to YEM's empirical case to structure the analysis.

In later writing, the two theorists add a more cultural understanding to their prior technical one. They analyze how *"the deeper structures of feeling that provide cohesion to social formations are themselves periodically reinvented through social movements. And we want to focus not only on movement intellectuals but also on 'movement artists' and those individuals who construct and organize the cultural activities of social movements"* (Eyerman & Jamison, 2000, p. 22). Extending Gramsci's (2000) notion of the organic intellectual[250], they add another specific subcategory of the organic intellectual as artist and musician. Thus, movements cannot be reduced to the policy or organizational changes they produce. Instead, the reach of social movements is a lot larger. It encompasses the production of new knowledge and the connected transformation of a society's larger culture[251]. These notions have large implications on how one assesses a movement's *"success"* and stand in stark contrast to more functionalist theories. They state that *"by combining culture and politics, social movements serve to reconstitute both, providing a broader political and historical context for cultural expression, and offering, in turn, the resources of culture – traditions, music, artistic expression – to the action repertoires of political struggle. Cultural traditions are mobilized and reformulated in social movements […] [which is central] to what social movements are, and to what they signify for social and cultural change."* (Eyerman & Jamison, 2000, p. 7). This *"mobilization of tradition,"* which they make out between culture and politics, between music and movements for them is part of the larger collective processes of collective learning. They state that musicians not only guide movements, but are also led and educated by them. In turn, they influence a

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[249] Eyerman and Jamison adhere to qualified subjectivity, which means taking statements and knowledge by movements and its actors seriously and qualifying them by putting them into social and historical context.

[250] For Gramsci (2000) the culture of the subaltern has to be studied and made coherent by potential organic intellectuals, i.e. movement organizers, who organically emerge out of their own class and represent it. This is necessary because *"counterhegemonies, capable of challenging in an effective way the dominant hegemony, emerge out of the lived reality of oppressed people's day-to-day lives"* (Crehan, 2002, p. 5). Since for the Gramsci any political relationship is also a pedagogical one, the resulting task is one of organizing and educating the masses (cf. Barfuss & Jehle, 2017). Cf. also Chapter 9 for further clarification.

[251] While it is hard to point out actual policy changes produced e.g., by Occupy Wall Street (OWS), its popularization of the "1% vs. the 99%" slogan and knowledge about inequality paved the way for the Bernie Sanders campaign that focused on the influence of the hyper-rich in American politics. OWS also left behind a vast decentralized infrastructure of protest and action repertoires. The latter were mobilized faster and more effectively than state actors during the "Occupy Sandy" relief actions (cf. Hamdi, 2013). Part of its action repertoire was also picked up by Black Lives Matter protests.

society's broader culture and spread the movement's ideas and knowledge. Let us now look at how this played out for YEM – a movement founded by rappers – and its public pedagogy of action.

8.2 Y'en a Marre – A Rap-Based Social Movement and its Pedagogy of/in Action

Tab. 7: YEM's Moement Phases & Timeline

Timeline of YEM's early events and the movement's phases	
Date	Events
Phase I: *Grievances & Movement Gestation (8.2.1)*	
2000–2011	Dire economic situation despite a change in government. Infrastructural problems, growing inequality: rich elites vs. suburbs/rural regions
01/2011	YEM founding at Barro's house & press conference
03/2011	"1000 complaints against the government" initiative: collection of grievances & signatures
Phase II: *Movement Formation: New Type of Senegalese & Voter Registration (8.2.2)*	
03/19/2011	1st protest at Place de l'Obelisque with few thousand protesters and reading of the letter to the president; launch of the concept of the "New Type of Senegalese"
04/15/2011	Launch of "Daas Fanaanaal" ("My Voting Card, My Weapon") > Voter registration campaign
Phase III: *Movement Consolidation > The Sentinel of Democracy (8.2.3)*	
06/22–23/2011	Arrest of Thiat and Fou Malade at sit-in against Wade's voting reform/Huge protests & founding of movement coalition M23 (incl. opposition parties, unions, YEM, etc.).; Wade forced to withdraw law
06/2011–2012	Radicalization of protests/clashes with police etc./YEM mobilizes via Esprits/council structure and continues voting registration, protests, and civic engagement
01/22/2012	Protest event "Fair of Problems" – all of YEM councils (Esprits) read grievances on place de l'Obelisque with opposition politicians present
01/27/2012	Constitutional court rules 3rd term for Wade constitutional > mass protests ensue
02–03/2012	1st & 2nd round of presidential elections: Sall wins; Yenamarristes refuse government positions
Phase IV: *Movement Evolution/Internationalization/NGOization (2012–2022) (8.4 & 8.5)*	

8.2.1 Phase I: Grievances & Movement Gestation

The various protests in Western African countries in the 2010s can be seen as a reaction to oppressive economic conditions, namely *"three decades of International Monetary Fund (IMF)-imposed Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs), the unequal terms of exchange now extensively established by the World Trade Organization (WTO) and dehumanizing neoliberal economic policies are entrenching despondency and despair across society."* (Niang 2015, p. 149). The unequal relations of the capitalist world system are maintained by these ruling institutions representing the interests of northern core countries and maintain a constant flow of cheap resources and labor forces while strictly preventing the building of profitable industries in Southern countries of the economic periphery (cf. Wallerstein, 2004, 2005). At the same time, local elites are necessary to maintain such neocolonial relations, which are usually educated in Western universities and support neoliberal governing. French and EU trade regimes and contracts also uphold such unequal trade relations, such as the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) or the French Colonial currency, FCFA, which Senegalese rappers had already criticized prior to YEM (cf. Latuner, 2018; Niang, 2010).

Fadel Barro's statements illustrate how such oppressive constellations play out on the ground. The YEM founder describes that the majority of Senegalese citizens suffer from these dire *"economic circumstances, this harsh poverty, this heavy economic situation, the fact of people not having enough to eat, people who are hungry, people who are thirsty, people who do not take care of their health, youth who are unemployed...".* After Senegal's first, and peaceful transition from one ruling party to another in 2000, many young people had placed their hopes for a better economic situation in their new, liberal president Wade. Before his election, Wade had promised better living conditions, education, job perspectives, and infrastructure in Dakar's suburbs. However, instead of delivering on these electoral promises, Wade's regime had put into effect further neoliberal austerity reforms, thus worsening the economic situation for the marginalized youth and poorer parts of Senegalese society. Living conditions in Dakar's suburbs had deteriorated with recurring floods due to the lack of a functional canalization system, ensuing displacements, and the spread of mosquitoes and malaria. Additionally, Wade's first ten years in government were marked by the worsening of already disastrous health and educational systems and rising youth unemployment, even for university graduates. These grievances led to a disillusioned youth making growing attempts at illegal migration. This period was marked by reports on the country's political and religious elites' corruption, the growing riches of a tiny minority, and the president's expensive and symbolic prestige projects. Instead of poverty relief, Wade used state budgets to build the gigantic "Monument de la Rennaissance Africaine", and renovate the coastline in the wealthier parts of Dakar (cf. Navarro, 2019; Prause, 2012; Wienkoop, 2020; Ziegelmayer, 2015, 2021).

Rap group Keur Gui had already decried some of these realities in their music and had been imprisoned for their critique of political authorities in their hometown Kaolack long before founding YEM, as MC Thiat described during an interview.

An example of their materialist depictions of poverty and overt critique of the government can be seen in their track "Coup 2 Gueule" from 2008:

> *"Let's act on our words / like we resisted Hitler, and De Gaulle / I don't even feel Senegalese anymore / this lusty regime wasted all our money / it's torturing me / who can help me to migrate / [...] we can't stop lamenting with this deadly hunger / [...] / I am fed up of this corrupt justice system / I am tired of doing nothing but drinking tea [...] old man [referring to president Wade] your seven years presidential reign has been expensive [...] let's fight these buffoons who are stealing our money / no one shall take away the power / because he fears the people's revolution"*[252] *(keurgui2kaolack, 2010)*

These short extracts show how the group, similar to other proponents of Senegalese hardcore rap, break Senegalese traditional and religious taboos of critiquing their elders. Via rap's public pedagogy, they voice their critique bluntly by calling Wade "old man" and blaming him for their country's vast poverty and inequality. Resisting Hitler and De Gaulle references the fact that Senegalese troops and soldiers from other African colonies fought for the French in World War 2 and had to defend themselves against the same colonial power's oppression.

The founding of YME thus marked a new step further from simple critique to movement organizing. Being from the Southern city of Kaolack, rap group Keur Gui regularly met their hometown friends: journalists Barro and Sané and other activists. YEM cofounder Sofia describes the movements' founding on such a meeting, the night of the 16th of January 2011:

> **Sofia:** *"[YEM] was created by a bunch of friends [...] it was at Fadel's at the time, he's the former coordinator, so we used to go there and have tea every night with Keur Gui's friends and me [...] we stayed nights without electricity so we stayed there to talk, have a tea. And at one point Fadel is telling the group Keur Gui 'So you are a very committed group here but it's limited to your lyrics, what are you waiting for to do something? Because the time now is no longer a time of talking but you have to act!' and then the group Keur Gui answers 'You too are a very committed and a well-known journalist. Why don't you do something?' So during the discussion, we said to ourselves, 'Why don't we all do something, create something?' [...] The discussion started 'We're going to create a movement!' And we said to ourselves: '[...] It's gonna be a movement to crystallize all the frustrations of the Senegalese people. A movement that opposes corruption, bad governance, injustice, as well as a costly life"*

That same night, the group decided to boil these frustrations down to the movement's title "Y'en a Marre", i.e. "We've had enough". They invited their friends, popular rappers Fou Malade and Simon, to join the movement and wrote a press release. The press conference two days later was supposed to happen at the "Place du Souvenir," but the police drove the activists off the central square. Being met with police repression on their first day of action, the group, instead, held the press

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[252] Cf. the video including English subtitles at https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=ZLrTLPrUodQ

conference at the side of the road, which made national headlines in the most important newspapers the next day. (cf. M. Gueye, 2013, Prause, 2012, 2013; Prause & Wienkoop, 2017; Wienkoop, 2020).

During this early stage, the movement's public pedagogy formed mostly on the level of its technological dimension, i.e., defining the major practical problems in Senegalese citizens' everyday lives. These grievances, denounced in the first press conference, included the recurring electrical cuts, many material needs, and questions of social justice. The activists decried the high prices for basic foods, the unemployment, educational crises, and infrastructural issues, such as the Banlieues' broken canalization system. In their cosmological dimension, a Utopian vision had not yet formed completely. However, the antagonist was already clearly named as the corrupt regime of Abdoulaye Wade, and the activists saw their movement as one of frustrated citizens taking matters into their own hands. The organizational dimension slowly formed with the circle of founders convening and planning regularly, and as founder Sofia told me in 2019, the movement's council structure slowly started building up:

> **Sofia:** *"The idea of the Esprits [basic regional council] really started from the first days of Y'en a Marre because[...] most of those who make up Y'en a Marre are artists. So we had the opportunity to do radio and TV shows, rap shows. The artists were invited, and every time they were invited, it was in the name of Y'en a Marre, of course, and every time, they left a number, which turned out to be mine...*
> **Saman:** *That must have been a really burning hotline then?*
> **Sofia:** *Yeah, [laughs] for those who wanted to join or understand or something. So we thought that every time someone called, we told them to see their friends and build an Esprit [French for: Spirit]"*

The movement's most basic local organizational unit of the Esprit was thus quickly founded in all regions of the country thanks to the rappers' popularity. This subcultural structure could crystallize frustrations with the government in a country where 63 percent of the population is under 25 (Krueger Enz & Bryson, 2014, p. 1). In addition to YEM, it was also opposition politicians, some religious leaders, and a very central civic NGO who equally decried the bad governance and antidemocratic tendencies of the Wade government in early 2011 (cf. Wienkoop, 2020, p. 117 ff.). YEM's founding rappers and journalists could not only use their popularity but also knew the ways of the national media landscape quite well. The founders' central role resulted in the movement's centralized organizational build-up, in contrast to many more horizontal movements of the Arab spring or the Occupy movement(cf. Graeber, 2013). Much of the early mobilizing potential of these organic intellectuals depended on their Hip Hop-specific social and cultural capital and them playing political concerts or radio performances (cf. Prause, 2012, 2013).

In early February, YEM members participated in the World Social Forum in Dakar, where Thiat and Fou Malade presented their rap compilation demanding the abolishment of the Global South's debt. The activists networked internationally and

with Senegalese civil society and opposition, which would play out in the movement's third phase (Abrahams, 2013, p. 9). In February and March, YEM collected grievances via the newly founded network of the "Esprits" councils. It included these grievances in a letter of "a thousand complaints" addressed at president Wade. They campaigned around this letter and let people in Dakar's impoverished Banlieues sign it, which initiated the movement's 2nd phase.

8.2.2 Phase II: Movement Formation: *The New Type of Senegalese* & Voter Registration

> **Fadel Barro:** *On the 19th of March 2011, we officially launched the Citizen's Republic for the emergence of the New Type of Senegalese. Thus we started with both [protest & proposing own solutions]. After we did some Daas Fananal [name of the voter registration campaign], we registered the people for the elections. We hosted public debates everywhere. At the time, I quit my job to go everywhere to explain, raise awareness and educate the youth. [...] we're a plane with two wings, there's the protest wing and the wing of social transformation[253]. And that's why in our praxis, we have always aligned the two. Today we've protested, and the same day we clean up the space."*

Journalist Fadel Barro here names the two main events and campaigns of Y'en a Marre's second phase[254] of the NTS and the voter registration, which marked a new quality in the movement's development. Firstly, Wade and his government used the 19th of March – a public holiday for the "alternance" (the country's first change in government in 2000) – to present themselves as a democratic force. However, on the same day, many opposition forces, parties, NGOs, and unions organized protest events. For YEM's founders, this was a crystallizing moment, as they called for their first large protest rally for which they could mobilize a few thousand protesters via rap concerts and on the radio. On the central square, "Place de l'Obelisque," the activists symbolically presented their signed letter with the "1000 complaints" directed at president Wade, which stands for the movement's protest wing. It was at this occasion that the leading activists also voiced the movement's historical mission

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[253] Leftist thinkers propose the concept of transformation to transcend the reform vs. revolution duality (cf. Danso-Dahmen & Degenhardt, 2018; D. Klein, 2018; Krause & Dellheim, 2008). Under a strong neoliberal hegemony where sudden revolutionary change seems impossible, it aims to go beyond small-scale reforms, which might stabilize this hegemony further. Instead, the goal is to take small, progressing, transformative steps toward larger systemic change. Another aspect of this approach is that it goes beyond parliamentary and policy perspectives. According to Barro, transformation should take place *"on all levels. Sure, economic! Sure thing. That's a lifetime project, a project of society overall, on social, cultural, and economic levels. I am very present on the cultural level because I know that culture is the alpha of all this."*

[254] Eyerman and Jamison (2000, 2007) define the second, formation phase of the movement, as one where the cognitive praxis of the movement begins to crystallize, movement organizations are formed and the early protests and interactions between activists become more institutionalized. Movement members now create, reinterpret, refine and recombine knowledge from various sources, such as other movements, cultural and musical traditions, etc.

and Utopian vision (its cosmological dimension) by launching their most central concept of the "New Type of Senegalese" (NTS). This concept is central to the movement's public pedagogy by combining elements of protesting against corrupted governments and independently initiating change on a smaller scale. It is mainly oriented towards a model of active citizenship and implies that the NTS do not wait for the parliament or politicians to take care of their problems but instead take matters into their own hands. When faced with corrupt politicians, an underfunded state, and vast austerity measures often imposed by international institutions (i.e., IMF, or World Bank), the NTS philosophy wants to surpass people's apathy (cf. M. Gueye, 2013; Nelson, 2014). YEM founder Thiat explains how it focuses on small-scale behavioral changes to challenge common problems:

> **Thiat:** *"in Senegal [...]people are undisciplined. They don't have any discipline. They don't have the civic education. Like the streets are not dirty. We make the street dirty because we are the dirty people. I drink my coffee, throw the cup in the street. I pee in the street. I come late to the appointment like you guys just did. You came 15 minutes after the time and all [referring to myself and other guests] you see. getting into the bus when it's already full, you know. The fatalism that people... the society is in".*

By prescribing accessible small-scale forms of direct action and behavior changes via the NTS, the activists aimed to open up a route against common fatalism. YEM thus mobilized the older movement tradition of the "Set/Setal" practice of the 1980s and 1990s by combining every protest with a collective neighborhood clean-up (cf. Nelson, 2014, p. 26ff.). This was supposed to enable participants to experience community, self-efficacy, and a belief in their powers, which is in line with their education via movement actions. In the following months and years, the movement's intellectuals always mentioned the NTS's guiding identity during rallies, media interviews, speeches, and lectures.

According to Prause (2013, p. 32), this self-positioning as a movement of civilized and patriotic citizens, who adhered to national values of the common good, allowed for YEM's large-scale mobilization during this second and the following period. This civic identity was essential to counteract the many prejudices in the societal mainstream against Hip Hop. Many of the religious older generations saw the clichéd young rapper as a weed-smoking, alcohol-drinking do-nothing or even criminal. The NTS thus made the movement more appealing to people outside of Hip Hop. To do so, the musicians and movement intellectuals wore national flags and colors and gave a behavior codex for protest events. In addition to the cleaning up, this included a clear strategy of non-violence: whenever the police confronted the movements' adherents during marches, sit-ins, or occupations of public squares and roads, they crossed their arms above their heads. This became YEM's trademark and signified both having had enough and a non-violent approach. The latter became particularly important during the later stages of the movement when state security and police forces aggressed protesters, and youth protests turned violent.

Some of the more individualist behavior focus of the NTS might be classified as an example of what Ege and Moser (2021, p. 9) call "urban ethics". They state that non-consumerist, non-monetized projects in the city often undergo an *"'ethicization' and a programmatic move away from the political, maybe even its displacement and repression."* However, Y'en a Marre embeds its ethical philosophies in a larger political strategy, including protests and political antagonisms.[255] Movement intellectuals Barro and Sané (in: Nelson, 2014, p. 14) explain this relation between the individual NTS, the state, and the system:

> **Barro:** *"the many problems faced by the people of Senegal don't just come from Abdoulaye Wade, they go beyond the politicians. It's the whole system, and to change it, we have to take a look at ourselves. We have to examine our own behavior, our habits with regard to the country and to public life. [...] Change in Senegal will not come from a political leader, much less from a political party [...] Change will come from each Senegalese understanding that the problem of Senegal is his or her problem [...]*
> **Sané:** *the [NTS] manifesto addressed not only the state and the role it should play, but it called on the citizen to take a hard look at himself and to say, 'I'm fed up with myself' ('Y'en a marre de moi'). Fed up with the citizen who sees the problems in the community around him but stands idly by, who does nothing to change things, [...] who doesn't demand that the state fulfill its side of the contract"*

While Barro mentions "the whole system," YEM's cosmological dimension mostly remains in the liberal frame of parliamentarian democracy. The activists call on an active citizenry to morally challenge their politicians to adhere to constitutional values, refrain from ubiquitous corruption, and sell out the country's resources. This role of an active citizenry also showed in the movement's next campaign for voter registration, launched a month after the NTS. On the 15th of April 2011, when the movement intellectuals publicly proclaimed the voter registration campaign "my voting card, my weapon" as their primary focus for the upcoming elections in 2012. To do so, the movement's organic intellectuals/musicians relied mostly on free rap concerts all over the country to raise consciousness and call on young people, in particular, to vote. They also relied on YEM's organizational dimension, i.e., the continuously growing nationwide network of regional councils, the "Esprits" to actively mobilize and register the people in their neighborhoods. Because of rap's central role in the movement and its youth character, the focus was to register first-time voters in particular. In the following months, the movements' leading rappers and newly joining ones used every opportunity during concerts, TV, radio and newspaper interviews to call the youth to register for the elections and vote Wade out of office. Rap music's blunt messages and the institutional network of Senegal's second most popular music genre (after Mbalax), TV and radio shows, etc., played

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[255] For a discussion on how the movement's fourth phase of evolution and NGOization has led to a further strengthening of the "ethicization" which is contradicted by its more radical anti-imperialist demands, see 8.4 & 8.5.

an important role. As movement intellectual and rapper Fou Malade states, his neighborhood-based cultural center G Hip Hop's manifold activities: *"all the training is for free […] they [young people] just have to have a voter registration card".* The campaign's youth and Hip Hop focus is also illustrated by its Wolof name: "Daas Fananal," which is youth slang for "sharpening one's weapon," i.e., the voter registration card. This campaign directly evoked traditions of voter mobilization by Senegalese rap artists in 2000 and 2007 and took them to a higher and more structured level via its national network of councils. The direct political context of the campaign was marked by Wade's growing authoritarian tendencies, who had proclaimed his candidature for a third election. In 2000, before his first election, he had promised to limit the president's legislature to two terms and even introduced a legal reform to ensure this. Now, he argued that he had only introduced the two-term limits after his first election and that his third candidature was thus constitutional. This strategy was called "a constitutional coup" by protesters and was accompanied by recurring reports of government corruption and Wade's continuous attempts to silence the press, opposition parties, and movements (cf. M. Gueye, 2013; Prause, 2013; Wienkoop, 2020), which leads to the YEM's next phase.

8.2.3 Phase III: Movement Consolidation, Protest Music and Becoming *The Sentinel of Democracy*

According to Eyerman and Jamison (2007), the duration and extent of a movement's consolidation depend on various factors. Among them are the resources it has at its disposal, the attention of media and the larger society, and the opportunity of a larger social crisis. Equally important is whether it is taken seriously as a political actor, the establishment's response, the strategies employed, and the commitment of movement activists. Finally, it also depends on the extent to which a movement's knowledge and ideas are taken up, institutionalized, or rejected by society. The Senegalese context in 2011 opened up various opportunities for the Y'en a Marre movement to scandalize the worsening material conditions of everyday life and focus the population's growing disillusionment with and contempt of President Wade. The movement could call on these frustrations to further its reach and organize parts of the population via its council structure of the Esprits. Parallel to this, they successfully mobilized against President Wade and for voter registration. Wade's authoritarian tendencies went one step further when he tried to push a voting reform through parliament on the 23rd of June. This reform would have allowed his reelection with only 25% of all votes, and it would have introduced the office of vicepresident, which was apparently tailored for his son Karim Wade. The result was the largest protests the country had seen since the 1980s, for which YEM and most opposition groups mobilized. Together they formed the movement coalition M23 (short for "mouvement des forces vives du 23 juin"), which included opposition parties, large NGOs, and unions (cf. Prause, 2013; Prause & Wienkoop, 2017). YEM co-founder Sofia recounts:

> **Sofia:** *"the strongest moment we had was on June 22nd, 2011 when the leaders of the political parties and other movements and civil society gathered [...] to see what we would do against the state of Abdoulaye Wade. So, that evening, the leaders of Y'en a Marre, they said the time was no longer one of talking and we had to take it to the street to protest. So they went to the Place de l'Indépendance, and some were arrested, and on June 23rd, it was the highlight because our motto is 'a people, a goal, a faith' and June 6th to 23rd, where our motto really had its raison d'être, we saw a determined people who stood up for one cause. June 23rd. So it's a very significant moment in the history of Senegal, because it was never seen before. [...] there were all the parties, all the leaders of civil society, of political parties and all that [...] It was really the people."*

The day before these mass protests, Y'en a Marre's movement intellectuals had participated in a non-violent sit-in on a central square in Dakar and thereby contradicted the more traditional actors' strategy of writing formal complaints. This protest was met with beatings, tear gas, and violent arrests. Among the arrested activists were YEM's founding rappers Thiat and Fou Malade (head of neighborhood center G Hip Hop), who were kept in a central police station. The news of the police violence and arrests led to numerous spontaneous riots by youthful protesters in and around Dakar and burning street blockades. Over 100 injured protesters were reported, and a police car ran over and killed a protesting student. While YEM did not centrally organize these riots, many of the young people chanted the movement's name ("we've had enough") in the melody of a popular wrestling chant, i.e., Senegal's most important national sport after soccer. Imprisoned rapper Fou Malade had introduced this chant, which shows how the movement could mobilize different political and cultural traditions to their advantage. These protests, heated debates in parliament, and even religious authorities called on Wade and finally forced him to withdraw his reform and liberate the imprisoned protesters. For YEM, this climactic mobilization of young people and the prevention of authoritarian reform rang in its third phase (cf. Prause, 2012).

The Wade administration reacted with a protest ban to ensure "national security" for the remainder of the year. YEM's movement leaders focused their mobilizing and organizing efforts during the following months on preventing a third term of Wade, raising consciousness among the population and organizing their members via the council network. They threatened Wade with repeated protests, larger than the ones of the 23rd of June, should he keep up his candidature. The activists mainly invoked the constitution as a normative framework, which after Wade's prior reform now prohibited a third term. From this phase stems YEM's self-proclaimed title of the "guardien de la democracie," i.e., the "sentinel of democracy," which shifted both the movement's technological and cosmological dimensions towards preventing Senegal's transformation into an authoritarian state. YEM framed

their protest in constitutional/patriotic terms with pan-Africanist undertones[256] (cf. M. Gueye, 2013; Latuner, 2018; Wienkoop, 2020).

The government's protest ban forced the activists to return to their prior cultural repertoire of public pedagogy via rap. They published a whole album with tracks against the president's abuse of power. Through such Hip Hop practices, YEM educated the public about his wrongdoings. In mid-July 2011, the president reaffirmed his intent to run for reelection in 2012, which Y'en a Marre members/affiliates Simon, Kilifeu, and Xuman contested in the famous single "Faux! Pas Forcé!" in December 2019.[257] The song addresses Wade directly and warns him not to carry on with his third candidature:

"Juggling with the constitution of our motherland/We won't let you get away with it/We have to deal with an old liar/We'll make you swallow your errors" (cf. YEM in: Latuner, 2018, p. 78). Such blunt lyrics as calling an elder a liar are seen as immoral by many in the religious country where clear social norms dictate respectful and docile behavior, particularly towards social authorities. The song and following rap singles from the Y'en a Marre compilation were thus at first boycotted by many radio stations. However, they spread quickly as cellphone ring tones and via many informal digital and analog youth networks. The song's refrain, "Faux! Pas Forcé!," calling for Wade to step back, had been taken initially from a longer protest slogan and was chanted at many ensuing protests and concerts. YEM both coined and sampled many such slogans, printed them on T-shirts, and sold these, which were worn and taken up by many young people. During the second half of 2011, YEM was thus able to voice its critique via cultural routes despite the government's ban on protests. Another way of organizing and mobilizing was via their growing network of regional councils, the Esprits, which, in addition to the pedagogical concerts, constitute the movement's organizational dimension (cf. 8.4).

In 2012, just one week before the constitutional court decided whether Wade's third candidature was legal, the movement activists arranged for the interactive protest event, the "Foire aux problemes" (the fair of problems), on the 22nd of January. Right when the protest ban was over, they called upon their council network of Esprits from the entire country to contribute their grievances and read them out aloud in central Dakar in front of invited opposition politicians (government

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[256] The movement's founders evoke anti-colonial, pan-African, and socialist leaders as points of identification: **Barro:** *"Whether it is Thomas Sankara, or whether it is Younis Nerere, whether it is Patrice Lumumba, whether it is Oum Nouebe, from the UBC in Cameroon whom the people always forget, whether it is Mandela, whether it is Cheikh Anta Diop, they are spirits, [...] they have laid the foundation to be here today where we are. We are not them, and we are obliged to do better than them. I am pacifist, they are not my leaders[...] But they have opened up a path, they have laid a foundation. […] It is the account of the insurrectionists. But for me that should not be the account of the insurrectionists, this should be however the account of the winners. The account of Africa".*
[257] While the song is in Wolof, the title is a French play on words meaning "Wrong! A forced step!" (Faux! Pas Forcé), "Grave mistake! Forced" (Faux pas, forcé) as well as "You must not force it!" (Il ne faut pas forcer!). The phrase was picked up from a famous protest chant. The music video can be seen at www.YouTube.com/watch?v=tCuKAn-T0pk, (last accessed 03/31/2021). For an excellent analysis of these tracks, the music videos and lyrics cf. Gueye (2013).

representatives did not show face). This event focused less on the election and more on the Senegalese people's everyday material problems, such as recurring floods, high prices of food, water, and electricity, as well as insufficient healthcare and education. The activists presented these issues in different formats, such as videos, talks, posters, presentations, panel discussions, rap performances, and movie screenings on a central square. Such events can break isolation and fatalism among participants as they collectively discuss the problems and deduct possible demands and solutions. The choice to not only mobilize against their corrupt government but also to interact with all of their members and focus on material problems of everyday life illustrates how the movement intellectuals already projected beyond the elections to plan further actions and interventions. Thus, the movement broadened its technological dimension following its historical mission of raising the general population's consciousness via the ideals of the "New Type of Senegalese" and transforming society via its public pedagogy (cf. Hamdi, 2018; Prause, 2013; Wienkoop, 2020).

On the 27th of January 2012, a week after this innovative protest event, the constitutional court finally decided that Wade's third candidature was in line with the constitution. The court followed Wade's argument that he had introduced the limitation to two terms in office only after the first election, counting this candidature as his second one. YEM and other opposition forces accused the judges of corruption and receiving state-sponsored cars for their decision. A mass protest spontaneously organized via movement coalition M23 was violently dissolved by state police. After strategic and generational differences in the M23 coalition, YEM decided to attempt an occupation of the "Place de l'Obelisque" in early February. This would have been in line with the ongoing protest occupations of the Arab Spring, as well as the Indignados and Occupy movements (cf. Graeber, 2013; Hamdi, 2013). The occupation was, however, prevented anew by a violent crackdown of state police forces, who arrested several YEM members, including two movement leaders, during the attempt. Activists and supporters reacted by building barricades and blocking roads, while the police used tear gas and water cannons to disperse protests. Two days before the elections on the 26th of February, a women's march for peace mobilized to mourn the 15 protesters who had died after violent police repression (Wienkoop, 2020, p. 134). For election day, YEM mobilized many supporters of the Esprit network to act as "watchguards of democracy" at local election offices to prevent fraud. The result was a run-off for the second round of elections between Wade and his former prime minister Macky Sall, who had left the government a few years earlier. During the month between the two election rounds, YEM (parallel to M23) continued to mobilize with the earlier cultural and standard movement tactics. In addition, they published another protest song/diss track, "Doggali" (Wolof for "Finish him off!"). The movement founders rhyme: *"The people put hope in their voice / Their disillusionment will make them get rid of you / Let's listen to their sorrows / […] they keep sweating but have nothing to eat / […] We don't want you anymore, you will feel the wrath of the people!"* (YEM in: Prause, 2013, p. 28f.).

On the 25th of March, opponent politician Macky Sall finally won with 65% of all votes and became Senegal's new president. It was thus during this third phase of movement consolidation that YEM could successfully mobilize around two sets of issues: firstly, the early material grievances (such as poverty, bad infrastructure, healthcare, education, high living costs, and youth unemployment), and secondly, the attempt of Wade's corrupt government to turn parliamentary democracy into a more authoritarian system. YEM could address both aspects via their citizen ideology of the "New Type of Senegalese" and its public pedagogy of action. In YEM's view, the NTS first confront the antagonistic Other of the authoritarian government to act as the "Sentinel of Democracy," register voters, and adhere to the constitution. Secondly, the NTS also confront the internal Other, of the lazy and fatalistic selves, doing nothing about their lives. Instead, they take fate into their own hands via small-scale actions of cleaning up after a protest or finding community solutions in neighborhood councils, or the "fair of problems" (cf. M. Gueye, 2013; Latuner, 2018; Prause, 2012; Prause & Wienkoop, 2017; Wienkoop, 2020).

In addition to the movement coalition M23 and mass-scale mobilization, the vast expansion of YEM's network of councils/Esprits defined its dimension for this period. The movement still had quite a hierarchical decision-making structure revolving around the "noyau dur" ("the central knot"), composed mainly of YEM's founders, a clique of friends with Hip Hop cultural and hometown ties (cf. Prause, 2013; Savané & Sarr, 2012).

These early developments of YEM show how, under the right opportunity structure, with a clear antagonistic Other, such as Wade and the threat of his authoritarian turn, famous rappers can make a political impact by mobilizing primarily youth. Via their direct attacks against the president on diss tracks, at mass rallies, and at pedagogical concerts when protests were forbidden, they could use their Hip Hop cultural and social capital to weigh in in addition to the other opposition forces. The rappers used their networks of established rap radio and TV shows to spread their message, educate about the corruption of their government and mobilize against it. The founding journalists knew the workings of the press and mass media and published press releases, held press conferences, and established a particular framing. By mobilizing cultural traditions (cf. Eyerman & Jamison, 2000) such as collective clean-ups after rallies, by adhering to non-violent strategies of protest, and via their use of patriotic imagery and messages, the movement could somewhat counter the stigmas attached to rap and its blunt messages held by most of the older generations. All of this shows how the reach and charisma of famous rappers, their rebellious attitude, and the strategic media initiatives of critical journalists can be employed for short-term mass mobilizing and for educating the general population about authoritarian initiatives.

But what happens to all of this mobilizing potential and the public pedagogy without the opportunity structure of Wade's authoritarianism, and when the organizers have to face the question of whether to enter state institutions? Following Macky Sall's election in 2012, Senegal's new president came to visit YEM at their

headquarters, thanked them for their actions against Wade, and offered the activists various posts in ministries and embassies. This practice of inviting representatives of other opposition forces into the government and offering them high-ranking posts is a common phenomenon in Senegal called "transhumance". This regular practice weakens the opposition by offering them high-ranking posts. To find out how YEM's leaders reacted to such parliamentary perspectives of institutionalization, let us look at a short meeting of German Hip Hop party activists and YEM founders in Berlin in 2018.

8.3 On Strategy: Between the "Sentinel of Democracy," Producing "A new Sankara," or Entering Parliament

We are sitting in a round of eight people in the spacious wooden kitchen of a leftist housing project in Berlin, drinking sweet Senegalese "Attaya" (tea) in late 2018. Senegalese rapper and concert organizer Che, who lives in Germany, laughingly compliments the host on her tea, which "is just like original Attaya, very tasty." The rest of the group includes YEM-founding members from the rap group Keur Gui, chairwoman Niki Drakos, and chairman/b-boy Raphael Hillebrand of Germany's officially registered political party "Die Urbane – eine Hip Hop Partei".[258] Since Kilifeu and Thiat of Keur Gui are in Berlin only for a few days, they had put a few meetings together. The result is a somewhat formal and awkward atmosphere of me carrying out a semi-structured interview with Thiat, and the other people just listening. After I ask about their goal for the upcoming elections in 2019, the static round loosens up, when Die Urbane's chairman Raphael asks a further question. The ensuing dialogue turns out quite telling regarding YEM's strategic perspectives on parliamentary institutionalization:

> **Thiat:** *We want to kick out Macky Sall [current president of Senegal]. Yeah, that's my desire. I really want that Macky Sall goes to hell. And then we have another one. If he's not good also, we kick him out and then bring another one. Until we get the at least reasonable one because there is no good president anywhere. There is only when the society is ready that we can have somebody [...] We will know when the population know their role, things will change in Senegal and I think you need time to oppose them.*
> **Raphael:** *You need institutions to oppose him.*
> **Thiat:** *That's what we're doing. That's what we do. That's what we're campaigning for so to change the mentality of the New Type of Senegalese. Not to run for a presidential*

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[258] The party was founded in 2017 in Berlin by different actors from the Hip Hop cultural spectrum and now counts over 300 registered members. The group all have either an activist or artistic background (or both) and in addition to political campaigning their party activism consists of a movement style of protest organizing, which they define as *"anti-colonial and critical of power"* (cf. www.die-urbane.de last accessed 4.4.2021). Their party program, however, includes many more positions on local, national, and international issues that might be classified as following a leftist-progressive agenda: including queer-feminist, antiracist, ecological, antimilitarist, and positions of a more just distribution of wealth (cf. ibid).

election. No, that's not our role. easy again. It's like Bayern Munich, München against Hertha Berlin[259]

Che: *[cries out:] HERTHA!! HERTHA!! [laughter]*

Thiat: *At the halftime, the referee comes on the pitch with the jersey of Bayern and plays, but he was the referee at the first time.*

Niki: *You mean that anyway they will fake the elections?*

Raphael: *And Y'en a Marre is not campaigning by itself?*

Thiat: *Civil society, no civil society. No, no. I mean civil society has to stay civil society. Or your question wasn't if Y'en a Marre is doing our own campaign to be president?*

Raphael: *Yeah*

Thiat: *No, no, we don't want to be elected. Our role is not to be in politics.*

Raphael: *Because you are not fit? You know, because...*

Niki: *Because he's going to be corrupted…*

Thiat: *No, I don't think so. Nobody can corrupt me, that I'm 100 percent sure. But what I can say is*

Raphael: *You can say it about you, but someone in the structure...*

Thiat: *From anybody that I know in the movement that I'm hanging with, having a weekly meeting, I know none of them can be corrupted. Because they saw a lot of money from Abdoulaye Wade... They didn't take it. They saw a lot of opportunities from Abdoulaye Wade. They did not.... Macky Sall […] he proposed us some positions, some ministers' posts like to take 'communication, youth and culture' and also some post in some embassies, so we refused again. So we have the opportunity to do some things.*

Friend of Niki: *You refused? Why?*

Thiat: *Because that's not our role. That's not our role. There are some other people who study and then follow those branches. A country needs a counterpower. Y'en a Marre needs to be built. Y'en a Marre is still a little Baobab[260]. The Baobab didn't grow yet. We need to let the Baobab grow and then we can use everything from the Baobab. It's a little tree. We need a big Baobab.*

This strategic positioning illustrates very well how much YEM relies on a citizen approach of an extra-parliamentary counterpower aligned with the interests of the general population. It becomes clear that YEM's founding members oppose any perspective of entering the political institutions due to their civil society orientation and YEM's self-definition as the "sentinel of democracy." By refusing government posts, which other musicians have taken[261], the activists aim to retain the

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[259] Two of the largest German soccer clubs: Bayern München is known for its huge budget and being able to buy the best players to monopolize the pole position in the German league, and Hertha, on the other hand, is seen as the underdog.

[260] The sub-Saharan tree can grow to over a thousand years of age and is one of Senegal's many national symbols.

[261] Among them is popular Mbalax singer and former opposition politician Youssou N'Dour, who became minister of culture under Macky Sall – a clear example of the mentioned "transhumance" (cf. Ziegelmayer, 2019).

independence necessary to establish new individual and collective responsibilities of the NTS via their public pedagogy of action.

Their class-based and movement orientation towards people's everyday problems becomes even more apparent when we are in a bar downstairs later that night. *While most of the group have left their seated positions to play table soccer, the conversation on strategy continues with Thiat asking Raphael a few questions in return: "What are your strategies for the most important questions in Berlin? Like housing and rising rents? I am now a white middle-aged guy – convince me!!"*

Die Urbane has an internationalist and anti-capitalist stance, and in majority-white Germany, largely sides with racialized and other minorities.[262] Even though there are sometimes tensions and hierarchies between Senegal's many Black ethnicities, these are small compared to the racialized ones in Western countries. Accordingly, YEM instead wants to represent Senegal's poor majority/working class and unemployed against corrupt political and economic elites and foreign colonial powers[263]. They, therefore, take a class-based position towards many issues and refuse to enter parliament, which is often equated with corruption. This points to a contextual difference between Western countries, where Hip Hop culture and rap music are traditionally practiced more by racialized minorities, while in Senegal rappers often claim to speak for the Black majority of their countries, particularly for the lower classes, with a pan-Africanist vision for the continent and the diasporas.

While the contexts vastly differ, a similar strategic debate between playing a part in or outside the parliament also happens within Senegal. During the 2012 elections, Abdoulaye Wade had hired a few less famous rappers to respond to YEM's public attacks on him, which according to all my informants, failed and led only to these rappers losing their credibility. During both elections in 2012 and 2019, some famous rappers outside of YEM campaigned for different opposition politicians. Upcoming presidential candidate Sonko also gained supporters among many young people in Senegal, including some of the most popular rappers of today's generation (such as Nitdoff). Sonko symbolizes a break from the usual mode of corrupt governing since he publicly denounced the government's corruption and French and Western neo-colonial interference. However, during the election, YEM chose not to side with any of the candidates, claiming to remain in their neutral observer position of the "sentinel of democracy" (cf. Ziegelmayer, 2019). During a panel on the

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[262] Niki stated that they see it as a *"duty to 'hijack' parliaments now and fight for a radical transformation also in the legislative arena because protest movements are being met with ever greater and ever more militarized state repression."*

[263] YEM also opposes the detrimental trade deals their elites close with their partners from capitalist core countries. The political antagonism, which is clearly voiced, however, is only that of the national government and elites, and not that of international imperialist forces. Here, the financing of YEM projects from, the EU, or large Western foundations surely plays a role. Barro also explains that *"we know that all this is a global system, which we denounce and we dispraise it. You see, against the Franc CFA against signing the EPAs, against the signing of these accords and all that we talk about it. But once again the resistance is done on the level of interior affairs. To me, there is no use in continuing to loudly… Instead, we have to get involved here. Because it's us signing. When we refuse to sign, well, things will be different."*

role of Hip Hop Galsen as political education shortly after the 2019 elections, journalist and Hip Hop aficionado Hamidou Anne talked about the potential parliamentary role of YEM and its sister movement in Burkina Faso, the "Balai Citoyen":

> **Hamidou Anne:** *"I had a debate with [...] the spokesman of the Balai Citoyen, I went to see them and I told them 'So you say ok, Balai Citoyen, etc. you are in the opposition and the guardians, the sentinels of democracy' – and this is the same critique, which I have brought towards YEM for several times – 'Why don't you quit this posture, because what you have combated with Blaise [former president] you will necessarily be facing again [...] why don't you aim for really winning state power yourself?' and he responds … and I was convinced by his response, and we're at Balai Citoyen's headquarters, he says: 'you see these youths over there? [...] we train them, we give them a political consciousness, we give them books to read, we open them up towards culture, towards artists, and art etc. and thus I want that in 20, 30 years, the next president of Burkina Faso comes from this group of youth right here.' [...]*
> **Amadou Fall Ba** *[host]: Thanks, Hamidou. Let's hope for a new Sankara in Burkina in a few years."*

This response is very similar to the one Thiat, and many others in the movement gave: In their view, the quest for parliamentary power is not to be undertaken by the Hip Hop social movements. Instead of aiming for governing power from above, they want to ensure the growth of power from below, i.e., people's power – via their public pedagogy, involving education, direct action, as well as their council structures and the development of civil society institutions.

An outlier position from within YEM is taken by Fou Malade – who until 2019 was the movement's former artistic director and head of the neighborhood cultural center G Hip Hop. In 2015, during an interview, the MC stated having changed his mind on whether to "enter the system":

> **Fou Malade:** *Me, personally, I think that if we talk of the state of transformation, we have to go and uproot power. I really believe in this. This wasn't my idea two years ago, but I think that when we talk about the problems, which concern us, then we talk about politics, and then we have to take matters into our own hands. In the future, I want to be the mayor of this city right here [Dakar's suburb Guediawaye], because the influence which we have on the youth; they [the politicians] won't have that, and we convince them [the youth] without using money, They convince using the official state budgets to "buy their consciousness" ['achat de conscience' refers to a common practice of politicians buying votes, confirmed by many informants as being a widespread phenomenon in Senegal]. But we have to be in the spirit of building together. [...] for years, Hip Hop has been unavoidable in the game of politics... Since its birth Hip Hop is political. We can't try and stop Hip Hop from being political. It already is."*

Most artists refrain from this position. However, Fou Malade who heads a neighborhood-based cultural center, organizes vast festivals, and retains a steady following in Senegal's mainstream rap, wants to use what he sees as a natural form of

persuasion for a political project to convince the youth. The corrupt buying of votes by ruling parties was confirmed by many in the field. However, this debate also generally hints at public funds and state money, which the next section discusses in more detail.[264]

In addition to the political elites abusing their power and public money in various ways, there are few further hindrances towards either entering the parliament or influencing a country's politics via movement activism by winning the public fight for legitimacy. Another reason for YEM's activists not entering party politics is that the Senegalese public often equates "politics" and "the politicians" with corruption and abuse of power. Any contact with the political system is thus an instant loss of credibility. The non-parliamentary route of YEM is analyzed in the following subchapter (8.4) on the movement's 4th phase from 2012–2022 to see how the activists organized various projects via non-profit structures. The downsides of this NGOization, and Sall's attempts of coercion and cooptation, will be analyzed later.

8.4 Phase 4 Movement Evolution – Internationalization, NGOization and Project Focus

Tab. 8: Y'en a Marre Timeline Phase IV

Timeline Phase IV: Movement Evolution / Internationalization / NGOization & Project Focus (2012–2022)	
Date	Events
2012	Macky Sall offers YEM ministry & embassy posts; they refuse in order to remain "Sentinel of Democracy" & instate citizen watch initiatives to monitor Sall's government and his election promises In following years YEM publicly opposes Sall government for "cronyism & corruption"
2012–2022	Internationalization of YEM: Founders travel regularly and exchange with other movement actors
2012–2022	Switch from self- to NGO funding: enables projects & employment (YEM opens own project bureau); this furthers rumors of YEM's corruption (used later by Sall to portray YEM as foreign agents)
2013	Model leader award by NGO "Lead Afrique Francophone"; ensuing partnership with Lead Afrique

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[264] Besides Fou Malade's proclaimed plans, Fadel Barro has now entered the political system with the small party/coalition "Jammi Gox Yi" after leaving YEM's post of coordinator to his colleague Sané. Barro now also works as regional coordinator of the African whistleblower platform PPLAF.

2013/ 2014	Oxfam-funded project launch "Dox Ak Sa Gox" (Walk with your community): one goal is to make politicians accountable to citizens via regular meetings & educating & organizing the latter
2013– 2022	Various other NGO projects over the following years: Sunu Gox (funding for local initiatives), Citizen Mic (political rap battle), small economic initiatives, labor-union-style organizing, anti-covid information campaigns, educational albums and concerts, etc. Always accompanied by accusations of self-enrichment by other rappers & opposing political forces
2015	Yenamarristes arrested in DR Congo during USAID sponsored movement exchange with Filimbi (Congo), Balais Citoyen (Burkina Faso) etc.; Macky Sall negotiates their liberation
2017	"Fonds du Developements des Cultures Urbaines" introduced by Sall government: G Hip Hop and other YEM-related initiatives among recipients; This fact is later used by Sall against them
2018 & 2020	UPEC: Large activist conference by YEM in Dakar with many solidary movements and researchers
2018	After various tracks against Sall, Keur Gui release viral diss-track & video "Sai Sai au coeur" (Wolof for: "bandit at heart") exposing Macky Sall's corruption before 2019 elections
2018	Sall withdraws Lead Afrique's non-profit status for funding/partnering with YEM; OXFAM, OSIWA and Enda Tiers Monde are also interrogated and threatened.
2018– 2019	Presidential elections: YEM organizes panels with opposition politicians, no large scale mobilization as before; Movement has lost some legitimacy in eyes of the public; Macky Sall wins
2019	YEM changes leadership and revives Esprit network; New transparency strategy about own funding
2019– 2022	YEM enters various radical movement coalitions (Aar Li Nu Bokk, Nio Lank, FRAPP, M2D, etc.): new mass-scale mobilizations; YEM fights for liberation of opposition politician Sonko & activist Sagna; various arrests of Yenamarristes

8.4.1 YEM's New Organizational Dimension: NGO Financing and the Network of Esprits

Following YEM's decision in 2012 against taking on government posts, the movement activists quickly established government watch initiatives and regularly published reports on the Sall administration's performance concerning its electoral promises. Additionally, a new mode of project financing changed YEM's organizational dimension. Barro describes the movement's different financing phases:

> **Fadel Barro:** *"the first phase, from the birth to the leave of Abdoulaye Wade, we never paid ourselves from Y'en a Marre […] all our financing was only done through the sales of T-shirts and merchandise. This was until the leave of Abdoulaye Wade. And when Wade left, the challenge was gone and lost in intensity, and when the challenge loses in intensity, the people, either the system recuperates them, they follow the power, and we have known some to do it, or they give up, because there is no more challenge. […] so we can no longer sell T-shirts, as we have done before, the people don't support the movement anymore as they have done before. At this moment, we have started mounting the projects and we opened up our barriers towards the foundations, towards the NGOs to continue with our actions, even without selling T-shirts, and the organization of concerts."*

This NGOization of the movement during what the former movement coordinator calls the second financing phase was possible primarily via cooperation with the non-profit Lead Afrique[265]. This non-profit awarded YEM the "Model Leader Prize" in 2013, and the activists' carried out most of their projects in cooperation with the organization. Lead Afrique thus managed the movement's finances, while YEM's newly founded project office planned and enacted the actual projects. The movement employed many of its founding members in this project office to lead national and international projects (for resulting problems cf. 8.5). Such an "NGOization" is a common development for protest movements after the initial point of antagonism, as they build institutions and movement organizations, and refocus the activist energies in different directions (cf. Choudry & Shragge, 2011; Ismail & Kamat, 2018).

Parallel to this institutionalization in a centralized structure via their project bureau and non-profit collaboration with Lead Afrique, the movement's organizational dimension is also marked by the more decentralized council network of Esprits on a more grassroots level. After the elections in 2012, the activists continued to carry out various direct actions via this network in line with their public pedagogy of citizen action described at the outset of this chapter. Their activities now took more and more the form of non-profit funded projects carried out via the many Esprits in the entire country.

Initially, this network of grassroots organizing had arisen out of the spontaneous desire of fans and sympathizers of YEM's leading rappers to support and adhere to the movement. Movement founder Sofia, at first coordinated this network of small-scale councils and recounts that soon after their first press conference, they had supportive Esprits in all Senegalese regions. In 2018, rapper Thiat, who coordinated

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[265] ENDA Lead Afrique was an international non-profit organization, which funded various projects of "sustainable development", education, etc. in Senegal and other African countries. They received funding from UN bodies, Western public/private foundations, such as the Shell Foundation, or the UK's Department for International Development.

these groups, told me there were 436[266] Esprits with a minimum of 25 members, of which at least 10 have to be women. According to Fadel Barro, this female quota, *"however, has never been respected. The ten women, this was difficult because the movement became very macho, and this is not because the movement was very macho, but it's rap which is very macho, and rap weighed in on this."*[267]

During the first three movement phases, the councils were not highly institutionalized and usually met at some of their members' homes. They coordinated themselves locally for neighborhood interventions (such as clean-ups, renovating public spaces, or building playgrounds), social work and voter registration. One example of quick, direct action was the humanitarian relief actions organized by local Esprits when large parts of Dakar's suburbs were flooded during the rain season in 2012.

The movement leaders had published the "10 commandments of the Esprit of Y'en a Marre" in 2012, setting some ground rules of their functioning. These ranged from not joining or accepting financing from political parties, being a secular organization, to coordinating major actions with the central council, as well as becoming locally engaged as NTS, etc. The movement founders in the central council "noyau dur" ("hard core") hold an open meeting every Tuesday to discuss and decide on the movement's further steps, projects etc. After the weekly meeting, the minutes are sent to all Esprits in the country to discuss them, their local initiatives, and give feedback. There are irregular national meetings of representatives of all Esprits as well (cf. M. Gueye, 2013; Prause, 2013; Wienkoop, 2020).

8.4.2 YEM's Projects According to the New Type of Senegalese Structure

During the fourth phase and the movement's NGOization, the Esprits were used as local nodes for funded projects. The activists structured the projects around the movements' technological dimension (Eyerman & Jamison, 2000) of the New Type of Senegalese, for which the founders now developed six "chantiers" (French for construction sites). These include *I. Education & Citizenship, II. Reinforcement & Observation of the Democracy, III. Development & Community Health (including ecological topics), IV. Arts & "Cultures Urbaines," V. Entrepreneurship, Leadership & Self-promotion, VI. Peace & Solidarity* (cf. Y'en a Marre, n.d.). In close cooperation with their local Esprits, YEM now enacted various short-term projects along these six departments. The financing of these projects ranged from foundations such as Oxfam, Soros'

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[266] As always, such numbers are to be assessed with caution. In 2019, I asked if it was possible to visit any of the Esprits around Dakar, and I was told that many of them were not really active at the moment. A founding member of the Esprits in Kaolack told me it was hard to maintain participation for a long time, without immediate material gains for the participants.

[267] According to YEM's new coordinator Sané, another reason for low participation by women were the violent repressions of the earliest protests, during which 15 protesters died, which deterred many women (cf. Sané in: Nelson, 2014, p. 22). In addition to the machismo in Hip Hop and the violence a further explanation for the low women-participation can be seen in the patriarchal structures in Senegal in general (cf. Chapter 7), which make women refrain from many societal realms.

Open Society Initiative, or the Ford Foundation to EU sponsoring. The following section gives a few project examples for each of the chantiers, to grasp the non-profit work of YEM:

I: The first larger national initiative funded by Oxfam and coordinated via Lead Afrique was "Dox Ak Sa Gox" (Wolof for: "Walk with your Community") which tied into chantier I *Education & Citizenship*, and chantier II *Reinforcement & Observation of Democracy*. A rap album of the same name accompanied this project. The project itself included a civic education for representatives of the Esprits in the different regions and financing of an official office for them. The project also related to different initiatives at the local level of the Esprits, such as the public events of *Wax Ak Sa Maire* and *Wax Ak Sa Député*. For these events, the Esprits invited their respective mayors and deputies to discuss with the local populations[268]. Questions about budgets were asked and answered, and people could voice their grievances and learn more about the different levels of the political system. These meetings aimed to educate the population about politics and reinforce the politicians' responsibilities toward them. Event manager Latyr reports that in his Esprit in the city of Kaolack, they could not achieve both goals, and their mayor did not show:

> **Latyr:** *"because you know, here in Senegal, when you're a protest movement, in general, they [the politicians] take you as an enemy, […] but we had the deputies, and it got heated. […] I remember at the time people came from all of Kaolack and stated their demands, and said like 'well we, in our locality, we are suffering from this, we are suffering from a lack of water, electricity and all that!' or 'The road is not asphalted' So the deputies explained a bit and then said that once returning to the national parliament, they would put these issues on the table… But like you know, with our politicians, well [laughs], every time, they say yes, but after they don't do anything."*

Rapper Fou Malade organized such meetings at his neighborhood-based cultural center, G Hip Hop, and recounts that there were not always policy results but different outcomes. Here, many people spoke publicly on political issues for the first time and made demands to the politicians. These interventions can be seen as a direct form of political education to make "the Subaltern speak" (cf. Spivak, 2010).

The Esprits in the regions launched further small-scale educational initiatives of the chantier I *Education and Citizenship* at schools (Clubs NTS) and their equivalent at universities. Many of these Esprits encountered problems entering state institutions due to their YEM adherence (cf. 6.3.2). The movement tried to counter this by relying on their patriotic citizen approach and, e.g., encouraging participating students to sponsor and mount national flags in their schools.[269] At the same time, the educational initiatives also focused on matters of international imperialism,

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[268] Some of these debates in Wolof are documented on YEM's YouTube channel. (cf. Temps forts "Wax Ak Sa Maire": Linguère & Malem Hodar – YouTube last accessed 04/01/2021).

[269] Such small but achievable first goals are an essential part of community organizing to gain collective agency.

oppressive trade regimes, such as the EU's Economic Partnership Agreements, or the colonial currency of the FCFA. Journalist and YEM's current coordinator Aliou Sané (in: Nelson, 2014, p. 17) explains another critical topic of land grabbing:

> **Sané:** *"there is a problem right now in all of the regions with the takeover of land by foreign agro-business. The state hands over land to them, and then the populations […] [work] as hired labor on their own land. For young people in those areas, there will be training on land use processes, so they'll know how it is supposed to work, they'll understand their right to contest improper procedures."*

II: Further project examples of chantier *II. Reinforcement & Observation of the Democracy* include the already mentioned monitoring of Sall's election promises, the panel discussions between opposition politicians, or the voter registration campaign "Pareel" before the 2019 elections (cf. Ziegelmayer, 2019). The movement's online presence and various press conferences also represent this chantier since the activists here regularly comment on their government's performance and acts of corruption and misgovernance. The meetings between politicians and populations also relate to this chantier.

III: One later example of YEM's projects, which fit mostly into chantier III. *Development & Community Health* was the EU-funded initiative "Sunu Gox" (Wolof for: "our community").[270] During this project, YEM distributed the EU funds they received among small neighborhood organizations in Dakar's Banlieue. Some of these local non-profits were founded for this occasion to carry out ecological, educational, or small-scale economic projects. The movement activists explained that such large-scale funding is usually received only by some of the country's most prominent non-profits, who monopolize their contacts and the professional knowledge of applying for these funds. Further projects in this chantier include neighborhood clean-ups (in the "Set Setal" tradition), building playgrounds, Urban gardening, or the collection of blood donations "emeutes pour le sang" ("riots for blood") (cf. Latuner, 2018).

IV: One example of a project tied into chantier *IV. Arts & "Cultures Urbaines,"* and chantier I *Education & Citizenship,* was the political rap competition "Citizen Mic." This rap battle rewarding only political lyrics, was organized by YEM's leading member/rapper Simon and financed by the Ford Foundation with a million FCFA prize money and management and promotion for the winning artist (cf. 7.1.4).

V: A few examples from the chantier V. *Entrepreneurship, Leadership & Self-promotion* are, as Fadel Barro and Aliou Sané explain, mostly projects carried out on the level of the Esprits. The YEM organizers have accompanied local activists in founding small enterprises and action groups. Among such entrepreneurial initiatives was the founding of a security company within one Esprit, which is now regularly

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[270] For a general overview cf. SUNU GOX: Le film des actions citoyennes de Y en a marre – YouTube and for impressions from the final projects cf. sunu gox diaporama des 19 projets – YouTube (both last accessed 04/01/2021).

employed at the movement founders' rap concerts. Additionally, an initiative attempting small-scale subsistence farming was founded in one of the regions, as well as economic ventures towards fishing, harvesting salt, and developing "socially responsible tourism" (cf. Nelson, 2014). Shortly after my second visit in 2019, YEM's leaders supported Dakar's bakers in reuniting and founding a labor-union-like interest group after a national series of wild strikes had erupted spontaneously (cf. YEM, 2019). The government fixed the price of baguettes, which was too low to allow the workers to meet their most basic needs. After three days of strikes, the government gave in and lowered the price of flour (cf. Franceinfo, 2019). According to Sofia, such organizing activities are carried out regularly as part of their mediation and conflict resolution program.

VI: One example for chantier VI. *Peace and Solidarity* is the project of *Mboka*, a peace-building project to further communication and exchange between Senegal and Gambia. After French colonial rule, the two countries had initially been united as Senegambie and had then split up into two separate states. This project, managed by movement founder Thiat, aimed to build cultural bridges, inter alia via exchange programs, in the often conflictual relationship between the two countries and their populations.

8.4.3 Y'en a Marre's International Impact, Turning Against Sall, and the Lost Mobilizing Potential

A different realm of educational movement actions came with YEM's internationalization. Since Hip Hop activists are often globally connected, the news of YEM having prevented an authoritarian turn in Senegal spread quickly. In the following, the activists were invited to conferences, informal movement exchanges, and other educational formats globally. In 2014, Aliou Sané (in: Nelson, 2014, p. 24) reports:

> **Sané:** *"We've been traveling a lot, especially in Africa. Thiat and Kilifeu just came back from Burkina Faso, where they helped organize a march last Saturday against the establishment of a senate where the president could install his cronies. I've been twice to Tunisia, and I've been to Ivory Coast, where I led an integrity camp for forty young Africans and told them about the experiences of Y'en a Marre. There are movements now in lots of other countries – Burkina, Togo, Gabon, Mali… They're not all called "Y'en a Marre;" some are, but there are other names, like "Etiamé," "Ça suffit," the "Sofas," etc. Anyway, there are a lot of similar movements being created in Africa, and we have put in place a working group that will network with those African brothers […] we would like to generate synergy on a pan-African scale to work for the emergence of a New Type of African, too."*

Part of YEM's quick internationalization was that YEM cofounder Sofia published her documentary movie "Boy Saloum" shortly after YEM's mass mobilizing. In the movie, she follows her comrades of the rap crew Keur Gui from their early activist days in their hometown Kaolack to the founding of YEM and the protests in 2011.

According to a lower-ranking YEM activist, rappers in neighboring countries credit this movie with having inspired them to establish similar movements.[271]

In addition to traveling themselves and receiving various international grants to do so[272], YEM's founders have also organized two large movement conferences called UPEC (French abbreviation for: "Popular University of Citizen Engagement"). These activist and academic conferences took place in Dakar in 2018 and 2020 to let activists learn from each other and find common pan-African perspectives from below (cf. the detailed documentation: UPEC, 2020).

The movement was recognized internationally, and its representatives could profit off of their achievements to travel, receive grants, and perform and participate in conferences and festivals. Since the mid2010s, YEM has also begun to critique the Macky Sall government. While they had at times protested together in 2011, when Sall was still in the opposition, the activists gave the new administration some temporary leeway. They instituted their government watch and monitoring initiatives. In an interview in 2014, both former and current movement coordinators Fadel Barro and Aliou Sané find very diplomatic tones and do not outright condemn the new administration. When I interviewed many of the activists a few years later, the tone had changed towards open condemnation and critique of Sall's government, which they saw as similar to Wade's. Barro commented in 2019. Former movement-spokesperson Fadel Barro said that with the Sall government *"It's the same system of cronyism and corruption which we have known and of sham. They pretend that things work. They put concrete everywhere and nothing for the environment. Only money counts […] to be able to consume. It is things stupid. That disgusts me."*

Since the mid-2010s, YEM has condemned Sall and his ministers for abusing their position in parliament for self-enrichment. YEM has used their public pedagogy to critize, among other things, the selling out the country's resources to foreign corporations or governments, such as newly discovered oil fields or fishing rights. Additionally, they have denounced the government's consent to vastly detrimental trade deals imposed by Western institutions and their cooperation with, e.g., Frontex to criminalize migration attempts of poor Senegalese youth (cf. Latuner, 2018; Schmid, 2017; Ziegelmayer, 2015, 2019, 2021). The rappers of the movement have also launched fierce diss tracks against Sall, e.g., Keur Gui's song "Sai Sai au Coeur" (Wolof/French for: "bandit at heart"), released shortly before the elections in 2019.

While the government's corruption and authoritarian turns became more apparent, the movement could not mobilize people as in 2011/2012. During both of my fieldtrips to Senegal in 2015 and 2019, the topic of YEM regularly came up, and

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[271] The Burkinabe sister movement "Balai Citoyen" for example was founded by rappers and reggae artists and helped oust authoritarian leader Blaise Compaoré. Compaoré had led the deadly coup against pan-Africanist and socialist head of state Thomas Sankara, often denoted "Africa's Che Guevara," who is a point of identification for YEM and many other pan-African movements (cf. Prause & Wienkoop, 2017; Wienkoop, 2020).

[272] Navarro (2019) states that such travels lead to jealousy among other rappers who accuse YEM of "exporting activism".

some people were in solidarity with YEM, while many were skeptical or outright condemned the movement. A Hip Hop dancer from Dakar told me that while he had been out in the street with them before the 2012 elections, he believed that in 2015, they had lost their way: *"They? Naaaah. They're politicians!"*. When I inquired what he meant by that, he just answered*, "they are simply looking for their own material gain, for money."* I often overheard debates between groups of friends whether YEM's founders were righteous or had been corrupted.

On the one hand, the movement successfully networked internationally, carried out a plethora of impactful NGO-based projects at home, and could employ various members in their non-profit structures. On the other hand, it no longer held the same legitimacy in the eyes of the wider public.[273] But why did YEM's image suffer, and why did mass mobilization in 2019 no longer work as in 2011? What had caused YEM's loss of legitimacy with large parts of the Senegalese public? I argue that this was due to three factors: the Sall administration's coercion, its attempts to coopt the movement, and YEM's NGOization. All of this severely impacted YEM's public pedagogy via citizen actions. To explore these factors and see how a strategic shift by YEM led to a mobilizing upturn after the 2019 election, let us take a theoretically informed look at the challenges to the movement in its fourth phase.

8.5 Government Attempts at Cooptation and Repression/The Conflicts of Running a Non-Profit Versus Mobilizing the Masses

According to Gramsci (2000, 1992), the ruling classes and the state operate via consent and coercion. This twofold rule of leading via ideas, partial concessions, and culture, on the one hand, and open violence and repression, on the other, can be seen in the Senegalese government's reactionary strategies toward YEM and other opposition forces. I have put these strategies in an escalating order from hegemonic attempts of cooptation towards force and coercion:

1) Attempts at cooptation by offering the activists public, government posts, and diplomatic aid
2) State funding for artists and Hip Hop culture, as well as the "Fonds des Cultures Urbaines"
3) Public denunciations of the movement's NGO funding, marking it as a Western agent and as corrupt, and withdrawing NGO licenses of operation
4) Violent repressions of protest, jailing of movement leaders, political use of the judicial system

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[273] The ability to mobilize and organize huge numbers in 2011 of course also depended on the opportunity structure, of what many saw as Wade's "constitutional coup." In the later 2010s, this opportunity structure was no longer given, but there were many other possibilities to mobilize around, such as the selling out of the country's resources by the Sall administration.

These four strategies and their sub-strategies have not been carried out entirely in this escalating order, as some have run parallel. While Macky Sall's rule has taken more and more authoritarian turns, the strategies have, however, escalated more and more towards the latter, more coercive end. These four measures and YEM's counter-strategies shall guide the following subchapter to gain a deeper understanding of the possibilities and limits of movement-based Hip Hop activism and resistance. However, YEM's pedagogic and political project is not only limited by government reactions. Some limitations also follow the more general logic of NGOization, which will be discussed under 8.5.3. This specific case will highlight how Hip Hop and movement activists negotiate these challenges by revisiting some of the theoretical arguments on NGOization and the *Non-Profit Industrial Complex*.

8.5.1 Attempts of Cooptation by Offering YEM Activists Government Posts & Diplomatic Aid

At first, Macky Sall's government, as well as that of his predecessor Wade, had attempted strategies of cooptation. The leading activists, such as Barro, Thiat, and Malade, had refused multiple offers of "transhumance," i.e., to leave the opposition and join the government as ministers of youth and education or in embassies. Since the last subchapters already discussed this first cooptation strategy, the following shall only briefly examine a related strategy of diplomatic intervention when Sall helped liberate YEM's leaders after their arrest in DR Congo in 2015.

As mentioned before, YEM follows a somewhat pan-African agenda. It maintains relations with upcoming youth-driven movements in other African countries, inspired by YEM's successful campaigns against former president Wade. This inspiration happens not only via documentary movies, social media documentation, or their activist conference UPEC. Instead, the organic intellectuals are also invited to other countries to share their vision and skills during activist conferences. In 2015, members of the Congolese youth movement "Filimbi" invited YEM's co-founders, rapper Fou Malade and journalists Barro and Sané, together with an activist from their Burkinabe sister movement "Citizen Broom" to such a conference. Filimbi had – with USAID funding – extended an invitation to the activists to learn from their movements' fights against the unconstitutional reelection attempts by Senegalese and Burkinabe authoritarian rulers. Congo's president at the time, Joseph Kabila, as one of many authoritarian presidents, followed a similar strategy (cf. Wienkoop, 2020). Congolese security forces arrested the activists claiming they wanted to "destabilize the country" and accused them of "planning terrorist acts" (cf. Human Rights Watch, 2015). While Y'en a Marre had already started denouncing Macky Sall's misgovernance a few years after their short and weak alliance of 2012,[274] Sall nevertheless contacted the Congolese ruler directly and pursued a

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[274] Already in 2014, Sané had commented on Sall's populist replacing of the prime minister: *"We at Y'en a Marre estimate that the problem is not the prime minister, but the global vision of president Macky Sall"* (Sané quoted in: Seneweb, 2014)

diplomatic mission to liberate the activists. This can be read as another attempt to coopt the activists, gain legitimacy, and silence their critique by liberating them (cf. Ndiaye, 2015; Seneweb, 2015). In the eyes of the Senegalese media and public, this certainly weakened the activists' critique of their government. Following the intervention, they were portrayed as not being grateful whenever criticizing Sall's misgovernance. This portrayal of YEM as youthful actors "lacking gratitude and respect" ties in with what Fou Malade calls the generational "stigma" bestowed upon Hip Hop, which has to do both with its bluntness in voicing political critique, as well as its American cliché of criminal activities. According to Nelson (2014, p. 27f.) this stigma is of both a generational and an aesthetic nature:

> *"the most pervasive motive for disapproval or denigration of Y'en a Marre, [...] is simply the negative reaction among some Senegalese, and probably particularly among older generations, to the group's youth and to the Hip Hop identity of its leaders and many members. This is a manifestation of the contestation over the traditional relationships between juniors and seniors, a contestation which is prevalent throughout West Africa."*

In a country with a large share of the population being under 25, this power relation, however shifts more and more, as the young become old enough to vote. It is of course only part of the equation, as young people are also divided according to different political camps. In spite of this diplomatic intervention to liberate them, YEM's activists continued to radically denounce Sall's misgovernance as its extent became more and more evident.

8.5.2 State Funding for Hip Hop Culture: the "Fonds de Développement des Cultures Urbaines"

Another concession-based attempt of coopting Senegalese rap and weakening its critique was based on state funding. However, this issue is more complex than cooptation, as many actors within the field see state funding for Hip Hop cultural realms as necessary to become independent from international funding. At the time of my first visit, the two largest neighborhood-based cultural centers, Africulturban, and G Hip Hop received mainly international funding. The activists saw this as negligence by their state and a lack of recognition for their cultural practice. Senegal has little culture-industrial infrastructure for rappers to live off their music and HHC and rap received almost no public money. At the same time, "high arts" receive state funding, such as the national ballet (consisting mostly of traditional West African dances) or the largest theaters. (cf. Appert, 2018; Navarro, 2019). During my research, this underwent a fundamental shift. Africulturban's Amadou Fall Ba discussed how Hip Hop having gained political influence, played out financially as well:

> **Amadou Fall Ba:** *"We have created an attraction. That's to say that inside the state, whether it's the mayor's office of Pikine, of Dakar and the minister of culture or even the government in general... We can reflect and sit together around a table and see what we can*

do together. It's not a question of instrumentalization or cooptation, that's clear, but what is important is to tell the guys: 'what we do in Hip Hop in Senegal, that's being done by Senegalese, and not by the Gabonese, thus it's a bit normal that the state supports. […] it's not Africulturban or Kaay Fecc who should tell you to construct cultural centers..if they can, even better, but I think it's the role of the state. The state has to create the framework, build streets, hospitals. Thus necessarily it also has to construct cultural centers and schools."

As mentioned in chapter four, this line of argument goes against the neoliberal austerity logic. Therein the necessity of cutting state budgets is forced upon populations using Thatcher's famous catchphrase that "there is no alternative." Senegalese cuts in public health, public education, and public culture sectors due to the World Bank's and the IMF's structural adjustment programs follow the same logic as the cuts in US state programs, resulting in New York's non-profit-dominated after-school sector.[275]

Building on what Amadou Fall Ba describes as the newly found political weight, Senegalese cultural and political activists have since 2015 achieved minor victories in this respect. In 2015, G Hip Hop's director and YEM's cultural coordinator Fou Malade described how he had recently visited the president's palace with other Hip Hop activists. They had petitioned for a national budget for the "Cultures Urbaines"; in 2017, Macky Sall's government authorized a "fund for the development of urban cultures". The latter consisted of 300 million FCFA (equaling roughly 400.000€) and was doubled to 600 million FCFA in the following years, which the receiving activists saw as partial cultural recognition. Being one of the 38 receiving parties out of 103 applicants in 2017, rap pioneer Awadi (in: Guèye, 2017) commented:

Awadi: *"This proves that we are recognized as being part of culture and that we play an important role for society. We're appreciating this recognition to its right value. Now it is up to us, to know how to handle this fund, so that we double it. If not we'll be the laughing stock of all of history."*

Recognition in the field thus partly translates into monetary funding. Another example of increased state funding of Hip Hop organizational structures is opening of the Maison des Cultures Urbaines in 2018, which is mainly state-funded and run by Africulturban's team.

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[275] During the Covid pandemic, many Western countries temporarily suspended this austerity logic, and the state has returned on many levels, inter alia using bail outs and re-funding public sectors. Western politicians have reinstated anti-cyclical, Keynesian budget spending during the economic downturn, and US president Biden even raised the corporate tax back to 28%. However, the means of anti-cyclical spending are not the same for peripheral countries such as Senegal. It remains to be seen how this develops with further ensuing economic crises inherent to capitalism (cf. Harvey, 2003; D. Klein, 2018).

While this recognition is one side of the coin of state funding, its other side is rarely voiced in Hip Hop circles. During a panel on Senegalese Hip Hop's educational potential, cultural observer and sociologist Dr. Wan admitted a right to being state-funded but provided a more differentiated reading:

> **Dr. Wan:** *"I will argue for a more complex view […] Hip Hop has reached a level of recognition in terms of being a menace, which leads to the fact that people want to subsidize it because they're scared of it, that people want to subsidize it to control it, etc. Thus, there is a sort of complexity of negotiation, let's say. Everybody has to maneuver this to get away scot-free. […] but where it becomes a trap is that: 'I get subsidies because it is my right […] but it is so much my right, that I cannot even live without them!' you see the contradictions this creates?"*

According to Dr. Wan, Macky Sall had gotten into government with YEM leading protests against his predecessor, and thus knows the extent to which rap threatens state power. By introducing the "Urban Cultures Development Fund," the government aimed to preemptively disarm the rappers' critique. The logic here is: "How can you criticize a state's corruption and insufficient funding when it funds you?"

Concerning NGO funding, Choudry and Shragge (2011, p. 506) argue that in *"the context of neoliberal transformation, both community organizations and development/advocacy NGOs come to contribute to managing and structuring the processes of dissent, channeling it into organizational structures and processes that do not threaten underlying power relations. Further, these organizations act to absorb cuts in services and a reduced role for the state under neoliberal restructuring and/or as a safety valve or lid on more militant opposition against such policies."* The two analysts mostly view NGOization as a neoliberal strategy of disarming social protest but differentiate that *"Many community organizations and NGOs do act in opposition, mobilize, and support broad social and political movements, but these constitute the minority and are often marginalized."* (Choudry & Shragge, 2011, p. 506).

Africulturban's Omar explained that his organization had problems with their local administration, as the organization's president, MC Matador, had criticized the government on many accounts:

> **Omar:** *"with the city of Pikine, we always had problems getting subsidies. There were none. Thus you know, […] when you choose to be hardcore like Matador, then sometimes this is no joke. You say things as they are, and then they [the authorities] tell themselves we have let them into the city's cultural complex and all, we pay the electricity…', and then they want to turn away from you".*

Matador himself had described his conflicting role during an interview as follows:

> **Matador:** *"There is Matador in terms of the president of the non-profit Africulturban, who sits down with Macky Sall to find ways to create jobs for the youth in urban culture. But the Matador who publishes his album 'Reew Gaal Nation' in terms of being a Hip Hoppa, can attack and will never stop attacking this system right there, directed by Macky*

> *Sall. You just have to know that you have two hats, but that doesn't mean that one has to prostitute oneself with these two hats."*

While all of the subsidized Hip Hop artists in Senegal continued to proclaim their independence and right to such subsidies, the effect was sometimes not as planned. Firstly, since the state fund was introduced, the scene has hotly debated the lack of transparency of funding criteria and the composition of the grant committee. The critiques described a clique of insiders who abuse their position inside the committee and their close ties with the governing structures to only gain funding for themselves (cf. P. M. Gueye, 2017). Such accusations towards a clique of insiders, who function as gatekeepers, are to be expected in a field with limited resources and knowledge hierarchies concerning application procedures and project management (cf. Choudry & Shragge, 2011; Thal in: Ege et al., 2018; Ismail & Kamat, 2018). Limited resources, and funding structures, thus lead to clique-building and pose the organizers as competitors against one another. The result is a highly divided field. In both the Senegalese and the US spheres of Hip Hop non-profits, there are different camps, and many of the subsidized people are routinely criticized. With his cultural center G Hip Hop, rapper and YEM activist Fou Malade regularly receives funding and is thus perceived by many as part of the clique. He described the competition and ensuing criticism during a panel of the festival Banlieues Fraternelles Francophones:

> **Fou Malade:** *"Hip Hop is like political parties […] same rivalries, same attitudes, it's very problematic. You'll have a rapper who'll come and tell you in his populism, 'I don't play a concert at a festival called 'Festival Banlieues Fraternelles Francophones' because it's fake!' And then again, he speaks French and plays a concert at the French Institute […] Hip Hop's community is never in solidarity."*

Thus, even the activists who call for unity and believe in Hip Hop ideals describe the field's competition. In Senegal, where mainstream rap and YEM carry such a large political weight, the critique of being dependent on and corrupted by the funders is equally voiced in the mass media and by politicians.

One example shall further illustrate how such critique works. In 2015, a Hip Hop cultural organizers delegation was invited to the "Palais de la Republique" to petition for the fund mentioned above. This invitation had caused widespread rumors of corruption among the general population and parts of the Hip Hop scene. Fou Malade, who had been part of the delegation, in an interview argued as follows:

> **Fou Malade:** *"this aspect of corruption, it's a battle of communication between politicians and Hip Hop. […] In reality, even the Hip Hoppers are scared of the politicians. A rapper, once you invite him into the 'Palais du Senegal', he will tell you 'No, if I go to the palais, they'll say that I've been corrupted' But me, if I talk of the palais, you see the palais, it is mine, it is the palais of the Republic of Senegal. The institutions, they are not the institutions of the parties, but of the republic. […]*
> **Fou Malade's colleague at G Hip Hop:** *This is the case, for example, after your*

meeting with the president. 'Why are the leaders of YEM ready to see…?'
Fou Malade: *You see, YEM's leaders meet the president and people say 'There's cash involved!' [...]*
Fou Malade's colleague: *You ask yourself, whether the journalist or the illustrator [apparently of a published caricature], whether he wasn't corrupted himself…*
Fou Malade: *He could be corrupted or not. […] it's just to tell you that the common sense, the majority of people think like that. But should we leave it then? It's the artist's responsibility to deconstruct this. […] it's the same debate I had with the people in YEM, who told me, 'Us? We'll never go and meet the president!' But I say, 'I'll go and meet him because we have elected him at the price of our lives […]' Thus, it's our responsibility to deconstruct and put something else into the minds of the population, which the politicians have successfully corrupted and manipulated."*

Thus, for the activists, the public debate of their own corruption is a political struggle for legitimacy and against what Fou Malade names as the politicians' manipulation.[276]

Before the 2019 elections, YEM continued to denounce the government's misgovernance and corruption. The Sall administration in turn used state funding to delegitimize this critique. One of the movement's leaders successfully applied for public funding to support his car trading. Another had done a TV advertisement for a new train system, the financing of which YEM had previously criticized. When I asked YEM's cofounder Barro about these cases, he responded:

Fadel Barro: *"all this shows you the precariousness of our artists and the activists in a general sense and of their actions of how they finance their activities. […] so the state published it like sort of an advertisement saying 'yeah they treat us like we are only financing those who are with us, but look we have financed [them] even though they are against us.' So this shows the patrimonialism of the state you see.. And is the artist a citizen, or is he not a citizen?"*

Dire economic circumstances thus make it difficult for Senegalese artists to navigate political debates of legitimacy. During the weekend following this interview, the movement leaders met with the YEM's remaining members from all the regions of the country to decide upon a new strategy and leadership. In Barro's words, they also wanted to discuss financing guidelines *"to see where is the line that a Yenamarriste can cross and where is the line that a Yenamarriste cannot cross."*

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[276] Journalist Hamidou Anne makes the case for state funding of Hip Hop and against politicians' arguments that Hip Hop was controlled by Western funders, saying that the entire state depends on external funding: *"Today you cannot have a Hip Hop which is not subsidized from the outside if you do not have a national budget which regulates all of public politics. Hip Hop is subsidized because health is subsidized because school is subsidized because Senegal's national budget is subsidized. There is always… Even religion is subsidized with Mosques built by the Qataris etc. When our head of state gets up to give his speech on sovereignty, the financial base of public politics of this country is finally dictated by international institutions. Because it is they who inject money into our budget."*

In conclusion, it can be said that state funding of Hip Hop cultural and political activities in Senegal, and more generally, is a contested field. On the one hand, the actors oppose both neoliberal austerity in the cultural and educational sector, as well as the financial discrimination towards Hip Hop, by demanding proper state funding of their activities. On the other hand, state authorities try to use such funding instances to delegitimize the more political activists' critique. Finally, the field's logic also posits some actors against one another as they compete for such limited resources. But how do Hip Hop activists navigate these pitfalls? An analysis of a few strategies by YEM in the following will provide insight.

8.5.3 Denunciations of YEM's international Funding, & Marking it as Corrupt & Dependent

The Senegalese authorities have not only used their own state funding to denounce YEM as being corrupt and portraying their critique of the state's austerity policies as incoherent. Additionally, they have also focused their critique on the funding of YEM's activities by international NGOs. Academic papers rarely discuss YEM's challenges and its temporary loss of influence.[277] During the research, I was highly conflicted about how to write about the following. I wanted to write in solidarity with the movement and gain a further understanding of the challenges to such Hip Hop movement activism via non-profits. Thus, I have decided to resolve the dangers of paternalizing sociological research from the ivory tower of the global North by granting the actors in the field a say on the matter. To understand the different aspects, I intend to bring the perspectives of some of the movement's observers and activists in dialogue with theory to situate this critique. This shall help understand the challenges arising from NGO-funded work and the ensuing dilemmas for strategies of mass mobilizing and public pedagogy. Theoretically, this will be guided by literature on NGOization and the "Non-Profit Industrial Complex" (Incite! Women of Color Against Violence, 2017) to find out how YEM maneuvered these challenges.

I asked Hip Hop scholar Mamadou Dramé in 2019 what the perceptions of YEM in society were. While the researcher agrees with many of the movement's goals, he said the reasons for YEM's declining legitimacy and popularity in Senegal lay in its NGO funding:

> **Dramé:** *"Well actually, the greater public has the impression that Y'en a Marre has more or less turned away from its primary objective. That is because, in the beginning,*

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[277] As an exception, Appert (2018, p. 191ff.) and Navarro (2019) analyze how YEM's political focus, as well as the many opportunities for travel, have led to multiple critiques from actors in Senegalese Hip Hop, who do not have the same opportunity for flying overseas, joining conferences and playing concerts. Here, Amadou Fall Ba's statement is confirmed, that for most of these trips, the only things paid for are the flight tickets, as well as the hotels, while most outsiders assume, that those who travel must be rich. Some of Appert's interviewees also retain large skepticism towards the funding of the movement's non-profit projects, which are discussed in the following.

there were many things which Y'en a Marre denounced and many of these concerned finances and funding. And now Y'en a Marre finds itself taking a lot of financial support by NGOs, and they think that this money from the NGOs can be subsumed as money for development aid. That is their perception. And it is very sincere on their part. I believe that they are very sincere when they say so. But they are – in my opinion – wrong. It is because of this money that their image has changed a lot. Because, as it happens, the people have the impression, that these are persons who are moved by money, who are looking for money. And that's the perception, which is very negative unfortunately. And which inflicts a bit on the success and aura, which the movement had before.

Saman: *And Macky Sall's government instrumentalized this a lot to denounce the movement?*

Dramé: *Yes, because the politicians have used it a lot. They have used such arguments a lot to discredit the movement. And every time the occasion presents itself, it is the same kind of argument they bring up – saying that 'those are corrupt people', etc. It is true that there are people who remain convinced, but sadly, the majority of the population stays in this posture, according to which Y'en a Marre is a movement of people who are looking for money."*

While strongly believing in the movement's sincerity and goodwill, Dramé perceives the funding by international foundations as the factor most hurting the movement's initial goals. The government using these issues to delegitimize the movement can be read with Gramsci (2000, p. 235) as a "war of position", where both parties struggle to dominate the discourse on political events, to maintain or gain cultural hegemony (cf. also Barfuss & Jehle, 2017; Candeias et al., 2019; Crehan, 2002).

There are additional and more complex mechanisms for how the non-profit sector can not only lead to disinformation by authoritarian governments but also for how it can deradicalize movements. According to Eyerman and Jamison (2007, p. 54 ff.), a social movement in its final stage either undergoes institutionalization or dissolution. Many critical analysts term one specific type of such institutionalization into non-governmental organizations "NGOization," which means funding stems from other NGOs and foundations. These funders then partly impose their own agenda to "discipline dissent" and deradicalize the movement (Choudry & Shragge, 2011). Such deradicalization usually happens via various factors, including a "professionalization" of protest, an ideology of pragmatism, and a liberal "cult of civil society" (Wood quoted in: Choudry, 2010, p. 18). These result in a failure to name capitalism, (neo-)colonialism, and class relations of exploitation[278]. Thus,

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[278] Ege & Moser (2021, p. 11) historically situate such developments of refraining from antagonistic politics, arguing that the *"'ethicization' of political language and forms regarding urban life is closely tied to a time after the fall of 'really existing' socialism in Eastern Europe (and its transformation into, broadly speaking, state capitalism in China and Vietnam) and the rise of neoliberalism. Given the individualistic vocabularies and voluntaristic imaginations of action in which urban-ethical questions are often embedded today, there is an obvious elective affinity between them and recent decades of neoliberal governmentality and the rule by technocratic experts, in one way or another."*

movements give up class-based perspectives of mobilizing the masses and follow representative/elite models of doing politics instead.[279] However, I argue that YEM does not fully follow this logic of deradicalization since the movement has reoriented itself since 2019. YEM has re-radicalized itself through movement coalitions, including more openly anti-imperialist groups. It has also employed strategies of code switching and retained some grassroots orientations throughout. It is clear, however, that the processes mentioned above took their toll on the movement's standing and legitimacy in the eyes of the Senegalese people.

A regular accusation towards Y'en a Marre is that their leaders "have become politicians," which in its common sensical[280] definition equals corruption. This is, therefore, a serious accusation, which its members are well aware of. Fou Malade, the movement's long-time artistic director and head of the neighborhood center G Hip Hop, acknowledged this on multiple occasions. One of those was during a panel on the different generations of Senegalese rappers. He began describing the first generation's mission as introducing Hip Hop culture into Senegal and fighting for its acceptance:

> **Fou Malade:** *"Then after the generation of Fou Malade, Keur Gui, Simon [YEM's founders and earliest members], we have worked to further this accomplishment because it is an accomplishment[281], And then after that, there was effectively the Y'en a Marre movement, via which we raise the consciousness of the youth. But we went so far as to be confused with politicians, and this is now absorbing our, our artistic side, while it should be the opposite. Our artistic work should be the driving force of our citizenship."*

Fou Malade places his and YEM's approach in a generational context and mentions being "confused" by the greater public with the political class, which only works towards their personal gains.[282] He also references another aspect: While the

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[279] Most of the literature on NGOization states that systemic questions are rarely raised in NGO-dominated fields of current movements. This often sweepingly general statement has been somewhat contradicted by the rise of the Occupy movements (cf. Chomsky, 2012; Graeber, 2013; Hamdi, 2013), and parts of the Black Lives Matter protests, which link their specific issues with a larger systemic analysis of the root causes of racism and capitalism (cf. Mendivil & Sarbo in: Sablowski et al., 2021) or the call for a "system change instead of climate change" by Fridays for Future activists.

[280] Gramsci defines common sense as "ambiguous, contradictory and multiform"(quoted in: Crehan, 2002, p. 31). However, he also acknowledges its basic intuitive qualities, which distinguish it from more educated but indoctrinated visions of society (cf. Barfuss & Jehle, 2017). A widespread and general skepticism towards politicians' integrity in representative democracies can be seen as such an intuitive quality, backed up by the evidence of both illegal corruption, as well as legal forms of corruption under the guise of lobbying (cf. Chomsky, 2012; Graeber, 2011, 2013).

[281] The original French word "acquis" translates also as gains, benefits, achievements, as well as knowledge gained.

[282] The view of all politicians as corrupt is quite common globally and mirrors a general loss of legitimacy of parliamentary democracy under neoliberal capitalism. The corruption of governments is criticized by right-wing and left-wing movements alike. The solutions however highly differ as the former call for a strong authoritarian leader and carry dangers of new fascist projects, such as the alt-

movement leaders were busy carrying out their projects, they did not produce and publish as much artistic material. This latter point has also been leveled against them on various accounts during informal conversations in the field: Namely that they were getting financial income from international foundations and NGOs and therefore left their musical career aside to follow what large parts of the Senegalese public sees as a "political career."

According to movement cofounder Sofia, who, among other things, manages YEM's social media, this misperception by the greater public was due to several contextual factors and one specific strategic mistake on the side of YEM. She states that during and especially after the electoral campaign in 2012, the Senegalese media were for a large part siding with the government, *"so it is difficult for the Senegalese people to understand what we were doing […] and then there was the phase of 'demonization', you see. There were several accusations against us and all that you know."* She went on to describe these accusations of having been illicitly funded by national and international funders:

> **Sofia:** *"Here, whenever someone was funding certain groups, the politicians all said that 'it's Y'en a marre!'. And it was made public, and the Senegalese people heard that. But after we were cleared of the accusations, those same media, who had accused us, didn't talk about it much, about the fact that it wasn't us. But the Senegalese had already written that in their minds. […] It's always a story of financing and all that. Stuff like that...*
> **Saman:** *And how do you fight these accusations?*
> **Sofia:** *That's the mistake of Y'en a Marre exactly because if you see that some people were starting to not follow the movement anymore, then that's Y'en a Marre's mistake. Because at first, with the accusations, we just gave it time. We didn't start denying or answering or anything like that. We thought the Senegalese would understand. And it was only […] [recently] that Y'en a Marre started denouncing these news, and we were invited to clear it up, and the Senegalese started to understand. But unfortunately, years passed of the Senegalese people saying, 'This is a corrupt movement …'"*

Most of these accusations revolved around financing via their own "bureau de projets" (project office). While YEM did not have a licensed non-profit status inside Senegal, the artists and activists at this office carried out its operations and projects and even had a few posts of full-time employment. Administratively and financially responsible, however, were two specific non-profits, ENDA tiers monde, with its member, the NGO Lead Afrique Francophone. The latter organization had managed the financial and administrative part of YEM's initiatives. They obtained funding for their long list of projects via various international donor organizations,

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right and Trump. On the other hand, leftist movements are calling for different forms of governing and systemic transformation expressed in the slogans of "They can't represent us" and the demands of "Real Democracy Now!," which were expressed in the alter-globalization as well as the movements occupying public squares all over the globe after 2008's world economic crisis (cf. Sitrin & Azzellini, 2014).

including George Soros' Open Society Initiative for West Africa (OSIWA), Oxfam, the Ford Foundation, and the EU. In addition, many trips abroad were financed via inviting institutions and different funding bodies, such as USAID, for the trip to the Democratic Republic of Congo mentioned above. All of these instances were criticized by other activists and used time and again by Macky Sall's government and YEM's critics to discredit their leaders as wanting to enrich themselves. In 2018, a year before the presidential elections, Sall's government withdrew Lead's license and accused it of directly paying the mentioned 350.000 million FCFA to YEM. The president gave speeches on national sovereignty and accused YEM of personal enrichment. Just before the 2019 elections, president Sall was in public crossfire for non-transparently contracting Western corporations on the recently discovered vast oil and gas reserves. Sall used this delicensing, as well as these accusations toward YEM, to shift the blame from himself and limit their public pedagogy and mobilizing potential (cf. NGO collective statement, 2018; Senenews, 2018; Seneweb News, 2018).

Ismail and Kamat (2018, p. 569 ff.) similarly argue that *"the unpopularity of regimes imposing austerity in different forms, as a result of failures to deliver on economic promises, has led to a general crackdown on resistance and dissent. The targeting of NGOs as part of this familiar crackdown is indicative not necessarily of the progressive political orientation of NGOs, but how neoliberal regimes are turning authoritarian in response to even moderate demands."*[283] Having studied in prestigious career universities in Paris, neoliberal proponent Macky Sall is a clear example of this global tendency with his discourses on growth and markets and his recent crackdowns on international NGOs and political opponents and movements. He has used both the judicial system and the army, security, and police forces to violently repress and criminalize protest (cf. Laplace, 2021a). This authoritarian turn and YEM's new strategies against their loss of public legitimacy have led to a restructuring, remobilization, and a re-radicalization of the movement. Before analyzing this most recent phase of movement developments, we will firstly look at NGOization from a theoretical point of view and secondly its impact on Y'en a Marre.

NGOization and how Y'en Marre Navigated its Dilemmas

The literature on NGOization and the Non-Profit Industrial Complex analyzes how the largest foundations globally are used by the 1% to evade taxes, to invest for profits, and to contain and discipline dissent. Ismail and Kamat (2018, p. 572) qualify this statement and further differentiate:

> *"The influence of NGOs can lead to the corruption of genuine mass movements through the NGOisation of their leadership or the distortion of their political aims.[…] [But,]*

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[283] Ege and Moser (2021, p. 11) further assess how: *"in many parts of the world, it is authoritarian nationalism that makes promises for countering the effects of neoliberal globalization […] and escalates ethnic tensions and racist structures".*

despite the material and ideological constraints imposed by funding, NGOs do possess a degree of agency that can influence the conditions in which they operate: the decisions they make can either further class struggle or undermine it."

This differentiated view sees some agency with non-profit-funded movements and calls for an in-depth analysis of realities on the ground of how non-profits and social movements interact.

The theoretical analysis, however, goes beyond donors purposefully influencing their financed NGOs. Instead, the literature looks at different inherent mechanisms and tendencies that lead to a different mode of political activism via NGOs. Choudry and Shragge (2011, p. 506ff.) assess the NGO sector's effects on movements due to its inherent mechanisms of careerism, professionalization, and what they call an "ideology of pragmatism." Professionalization entails three characteristics. Firstly, paid staff plays a central role in the organization. Secondly, the staff increasingly includes people who are not activists but have studied NGO-focused academic programs. These programs prepare *"professional staffers with a model of local managerialism that emphasizes organizational governance over radical politics and supporting local mobilization and social movements."* This leads to the fact that thirdly, these professional staffers publicly act as spokespeople at negotiating tables and partnership structures, *"whereas they could instead play organizing roles that mobilize those active on the ground, and help them develop leadership skills and represent movements in the public."* (all quotes from Choudry & Shragge, 2011, p. 507ff.). These three factors have certainly been at play within YEM. However, I argue that the movement's reality is more differentiated than the above theory suggests. YEM has widely relied on centralized press conferences and employs staff who studied NGO programs. However, the movement has also followed routes contrasting such a professionalized, representative politics model. Instead, the activists have used their funding to support many smaller non-profits and neighborhood organizations, and carried out grassroots organizing via its council structures and interventions, e.g., founding an organization representing the working rights of Dakar's bakers.

Choudry and Shragge (2011, p. 510) equally assess an *"ideology of pragmatism"*, which

"ties development NGOs and community organizations into institutional power while they purport to be progressive and transformative. […] Missing from this is any fundamental critique of capitalism or reflexivity about the organization's own implication in structures and systems of power. […] Funders must also be kept happy. In NGO and community networks, there is much focus on development and development models which obscure capitalist assumptions which underpin them. Many organizations seek merely to ameliorate some of the social or environmental impacts through community development and participation-based development projects."

This deradicalization and focus on smaller reformist goals hold true for most Hip Hop non-profits discussed in my research (with a few small and radical exceptions

who openly critique capitalism). In addition, for YEM, the short-term finances of the NGO project cycles also caused conflicts and competition between differently funded projects, which harmed their organizing efforts of the Esprit network. The Oxfam-financed "Dox Ak Sa Gox" program included funding for one year for the Esprits to open up offices in all regions of Senegal to strengthen the local educational initiatives in these more marginalized areas. This temporarily limited funding caused many problems:

> **Fadel Barro:** *"The first project we put into place "Dox Ak Sa Gox" was to have a bureau in every region. Even in Kolda we had an office [in marginal southern Senegal]. And that was the weakness of the whole thing also. I told them we have financing from Oxfam to open up and sustain an office for one year. But we should be capable after this year to sustain the Esprit to sustain the office, well it's not expensive to continue to have one computer to meet and to rest in contact with our core council. But sadly, at the end of this project, many Esprits [sighs], could not really continue. And I know that many people were angry and thought we were the ones who wouldn't want to continue sending them money. But this wasn't true. We were not even allowed to. There were many problems like this with the Esprits."*

The projects of the following funding cycles, such as "Sunu Gox" were geared more towards other regions, so many members of the initially funded Esprits became upset when they received no more money and quit the network. The short-term funding cycle of large foundations thus caused competition between the different regions and councils. Despite these conflicts, some Esprits continued their work, and the organizers mounted further actions and activities.

The above-mentioned argument of NGOization's deradicalizing tendencies and the cult of civil society have to be further qualified for YEM. While the movement certainly follows a civil society model of doing politics, it nevertheless chooses more radical forms of critique and non-violent forms of civil disobedience once the consensus models are exhausted. This is the case in their mediation programs, where they are often asked to intervene in conflicts at work. As Sofia put it concerning Dakar's bakers: *"We listen to them. And we will also listen to the other side before taking a role in it. We will listen to both sides. And then, we try to mediate to find common ground. And here we are, and if it doesn't work, we raise our voice [laughs]"*(cf. also YEM, 2019). The same approach characterizes their stance on Macky Sall's government. While Sall had visited the movement's headquarters right after his election, the activists remained skeptical. However, after a few years, it became evident that he did not deliver on his electoral promises, such as massive job programs or not signing trade allowances for European fishing industries that would harm local fishermen (cf. Ziegelmayer, 2015). The movement thus chose a more antagonistic course and depicted Sall as the enemy. While YEM does not take an openly anticapitalist stance, the activists have communicated more radical positions on French and Western

imperialism in the last years.[284] They have decried the colonial currency FCFA, and the neo-colonial and imperialist nature of the Economic Partnership Agreements, forced upon former colonies by the EU. Like many other organizations applying for public or private funding, the movement uses strategic code-switching and does not communicate its more radical critiques and demands on its website. Apart from code-switching, "language switching" is equally important, as the movement activists often communicate with Senegal's population only and not with Western funders by talking in Wolof.

It becomes clear that financing via NGOs does have diverse and conflicting outcomes and effects. On the one hand, it enables small-scale transformative projects (cf. 8.4.2). On the other hand, the government used YEM's financial sources to publicly delegitimize the movement. In the years following the public debates of their funding, YEM's calls for protests did not draw as many people into the streets. Their public statements also did not convince as many people, thus impacting their public pedagogy. Here, the dilemma occurs between NGO-specific professionalization, and an ideology of pragmatism on the one hand and organizing, educating, and mobilizations of the masses on the other (cf. Choudry, 2010; Rodriguez in: Incite! Women of Color Against Violence, 2017; Ismail & Kamat, 2018). With the legitimacy of the movement in the eyes of the public diminished, the funding harmed the movement's public pedagogy of action, and Hip Hop's possibilities for such transformative educational purposes.

Since the 2019 elections, Y'en a Marre has taken on a more grassroots orientation again. With their partner NGO Lead Afrique delicensed by the state and new leadership in place, the movement not only rallied for a reviving of its council structures and established new internal financing guidelines but also joined various movement coalitions with more radical movement actors. Choudry and Shragge (2011, p. 511) argue that *"the process of co-optation of some community organizations and NGOs cannot be divorced from the reverse side of the coin for those who refuse to operate within the parameters set from above–increased repression, surveillance, and the criminalization of dissent."* The movement's renewed grassroots and anti-imperialist orientation thus reinforced this "reverse side of the coin," i.e., Macky Sall's repression and his most recent authoritarian turns. This is analyzed in the following.

8.5.4 Violent Protest Repression, Jailing of Movement Leaders, and Political Use of Judicial System

In more recent years, aside from their project focus via their NGO structure, YEM's movement activists have not stopped denouncing the government and, in addition,

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[284] In 2015, Fou Malade addressed French President Hollande and openly named continuing neocolonialism of e.g. French Uranium exploitation in Africa, or France's military presence. He states how France violently refuses access to African migrants on boats, while it was Europeans coming to Africa in boats to destroy the continent (cf. https://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=A5f3yopkXT4 last accessed 15.4.2021).

have joined more openly radical anti-imperialist movement coalitions. In particular, a strong alliance was forged with the movement FRAPP France Dégage! (short/French for "revolutionary, anti-imperialist pan-Africanist popular front. France get lost!"), whose leader, the trained social worker Guy Marius Sagna[285], was jailed by the Senegalese government multiple times on different pretexts. These alliances were forged in two larger movement coalitions, "Nio Lank" and "Aar Li Nu Bokk". The former demanded lowering the high electricity prices, which were unaffordable for many Senegalese. The latter movement coalition was founded to demand a renationalization of the country's recently discovered gas and oil resources. Movement leaders Thiat and Sané, as well as many other local participants, were arrested when protesting for Sagna's liberation. Since Oxfam had told some of its employees to refrain from anti-imperialist "Aar Li Nu Bokk" protests (cf. Sylla, 2019), this can be seen as a decision of YEM against the agendas imposed by Western NGOs and for a grassroots orientation to mobilize the masses for large scale protests. This protest is similar to the large public protests against the domination of the Senegalese market by French corporations, such as supermarket chain "Auchan" or mobile network distributor "Orange," (cf. La Cause Du Peuple, 2021).

A further indicator of development in this direction are the protests surrounding the arrest of anti-imperialist opposition leader Sonko. YEM follower Jules, a young man in his mid-20s, who despite a master's degree in business administration, was working at a large French supermarket, had explained to me that *"Sonko, we say that he's not a politician. The others, however, they are politicians. It's like when people say politician, then that means someone who will tell you lies. They'll tell you: 'I'll create this, I'll create that.' but when they're president, they won't do it."* The well-informed young man said he had voted for Sonko as he was the first important presidential candidate to denounce the government's corruption and ongoing Western imperialism openly.

While YEM remains in a position of neutrality concerning political candidates, the activists still joined in the M2D *"movement for the defense of democracy,"* a coalition consisting of movements and political activists, etc. They denounced the rape charges recently leveled at Sonko as another incident of framing political opponents by Macky Sall's government and construing false stories, as well as abusing the judicial system to eliminate the competition for the next presidential elections in 2024 (cf. Fall, 2021). During this next election phase, they suspect Sall of plotting to enter the race for what would be an unconstitutional third time in office. The protests for Sonko's liberation and the demands for Sall to stop misusing the judicial system have mobilized masses of young people all over the country, which were met with further violent suppression by the government. Both army and police forces were

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[285] For a political self-positioning of the charismatic organic intellectual Sagna cf. https://youtu.be/ wc7yyKWZFC0 (last accessed 15.4.2021). As Sagna and the "FRAPP France get lost!" movement are often portrayed by the government as xenophobic, the trained social worker clears up this issue by saying that theirs is a pan-Africanist and internationalist approach, which sees the people of France and other Western states as allies, but sees the exploitative and expropriating relationships enforced by their governments as the central problem.

employed, and 13 protesters died from fatal shootings and beatings by state forces. Despite YEM and M2D coalition's calls for non-violent protests, this has sparked a series of lootings and street barricades. Again, many YEM adherents were arrested (cf. Laplace, 2021). In addition to the violent repressions of protests and the political use of the judicial system to eliminate opponents, Sall has most recently announced the delicensing of George Soros' Open Society Institute West Africa for having previously financed Y'en a Marre (cf. Diallo, 2021). This signals a further authoritarian crackdown on even more liberal NGOs, as they support a movement taking more radical stances against their government and its support for neo-colonialist ventures.

Choudry and Shragge (2011, p. 511) differentiate between two types of political orientations of movements and organizations in the NGO sector: The first follows the logic of *"'do what is in the boundaries', and acceptance of limited gains. This is quite a different position from those groups that fight for limited gains but advance a platform that sees this work in broader and longer-term understandings about the need to politicize, build grassroots power and leadership, and education for change."* I would argue that Y'en a Marre, with its public pedagogy of ethical citizenship via the New Type of Senegalese, its transformative projects of direct action, and its renewed orientation towards mass mobilization, falls into the latter category. YEM has distanced itself from many NGOs and their agendas, partly due to its denunciation and the president delicencing their funding NGOs. In addition, the movement has changed its leadership and thereby signaled a democratic renewal while reviving and joining new movement coalitions and forging more radical anti-imperialist alliances. As the Corona pandemic took it toll on the Senegalese economy, more and more young people died trying to leave their country via the sea route to escape the lack of economic opportunities. In a country with growing grievances, which takes more authoritarian turns, the chances of mass mobilization also rise (cf. Ziegelmayer, 2021). These factors open up perspectives for a revitalization of mass protests and public pedagogy via actions similar to the ones detailed at the outset of this chapter.

As shown before, such Hip Hop-/movement-based education can be subject to state oppression, cooptation via funding, and NGOization. However, as Ismail and Kamat (2018, p. 572 f.) argue,

> *"Left activists working in movement organisations with a mass base recognise the contradictory space of the NGO sector and can resist being absorbed into the bureaucratic structures of NGOs [...] Where there exists a class conscious leadership within an NGO, one that seeks to promote the principles of solidarity, worker-led agency and resistance from below, contributions towards social justice are possible".*

At a moment of critical self-reflection in 2019, shortly after Sall's reelection, YEM cofounder Sofia had said that the most important goal for the movement was to achieve a *"change in mentality"*:

> **Sofia:** *"What needs to be instilled are changes in mentality and the value of the NTS, the New Type of Senegalese. Because we couldn't get that into the hearts of the Senegalese people. That's it, it'll be hard to succeed, that's how it will be. We fought a fight in 2011– 2012, and here we are… we got out of touch a little. But [...] we want to revitalize the troops if you like [laughs]. […] Yeah, that's the main challenge."*

Looking at the developments in 2021, it seems that the activists were partly successful in revitalizing the movement, while their political opponent also perceives them as more of a threat than before.

At about the same time, as Y'en a Marre planned on "revitalizing their troops," I asked my acquaintance Jules what the situation would be like if Y'en a Marre had more power. The young man, in his mid-20s, got politicized when he could not find a job and now follows YEM public pedagogy via Rap to stay informed. He denounces the self-enriching of Senegalese politicians and sees YEM as an answer.

> **Jules:** *"Macky Sall, he uses the judicial system, just like he imprisoned opposition politicians […] and he passes his laws at the national assembly. Thus seeing all of this, if Y'en a Marre had more power in Senegal, I think these things could not happen. Because they can get into the street, they can call on all of the Senegalese to join them… If it's the politicians who call on the people to march, they can withdraw you know, because they'll say 'those are politicians'. But if Y'en a Marre directs these marches, the Senegalese can join them. […] because they are in a position to say 'No! The president faked the elections.' they can tell it all […] If they had more power, more members who'd follow them, more important people inside Y'en a Marre, maybe the things will change."*

8.5.5 Preliminary Conclusions:

To conclude, we have seen how popular rappers could – together with a team of skilled journalists – leverage their public reach, as well as their Hip Hop-specific social and cultural capital, to mobilize a mass movement and enact their public pedagogy of action. This worked out under a particular opportunity structure and against the clear antagonist of an authoritarian leader. Such an enemy image enabled the activists to employ a standardized social movement repertoire and mobilize rap-specific traditions, such as diss tracks, pedagogical concerts, and Hip Hop media. However, their blunt Hip Hop attitude also had detrimental effects on their public pedagogy with some of the older generations and the more traditionalist parts of Senegalese society. They could counteract this with their non-violent, citizen approach and a patriotic framing of their political project. This cosmological dimension of the movement was thus represented by being Senegal's "Sentinel of Democracy" and aiming for change at all levels of society, beginning with the individual, the "New Type of Senegalese". Its technical dimension was marked by material problems of everyday life, as well as corrupt and authoritarian governments. Initially, a network of council structures and a central governing body defined YEM's organizational dimension. All of these factors changed during the fourth movement

phase after the 2012 elections when the opportunity structure of Wade's "constitutional coup" was gone. The activists now chose the road of NGOization to secure their employment and international funding for their development projects and "pedagogy of action" to launch various projects. However, the Sall government leveraged this funding against them, trying to counter YEM's critique of government corruption by saying the activists were themselves corrupted and international agents. Thus, their new organizational mode of non-profit funding harmed their project of transforming society. Their renewed orientation towards mass mobilization and movement coalitions with far more radical agendas, as well as their change in leadership and transparency approach, seem to increase the movements' potential for mobilization anew. This allows some conclusions about the institutionalization of Hip Hop non-profits and the field's forces to be spelled out further in the discussion. In summary, I argue that there is a trade-off between mass mobilizing on the one hand and NGO-funded, impactful projects on the other in terms of legitimacy. Movement actors should be conscious of this and develop strategies to counteract a possible loss of legitimacy when mounting non-profit structures and political projects. As we have seen, Y'en a Marre educated via their movement actions, their music and their approach of "conscientization". However, there are further instances of social movement oriented-public education based on rap. The last subchapter will look at such public Hip Hop pedagogy, i.e., rap journalism.

8.6 Movement-Oriented Hip Hop Journalism, or How to Rap the News[286]

As mentioned before, Y'en a Marre informs via its music, its social media accounts, and giving press conferences. The movement thus serves as an alternative news source for more educated young people critical of their government. Some of the Hip Hop event-organizers gave me detailed account of governmental misconduct, which they had learned about from following YEM and other civil society groups. They stated that a lot of the illiterate youth would rather follow their favorite rap artists who commented on current events than anybody else, while others did not follow current events at all. This is the case with many dancers with whom I spent much time (in Dakar and globally). Some innovative news formats try to tackle such a lack of interest in socio-political issues and the intellectual hurdles of news media by using rap music.

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[286] Public Enemy's Chuck D stated that "rap is CNN for Black people" implying that rap music was the only way for Black people from the ghetto to find out what is going on in other cities' impoverished neighborhoods (cf. Chang, 2004.).

8.6.1 The Journal Rappé

Xuman and Keyti, two MCs from two pioneering (and competing) rap crews of the 1990s' highly politicized generation, initiated rap-based news show "Journal Rappé" in 2013. This was one year after YEM's height of movement protests during the presidential elections. YEM leader Fadel Barro described the two MCs as the movement's godfathers and their show lasted until 2017.[287] During these four years, they had a whole team working for their show, producing beats, recording and filming it, and researching current topics, of which they then chose a few to be discussed in detail in rhymed format. The show was televised on national TV and via YouTube until 2017. The Journal Rappé's YouTube channel (Xuman & Keyti, n.d.) counted roughly 40 million views in April 2021 and also includes their own and other artists' music videos. Xuman sees their approach as standing in the tradition of Senegalese political rap and as a countermodel to Western commercial rap and consumerism:

> **Xuman:** *"Rap for a long time was considered the voice and the mouthpiece for the streets, for the disadvantaged, for the ghetto etc. […] Then after, rap evolved and changed up until the point where it became more what it is today […] So if you watch the TV channels like BET, the majority, 99% of rap music being shown is the same video: it is alcohol, drugs, girls etc. This is a reality which is not necessarily our reality. So the most conscious rappers are not exactly the most famous rappers. Here in Senegal, we have a different reality. Here, rap music has always been a rebellious music. It has always been music to wake people up, a music that brings a positive energy".*

Xuman evokes a mythologized narrative of rap being a mouthpiece for the oppressed's conscious message, which holds true for rap's hardcore and conscious subgenres of the late 1980s.[288] He aligns their approach with what he defines as Hip Hop's origin, from which many activists derive agency.

The two MCs host the show, with Xuman rapping in French and Keyti rapping in Senegal's second most common language after colonial French: Wolof. The show has a fancy animated logo, headlines rolling through the image, while the two Senegalese rappers sit in suit and tie and "read" their rhymes in news-anchor style. They have treated many topics ranging from the inequalities produced by the Senegalese tax system, imperialist trade regimes, the history of colonialism, and the origins of poverty to the state of Senegal's educational and health systems. When treating such different topics, they have openly criticized president Macky Sall's corruption on many occasions. Aside from cooperating with different rapped news shows, which have sprung up in many African countries such as Ivory Coast or Mauretania, they have also had female-only editions or topical rap "debates" among current

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[287] The two rappers stopped the show in 2017 but have produced ten special thematic pan-African episodes for the 2020 Biennale in Munich partly in French and partly in English (cf. JT Rappé, 2020).
[288] However, the earliest rapping at Block Parties in the Bronx and on the first rap records was quite apolitical and a rhyming party phenomenon. In Senegal, things have equally changed a many rappers from the older generation criticize some of the younger artists for their "self-glorification".

Senegalese rap stars. In 2015, they hosted a rap debate between six rappers of the older and younger generation to discuss the question of Senegalese poverty. The round of eight debated the country's inequality, the disastrous state of the health and education systems and the government's dependency on rich elites and imperialist partners. At one point in the show, YEM's leader Simon stands up to rhyme a few agitated bars aimed at the neocolonial exploiters and their governments' compliance: *"Stop getting on my nerves everyone, they control our currency, our harbors, or roads, they tell us what to consume. If our political leaders had the audacity to think of the masses… we have to stop playing the b*tch and confront them"*[289] (Simon in: JT Rappé, 2015). Host Xuman then calls the round to order, saying *"there's no use in getting agitated"* and continues the debate. Via such emotive and rhymed formats the show hosts help make such topics as poverty, tax inequality neo-colonialism and imperialism, more accessible and entertaining in a country where over half of the population is under 25 years old (cf. Hackel, 2013; Hamdi, 2018).

The complexity and depth of the topics treated are, at times, relatively high and the shows are well researched with a lot of scientific and economic data to back it up. The show aimed at educating about the topics treated and at criticizing their own, and foreign governments, via humorous and satirical measures. It also critiqued large parts of traditional media and news, such as the large segment of Senegal's yellow press. As an entertaining alternative news outlet it is one answer to the problem of a depoliticized youth (cf. Hackel, 2013; Hamdi, 2018; Kimminich, 2015). It works as another instance of Rap's public pedagogy and illustrates how Hip Hop can be used to repoliticize and educate younger audiences.

8.6.2 "Ñ Don't Stop": Rebel Diaz's Disruptive Reporting from and in Solidarity with Movements

The movement-oriented Hip Hop journalism by Latino rap group Rebel Diaz from Chicago stylistically differs from Journal Rappé's half-ironic, but still very official staging of a professional news show. In contrast, the Diaz brothers are usually dressed in baggy gear with a 1990s Hip Hop look and mostly report without rhymes and not in a studio setting. They are in the street and report from within movements and protests all over the globe, as well as their own activism. At the end of their show, there is often a short concert with them or some political guest MCs rhyming on special venues, such as a rooftop.

When I meet Rebel Diaz, we are sitting in a small apartment in West Berlin and I am surrounded by Montana spray cans and leftist literature, a portable microphone on the table. The brothers from a Chilean socialist family smoke one joint after another and laughingly recount their journalist experience. They were invited for a workshop and a concert by their "Berlin comrades"

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[289] The heteronormative sexism of rap will be treated in the discussion. The French original goes as follows: *"Faites pas chier le monde, Ils ont le contrôle de notre monnaie, Nos ports, Nos routes, ils nous disent quoi consommer, Si nos dirigeants avaient assez d'audace pour penser à la masse, Leur faire face, et arrêter de jouer au biatch"*

from the leftist Interbrigadas initiative. They recount that after their cultural center in the Bronx (the Rebel Diaz Art Collective) had been shut down by the police, they started looking for new ways of making a political impact:

> **Rodstarz:** *for like a couple years we were doing media. We put down the MC hat, put on the journalist's you know and I don't know if you know about that but even in the journalist shit we did some wild shit bro. We shut down the Chicago Mayor at the airport in New York, right after, you know, he covered up a murder that shit went a little viral. We shut down Senator Ted Cruz and*
> **G1:** *we were like, We were like, an anarchist, a political fucking TMZ[290]*
> **Rodstarz:** *Dream team [both laugh]*
> **G1:** *surprising motherfuckas like 'Whatup!'*
> **Rodstarz:** *you know, so then we kind of reinvented ourselves as like crazy 'Shut you down' media dudes... the same street energy that we're doing the Hip Hop with so a lot of folks*
> **Saman:** *through your own platform?*
> **Rodstarz:** *Through Telesur from the Venezuela channel, we had Telesur baggage*
> **G1:** *They kind of liked us… They were a little scared of us, too*
> **Rodstarz:** *We were too radical even for the Telesur motherf*ckas I feel like.. after a while they were like 'Damn son!'. Cause Telesur they make mistakes when we're in Ferguson like in the middle of the rebellion, and they send you the official Telesur reporter... She's like a blonde model-type girl... like the typical capitalist-eye vision of like, you know... they were like*
> **G1:** *in a Black uprising bro!*
> **Rodstarz:** *She's clueless she's just a pretty face like and it's not to objectify her but they were objectifying her and having her be out there, bro. She's like, saying the shit CNN is saying I'm like 'This is bullsh*t!' and they're worried about us smoking weed in Telesur jackets. [laughter]*

From 2014 until 2017, the group reported on different protests ranging from the Black Lives Matter protests in Ferguson to Climate Marches all over the globe, to anti-austerity protests in Greece. In doing so, they take an anti-capitalist, ecological, anti-imperialist, pro-poor people and -immigrants stance, rap about revolution, and use their reporting as interventions. For the latter, they run up on politicians to confront them with what they see as the most pressing issues, from climate racism, to immigration rights, to mass incarceration. They have documented their protest of Republican presidential candidate Ted Cruz's visit to the Bronx in 2016. During the news show, the brothers continue to ask Cruz critical questions and, when not getting any answers, make loud and disruptive statements against a "right-wing bigot" daring to come to one of the poorest congressional districts and immigrant

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[290] The tabloid online newspaper is known for its ruthless paparazzi methods of gathering information.

community in the Bronx (cf. a news report on the incident CNN, 2017; and the show itself: TeleSUR English, 2016).

During their show, they also have employed members of their neighborhood center, such as their Arts Collective's member "YC the Cynic," or community organizer Claudia De la Cruz. The latter had been responsible for five years of political programming at their center and during their show interviews New York citizens at rallies against racist police violence. Their description of the blonde journalist from Telesur reporting from Ferguson, illustrates their political and Hip Hop ideal: it is one of an alliance of Black, Brown and poor people speaking for themselves. This also parallels their approach to grassroots activism, which they framed as *"we were […] not 'organizing the poor' but 'the poor organizing'"*. Such an approach is in line with Gramsci's ideal of the organic intellectuals arising from the subaltern classes and being not only their voice but also an organizing force (cf. Barfuss & Jehle, 2017; Candeias et al., 2019).

Another aspect that mirrors Y'en a Marre's approach and is in line with Eyerman and Jamison's (2000) argument about the emotive role of music for movements is their production of protest soundtracks. *In 2019, after our interview G1 switches topics as he was up all night with DJ Illanoiz, to record a song supporting the Chicago Teacher's Union, who are on strike and protesting at that. G1 plays the track, and after listening I sit back, as it left quite the impression on me as the two MCs joke about the differences between their first teacher-union support track recorded in 2012 and this one from 2019:*

G1: *It's zombied out all right. Yeah, definitely it's got a 2 to 6 in the morning feeling*

Rodstarz: *ten thousand blunts later [laughter] It's cool tho*

The duo had performed their first song live at multiple rallies and marches of the Chicago Teachers' Union and reported on these in their show (cf. TeleSUR English, 2015). Their lyrics radically address many core issues of the fight and places them into a larger social context, as Rodstarz rhymes:

> *"The teachers are tired, the students dumbfounded /*
> *the budgets get cut, so classes are overcrowded /*
> *Streets full of violence, the blue code of silence /*
> *so imma keep rhyming til salaries start rising /*
> *The unions uprisin', Takin' to the streets /*
> *The workers are united, so the Mayor's got beef /*
> *Rahm's a fake pretender with a corporate agenda /*
> *neoliberal offender, of course you offend us /*
> *This not about money that's far from the truth /*
> *they want better work conditions to teach the youth / […]*
> *They don't teach how to think but teach us how to test /*
> *They teach us to work n put money in their checks /*
> *The CEOS need to get up out the classroom /*
> *before these streets get hotter than the sand in Cancun /"*

Such movement music, in combination with their disruptive style of reporting, marks another pathway of Hip Hop musical movement activism and public education. In their case, this approach is inspired by their political reading of Hip Hop and their family history of their father having fled Chile as a member of Allende's party. Political activism in both Senegalese and US Hip Hop, thus oftentimes "mobilizes movement tradition" (cf. Eyerman & Jamison, 2000) from histories of resistance in the Global South. The appropriation of Hip Hop by different communities ties in with the appropriation of political methods and repertoires.

Thus, in addition to social justice education and the movement organizing in this chapter, rap-based journalism is another of Hip Hop culture's many political projects aiming to transform society via public education. Such rap-reporting can form a counter-public to media outlets in the hand of the rich and powerful. To a certain extent, Rap's public pedagogy can also counterbalance the reactionary and oppressive strategies, which the Macky Sall government used to publicly delegitimize the Y'en a Marre movement. The broader implications of these different political projects of educating and organizing, as well as the larger field of Hip Hop non-profits will be further discussed in the next and final chapter.

9 Discussion: Hip Hop's Organic Pedagogues – between Non-Profits & Movements

With this research, I set out to analyze the educational, social, and political projects of Hip Hop practitioners in New York City and Dakar. With my first set of research questions, I addressed mainly the pedagogical practices of the culture which Hip Hop pedagogues use inside classrooms and in the scene to transform individual lives, learning spaces, and relationships. On a second level, I wanted to analyze the different types of Hip Hop non-profit organizations, as well as the larger field with its material and ideological conditions and its forces. This organizational meso/middle level was addressed in the second set of research questions. Thirdly, I have examined whether such Hip Hop projects can contribute to transforming society at large by building movements and carrying out political interventions. A lot of the discussion has already been presented in the five empirical chapters, and thus I will only briefly recapitulate some points here and paint the picture in broader strokes. Let us begin with the level of the Hip Hop pedagogues and their teaching practices.

9.1 Transforming Classrooms, Learners, and Communities

As we have seen in chapters 5 and 6, teaching artists introduce different Hip Hop cultural practices into various classrooms. They formalize the autodidactic and

collective processes of the informal "street" culture and bring them into state education institutions. By doing so, Hip Hop pedagogues transform not only these often hierarchical and oppressive spaces and their relationships but also their own and the learners' identities. This bears enormous potential for an emancipatory learning process and for more inclusive and social-justice-focused pedagogy. At the same time, institutional frameworks for learning also limit the chances of realizing this potential, since more oppressive public education standards/curricula cannot be entirely neglected. The timeframes of semesters act as limiting factors to HHC's long-term learning, and school personnel can censor political content or even restrict access to the school.

Hip Hop pedagogues use performance practices such as a "show and prove" to demonstrate their skills and legitimacy to the learners and awaken their interest in Hip Hop's face-to-face practices. This method marks the beginning and end of a practical and often fun learning process and allows the learners to showcase their acquired skills, a central tenet of HHC (5.2).

Teaching artists use the cypher as a pedagogical tool to introduce elements of improvisation, call and response, and creative expression. They thus facilitate the learning process and level out the hierarchies typical of educational institutions and the banking model of education (cf. Freire, 2000). As both teachers and learners then participate in Hip Hop's circular space of practice and learning, they both learn from each other akin to Freire's dialogical pedagogy. If these spaces and the tasks are scaled progressively and adapted to the learners' skill level, this can make for a highly entertaining learning process (cf. 5.3).

The Hip Hop practitioners who teach their craft also introduce the culture's specific mentoring relationships into the classroom. Here, the nature of the mentoring relationship depends strongly on the teachers' biographies and learning experiences in Hip Hop culture, which in turn shape their personal approach and philosophy. There are thus very egalitarian and dialogical versions of mentoring. More structured and hierarchical ways of mentoring can be employed. This happens for instance in Dakar to reintegrate formerly incarcerated young men and provide them with job opportunities (cf. 5.4).

A central problem is that workshops are often tied to the duration of semesters that are too short to engage in Hip Hop culture's long-term mentoring and learning processes, which usually require years. One way the pedagogues maintain the relationships with the former mentees is by employing them within the project as teachers/mentors or in other roles that tie them into the Hip Hop cultural scenes, such as working on documentation, graphic design, etc. There are also institutional solutions to enable long-term mentoring that build on cooperation between different types of Hip Hop non-profits or with a hosting organization to ensure longer terms.

Chapter 6.1 has analyzed how the teaching artists situate themselves on a spectrum between an artistic and political "foundation" of their artistic practice and their teaching on the one hand and the approach of welcoming every contribution by the learners on the other. The teaching artists' understanding of foundation depends

on the national/local context and their individual orientation. Senegalese rap is historically highly political and its foundation often includes a radical political stance of social justice. There are Hip Hop pedagogues who mainly want to maintain aesthetic traditions, while others stress innovation and infuse artistic fundamentals only later during their teaching process. Most pedagogues attribute a central role to Hip Hop's originality principle and the artist's identity must be expressed in their artistic craft and Hip Hop persona while respecting traditions and innovating upon them.

Often, the teaching artists are required by hosting high schools, colleges, and other institutions to formalize their practical knowledge by writing curricula. On the one hand, this institutionalization of community and oral cultural knowledge via curricula-writing marks a level of professionalism. On the other hand, it helps the pedagogues distill their pedagogical essence, reflect upon it and develop it further. The types of Hip Hop curricula range from purely artistic, craft-related (6.2), or more academic ones to integrated social justice ones (6.3). The pedagogues form a global community of practice and exchange their curricula and teaching approaches, "flip" and innovate upon them. These curricula mostly include one or another version of Hip Hop culture's history, framed as Black and Brown people overcoming racism, poverty, and oppression by means of cultural liberation through Hip Hop's art forms. Starting with Hip Hop culture, the pedagogues can initiate the learners' interests with one of the most popular cultural phenomena of the last five decades. This can relate to the learners' lifeworlds and enable a discussion of structural inequalities. Teaching artists not only talk about how HHC can lead to individual artistic empowerment in response to structural problems of racialized class oppression. The pedagogues also often reference the Black Power and civil rights movements and tie those into HHC's history. The teachers and / or the learners, at times, reenact this narrative in an interactive theater setup. Such historical lessons of cultural liberation are usually followed by the learners producing Hip Hop art themselves (cf. 6.5).

HHC's history is sometimes retold as a "great man" story, where the liberatory cultural expression is not one of communities or collectives but instead set in motion by individual Hip Hop "godfathers".[291] One interesting contrary approach followed by some pedagogues is to talk not only about structures and collectives but to focus particularly on female accomplishments in HHC (cf. 5.2.1 & 6.4.1). The great man accounts and the empowerment narratives have, however, suffered severe blows with the publication of multiple accusations against one of the earliest

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[291] These pioneering men with a lot of symbolic prestige and sub-cultural Hip Hop capital have contributed a lot. Such narratives of individual geniuses dominate Eurocentric Western liberal accounts of history. However, behind these "individual geniuses," there are necessary material conditions on the one hand, such as the middle passage, chattel slavery, deindustrializing American capitals, a growing Black underclass, racist city planning, and in the Bronx, etc. (cf. Chang, 2006; Rose, 1994). On the other hand, there are collective cultural accomplishments of mixing African with European musical traditions, Afro-Caribbean innovations, etc.(cf. Casas-Cortés et al., 2008; Eyerman & Jamison, 2007; Wenger, 1998).

Hip Hop DJs, Afrika Bambaataa, of repeated sexual abuse of young boys (cf. Clemente et al., 2016). Different men came out decades after the incidents and publicly accused the Hip Hop pioneer who had canonized and named the culture and given it a normative compass. Some of my interviewees from New York confirmed the accusations from second-hand accounts. The teaching artists have developed various curricular strategies to navigate this incident and keep an empowering narrative intact. Some name the case and Hip Hop's contradictions head-on and differentiate between Bambaataa's achievements and the cases of abuse. Others de-center Bambaataa and his organization – the Universal Zulu Nation – by focusing on other cultural actors. Some even de-center canonized Hip Hop culture and focus more on "creative expressions" and multidimensional art (cf. 6.4.5).

Finally, the Hip Hop pedagogues follow the culture's principle of practice and always finish the semester, or workshop with a final "show and prove". These performances let the learners showcase the acquired skills in various formats and settings. There are performances in school settings, and in neighborhood-based cultural centers. Sometimes, Hip Hop pedagogues employ battle or cypher formats to emulate scene-specific performances in the classroom and prepare the learners to enter scene spaces. Some teachers want to introduce the learners to Hip Hop cultural or social movement settings and arrange performances in these new social realms. While such "show and proves" motivate learners and allow them to experience a sense of achievement, they also bear the dangers of funders or other gatekeepers censoring politically radical content or restricting HHC expression (cf. 6.5).

The Learners' Perspectives

There is often a lot to gain for the participants of such classroom-based projects. They experience an empowering space where they can build skills and produce Hip Hop art, which ideally is validated by the community of practice and the teacher. Such recognition and a culture of completion can be a highly empowering experience for the learners. They acquire sub-cultural capital, i.e., Hip Hop skills and knowledge, social capital, i.e., new scene and maybe even professional contacts, and aspirational and psychological capital in the process (cf. Bourdieu, 2012, 1977; Ortner, 2002; Yosso, 2005). This can, in some cases, already be converted into financial capital since some projects also employ the learners directly. For some students, this even means the beginning of a longer-term career as a practitioner. This can provide individual solutions to larger structural problems of unemployment or unequal chances for racialized, lower-class youth. However, such individual projects cannot resolve problems of structural inequalities, exploitation or oppression for everyone. The precarious nature and often low pay of non-profit work affects both the teachers and those learners who are employed as mentors. Nevertheless, in times of growing isolation, social media addiction, and depression, these face-to-face practices, community experiences, and identity-related resources can provide perspectives and positive self-images as a partial answer to some of those problems.

9.2 Organic Pedagogues, Intellectuals, and Hip Hop's Translation into Classroom Settings

We have seen that both in New York City and in Dakar, HH practitioners who model their teaching process according to their own experiences in this culture of mostly autodidactic and collective learning, or as a positive contrast to their experience. They introduce the spaces, practices, norms, and relationships, i.e., their inner Hip Hop pedagogical blueprint, into their classrooms and structure their curricula accordingly. I propose the term *organic pedagogues* for these teaching artists who have acquired their artistic and pedagogic skills in Hip Hop culture's informal settings and now formalize them. The term *organic pedagogue* stands in allusion to what Gramsci calls *organic intellectuals* and implies an analytical distinction. As described in chapter 2.4.1 an organic intellectual for Gramsci (cf. Forgacs in Gramsci 2000, p.3) is someone who organically represents the class she was born into and takes on the social role of a *"thinking and organising element of [this] particular fundamental social class."* An organic intellectual thus formulates a coherent political project for her own class and organizes people to win power and hegemony, i.e., ideational leadership. Gramsci (2000, p. 321) further explains that *"the mode of being of the new intellectual can no longer consist in eloquence, which is an exterior and momentary mover of feelings and passions, but in active participation in practical life, as constructor, organiser, 'permanent persuader' and not just a simple orator."* Therefore, a rapper, musician, dancer, style writer or DJ who has a political message as an artist or an educator is not necessarily an organic intellectual in Gramsci's sense, unless they are actively organizing their social class to win hegemonic power. Both Hip Hop scholars as well as some practitioners in the field who claim the title of the organic intellectual have not always been clear with Gramsci's terminology and this particular distinction[292].

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[292] Forman (2002, pp. 158, 196, 2010, p. 3), in his otherwise excellent writing, has e.g. used the term quoting mostly Hall, Lipsitz, and Gilroy and not Gramsci directly to vaguely refer to rappers, who come from the ghetto and e.g. bring their art into highbrow artistic realms. There is no reference to a clear counter-hegemonic project nor to the active organizing function among their class bases. Lusane (in: Forman & Neal, 2004, p. 357) states that *"In a sense, Cube, NWA, Too Short, the Geto Boys and others are the "organic intellectuals" of the inner-city black poor, documenting as they do their generally hidden conditions and lifestyle choices."* Swedenburg (in: Forman & Neal, 2004, p. 582) states that *"rappers still adhere strongly to a notion of the community and relate to it as "organic intellectuals."* Kaya (2001, p. 180 ff.) in his otherwise excellent book on Turkish Rap groups/youth collectives from Berlin constructs Cartel, Islamic Force, and other Rap groups as organic intellectuals, with no clear reference to their organizing element (even though he talks of a subculture developing into a counterculture). These are only some examples, and most of them do not take into account Gramsci's original meaning of the organic intellectual as an active organizer. My point is consistent with Crehan's (2002) critique that most cultural analysts strip Gramsci of his Marxist/class analysis.

It could be argued with Gramsci that many mainstream and gangsta rappers do not represent not their own class fraction in an organic way, but rather often act in the interests of the ruling class. They do so by perpetuating the myths of the American dream and what Tricia Rose (2008) calls the "trinity of the gangsta, pimp, ho", i.e. one-dimensional depictions of Black lives.

In this strict sense, the term applies mostly to the rappers and founders of the Y'en a Marre movement, but also to some of New York's practitioners who engage in movement organizing, such as MC/DJ Spiritchild, as well as some of the El Puente staff, or Rebel Diaz, who have done political organizing at their cultural centers. I argue that the other activists, who are mostly active in the scene and in classrooms, should rather be seen as organic pedagogues. To introduce this differentiation is not to create a normative hierarchy but rather to really grasp what it is that either group does. This is also in line with Gramsci himself, who called for further analytical distinction among the intellectuals of various groups, be they organic, or traditional.[293]

Just to be clear, one individual can be an organic intellectual and an organic pedagogue at the same time[294], such as the director of cultural center G Hip Hop and early member of the Y'en a Marre movement Fou Malade. Fou Malade is a political and cultural organizer and teaches the craft of MCing / rapping with a social justice agenda. Before explaining the organic pedagogue as such, it is necessary to explain what "organic" means when looking at Hip Hop culture. I will propose two additions to Gramsci's reading of organicity in the following.

Gramsci (2000, p.201) distinguishes *"organic movements (relatively permanent) from movements which may be termed 'conjunctural' (and which appear as occasional, immediate, almost accidental)."* Ege (2021) further explains that the "organic" socio-economic developments lead to epochal structures, such as capitalist modes of production, heteronormativity or coloniality and are different from the intermediary level of

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[293] Gramsci (2000: 304) who sees intellectuals as the functionaries of the various superstructures posits that "all men are intellectuals […] but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals." He calls for further research and differentiation of the different subtypes, which he himself does analyze for traditional intellectuals of the Italian ecclesiastics of the catholic church, who organized the masses for the hegemony of the landed aristocracy via a "*monopoly of a number of important services: religious ideology, that is the philosophy and science of the age, together with schools, education, morality, justice, charity, good works, etc.*" (ibid: 302). Gramsci (ibid: 306) calls for further research as follows: *"It should be possible both to measure the degree of 'organicism' of the various intellectual strata and their degree of connection with a fundamental social group, and to establish a gradation of their functions and of the superstructures from the bottom to the top (from the structural base upwards)."*

[294] Following Gramscian analysis, organic intellectuals have to fulfill pedagogical functions by definition as well, since for him any political relationship is also a pedagogical one. Ideally, the organic intellectuals of the working class should expand their base. In his historical analysis of ecclesiastic intellectuals organically bound to the ruling classes of the landed aristocracy, Gramsci (cf. 2000, p. 302ff.) counts school and education as some of the realms of their activities. However, when referencing subaltern classes, he always mentions the need to organize to qualify as an organic intellectual. His conception of the education of the subaltern classes to become organic intellectuals and possibly rule, has to be seen in light of his own educational activism via the newspaper the "new order" and the institute of proletarian culture, i.e. a cultural education for adult workers (cf. Apitzsch in: Castro Varela et al 2023, p. 151 ff.). For Gramsci the goal was always to create a new culture as well as organizing the cultural hegemony of the subaltern classes by educating and organizing them through both the party and a reformed school (cf. Gramsci 2000, p. 300ff.) For many more general questions about Gramsci and education cf. the excellent anthology (in German) by Castro Varela et al (2023).

conjunctures.[295] In Gramsci's understanding, new social classes arise out of these larger "organic" – mostly economic – developments and bring forth their organic intellectuals in order to oppose the traditional intellectuals of the dominant societal structures. The organic intellectual can initiate shifts in power and contribute strongly to transforming or revolutionizing society. From my point of view, being organic Hip Hop intellectuals or pedagogues in this historical sense would thus mean representing the interests of the Black underclasses in deindustrialized American ghettos whose members – two generations ago – initiated the cultural practices and are continuing to develop these further. I argue that looking at Hip Hop culture today, two additions to this understanding of organicity are necessary: one of anti-racist class solidarity and one of practice.[296]

Firstly, Hip Hop like many other subcultural communities of practice (cf. Wenger, 1998) has expanded beyond its original class and ethnic origin and its art forms are now practiced by many non-Black practitioners all around the globe from various class positions and also by Black practitioners from upper classes. It carries elements of an imagined community (cf. Fogarty, 2012a; Forman, 2000; Forman & Neal, 2004; G. Klein & Friedrich, 2003), or at times of an imagined movement.[297] The latter implies a larger intercultural coalition, which is imagined with a political impetus striving for intersectional social justice more broadly than just for the Black American underclasses. Since Hip Hop's mythologized origin story is so central to this imagined movement, it must, however, always include the racialized communities who created the culture. I thus argue that Hip Hop organicity in the class sense can also be achieved by people from different ethnic and class positions who act in solidarity with the poorest racialized minorities who developed Hip Hop culture. Thus, also white, Jewish rapper/DJ/beatboxer Rabbi Darkside or MC and all-round musician of color Y? can be organic Hip Hop pedagogues, as long as they reflect

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[295] These conjunctural settlements between ruling and subordinated classes are relatively short and rely on hegemony, i.e., coercion and consent. Examples would be Thatcherism, or more recent political, economic, and cultural varieties of neoliberalism, including violent and legal repression of labor unions. Both organic and conjunctural contexts determine the immediate situation on the ground and in everyday social realities.

[296] Mecheril and Rangger (in: Castro Varela et al 2023, p. 251 ff.) introduce the figure of the "intellectual teacher of migration society", whereas these teachers are no longer tied to a specific ethnic/class fraction, as long as they help deconstruct the natio-ethno-cultural in and out groups. Such intellectual teachers should in their view counter the impact of schools in normalizing such national identities and deconstructing modern forms of racializing hierarchies. I discovered their figure of the intellectual teacher only after developing the concept of Hip Hop's organic pedagogues and handing in my thesis in January 2023. Their conceptual innovation is related but also not too close to mine, since it is not about a (sub)cultural practice and less about mounting a counterhegemonic project as such than about deconstructing current forms of racialized hierarchies.

[297] This social justice aspect is also expanded when looking at Hip Hop's "glocal" nature (cf. Alim et al., 2008; Alim & Pennycook, 2007; G. Klein & Friedrich, 2003). Today, HHC is a globally connected network of practitioners deeply committed to their local realities. Thus, it concerns other minorities and poor people who might be oppressed and exploited intersectionally rather than in just a racialized manner

on Hip Hop's origin story, derive a position of ethnic and class-solidarity from it, and translate these convictions into teaching practice. At the same time, the reintegration of formerly incarcerated young men at Africulturban's YUMA (cf. 5.4.3) or at cultural center G Hip Hop are also part of Hip Hop organicity in terms of an (imagined) movement striving for social justice. The intersectional component of social justice would thus also include the female-focused education and organizing happening through Africulturban's Urban Woman Week organized by Ina Thiam (7.1, 7.4.2), and at the all-female federation "Genji Hip Hop" in Senegal (7.4.3).

As a second addition to ethnic/class position, I argue that to be a Hip Hop organic pedagogue or intellectual, one must also be part of the community of practice. Only as a practitioner can one fully understand the inherent logics, norms, spaces, and relationships to be used either in movement organizing or in social justice Hip Hop teaching. Hip Hop's organic pedagogues are thus practitioner-facilitators who engage mostly in pedagogic relationships of learning and mentoring rather than building protest movements and counterhegemonic projects. They take Hip Hop's specific practices (such as flipping, freestyling, battling etc.), spaces (such as the cypher), and relationships (such as mentor-mentees, battle-rivalry or even crews) and introduce them into the classroom. The teaching artists, such as b-boy Seska, and Hip Hop dancer Pi, MC Matador, or DJs Gasga and Geebayss from Senegal, as well as b-boy Waaak One, MCs Rabbi Darkside, Y? and all of the dancers at Urban Artistry clearly fulfill this role of organic pedagogues as described in chapters 5 and 6. To be a true organic Hip Hop pedagogue, there has to be some social justice component to the teaching in relation to Hip Hop's class and ethnic positions of origin. This is illustrated in the many varieties of social justice curricula described above and in the political final presentations.

Before moving on to the gendered nature of the field and to Hip Hop's political/movement organizing, let us look at a different form of organizing first, which is essential for the scene.

9.3 Cultural Organizers, their Hip Hop Organizations, and the Scene

Besides HHC's organic intellectuals and pedagogues, there are also the cultural organizers, i.e., people who build Hip Hop non-profit organizations and have an interest in maintaining the community of practice. Sometimes, they are (former) practitioners, such as Amadou Fall Ba, Matador, and Omar of cultural hub Africulturban, or James Kim, founder of the educational service provider BEAT Global, or Junious Brickhouse, founder of the dance organization Urban Artistry. Fou Malade, president of the cultural center G Hip Hop, Farbeon and Sam Sellers of the Hip Hop Re:education center, and Docta of the style writing-crew/organization Doxandem Squad fall into the same category. Sometimes, however, these cultural organizers are not (former) Hip Hop practitioners, but supporters and people who

hold the cultural practices very dear, such as Rosa Bettina of Urban Art Beat, Ina Thiam of Africulturban, Maman Faye of the federation Wemanagement, Dakar's dance event organizer Gacirah Diagne, and head of the neighborhood-based cultural center El Puente, Frances Lucerna (the latter two have both danced contemporary and more traditional dance styles from West Africa or from the – partly Afrodiasporic – Latinx communities). I argue that by organizing Hip Hop events, those who do not practice a Hip Hop art form themselves can still become part of HHC's community of practice – even though they are not "organic" in the sense of having experienced the culture from the inside through artistic practice. As organizers of spaces and events they nevertheless fulfill an essential role for the maintenance and professionalization of the Hip Hop crafts and build communities and social ties among the practitioners. Wenger-Trayner et al (1998; 2014) state that also journalists, researchers, etc. can become part of a community of practice once they contribute and engage in the regular exchanges. However, within this field, these Hip Hop cultural organizers have to "do their homework" and deeply engage with Hip Hop's inherent cultural logics. They must study its history and its aesthetics to become part of its communities of practice in order to become accepted, which is not always a given, since the practitioner vs. non-practitioner divide is quite large in Hip Hop and represents one of the main axes of legitimacy.

Whether insider or outsider, I maintain that the actual practices, events, and modes of being together, which these organizers enable, are more important. As stated before, Ortner (2008) sees an individual's ability to resist power and gain agency as deeply rooted in her social relations in larger society. These relations for her take two different forms: *"1. solidarity: family, friends, kin …, teachers, allies, and so forth […] and 2. power, inequality, and competition."*(Ortner, 2008, p. 130) This raises the question what kinds of relations the cultural organizers, their events and formats ultimately foster. Inside the classroom, it is almost exclusively cooperative relations but what are the dominant modes of being together in the various Hip Hop cultural scenes?

Hip Hop Events and their Effects

Chapter 7 analyzed the various types of events the cultural organizers and practitioners typically host. Simply put, they can either foster relations of solidarity or of competition and it is most often both at the same time. The first large type of event organized is that of the festival through which cultural organizers unite the practitioners present at their cultural centers or of the different scenes. Thereby, they play a vital role in maintaining Hip Hop's cultural understanding by bringing dancers, MCs, DJs and style writers together who then reinstate the "imagined community" in a more collaborative setting (cf. Anderson, 2016; Forman & Neal, 2004, p. 5 ff.). Festivals are necessary for Hip Hop culture's face-to-face practices and for what cultural organizer Amadou Fall Ba from Dakar calls its "functioning ecosystem." Such an ecosystem is based on social capital, i.e., social relations between the

different scenes, actors, and organizations and needs to be maintained via Hip Hop cultural events (cf. 7.1).

Battles are a competitive counterpart to the more collaborative festivals (there are also mixed event types, and battles can be part of festivals). The various types of battles further raise the artistic level by working as motivating instances, where practitioners put their styles to the test. The titles won function as an equivalent to institutionalized cultural capital of Hip Hop practices and serve to legitimize the work of the Hip Hop non-profits that lack more formalized titles/degrees of Hip Hop education. These battle victories are, however, not fully recognized by the state and "high cultural" institutions. Nevertheless, such titles enable practitioners to build careers and gain public legitimacy. Cultural organizers also fulfill a pedagogic function by employing different battle formats to educate the practitioners towards various aspects, such as improvisational techniques, collaboration. or cypher etiquette. Other events, such as the Battle of the Year can give incentives towards forming crews and creating showcases in Breaking. However, the chances are not equal for all participants and depend on national specifics and global migration regimes. Senegalese b-boys, for example, after winning their national qualifiers, cannot always make it to the world championship due to visa issues and a lack of institutional recognition of these events. Through their events, the cultural organizers also establish normative orders by emphasizing either innovation, foundation, aesthetic traditions, solidarity, political orientations, or fierce competition. In practice, the events always bring forth a combination of those Hip Hop values (cf. 7.1.2 / 7.1.3).

The events as well as the orientations are often subject to critique from within HHC's communities of practice. Dancer and aerosol artist Waaak One from New York City questions the balance in the breaking scene, where - instead of cypher events - large-scale commercial competitions are the norm: "*what's happening in these competitions where people are being proclaimed 'They're the best'. Why? so that they can be branded, branded, sold, so money could be made off of them. […] Because they got a lot of YouTube views or they got a lot of Instagram followers, you know […] it's another form of exploitation.*" The antidote against this imbalance for him lies in more collaborative formats, such as cypher jams, which also contain competitive elements but not necessarily a declared winner (cf. 7.1.4). Such less-marketable and more "underground" cypher events are rarer today than during previous decades. These more collaborative formats can, in some instances, introduce a level of playfulness and solidarity and thereby counterbalance HHC's competitive aspects, which are highly compatible with capitalism. Other cultural organizers with social movement ties host political Rap battles, such as the Y'en a Marre movement's "Citizen Mic" in Dakar or political community-events such as Urban Art Beat's "Communiversities", or El Puente's "Three Kings" theater performances in New York City (cf. 7.1.4).

Open Spaces/Mentoring

Besides events, the cultural organizers also provide the open spaces necessary to allow for Hip Hop culture's peer-to-peer processes of collective and autodidactic learning and mentoring outside of classrooms (cf. 7.2). In some spaces, as in Dakar's cultural center Blaise Senghor, the set-up and Kaay Fecc's cultural organizers encourage interdisciplinary stylistic developments in dance, leading to such fusion-phenomena as "Afropop" (cf. 7.2.2). However, in contrast to classrooms, where the learners are already there, such open spaces and neighborhood-based cultural centers also have to be filled with people. People are often invited through local community interventions, such as neighborhood clean-ups, urban gardening, social services, etc. which mainly the more political organizers employ. At the same time, such spaces are under constant threat of eviction due to gentrification and funding, or even political repression, which raises the question of ownership of these spaces.

The practitioners also use such open spaces to initiate Hip Hop's long-term mentoring relationships. Together with their mentees, they work on stylistic developments, plan out careers and develop the above-mentioned ties of solidarity in the partly oral cultural practices (cf. 7.3). Next to individual responsibilities, such mentoring often relates to questions of cultural responsibility. In the case of Urban Artistry, the practitioners also learn how to document and archive various Afro-diasporic practices of music and dance and keep these aesthetic traditions alive (cf. 7.3.1). For Senegalese dancer Pi, it was the mentorship of the late Viera, which introduced him to "Afropop", including *"taking root"* through traditional Senegalese dance styles, as well as *"opening up to the world"* through various other movement disciplines "to become universal" (cf. 7.3.2).

The goals of professionalization play a central role for all three types of actors. Hip Hop's organic pedagogues, the cultural organizers, and Hip Hop's organic intellectuals all – as Rebel Diaz put it for their local participants – *"gotta eat"*. One of the field's downsides is that relatively short and repetitive funding cycles place the various HH activists and their organizations as rivals competing for the same limited resources and recognition in the scene and beyond. Often there are no pension plans, no long-term financial, and job securities, and activists have recurrently reported the danger of burning out.

Thus, financial strategies to earn a living from one's artistic practice are often part of the mentoring process. The cultural organizers host workshops on optimizing artistic marketing or grant-writing. They sometimes share resources and make efforts to organize and "federate" the scene. The resulting Hip Hop federations often have a representational function when dealing with state institutions, or non-governmental bodies, such as the International Olympic committee in the case of breaking. They also serve as financial and structuring facilities for the scene and work towards professionalization and recognition of the practices to gain more resources. In addition to these outside functions, they also have internal modes of learning and organizing for the communities of practice (cf. 7.4). In some cases,

they focus on individual and collective empowerment, such as for the female federation of "Genji Hip Hop", which brings together female practitioners and activists in Senegalese Hip Hop. It acts as a safe space and furthers relations of solidarity among a minority position within a male-dominated field.

9.4 (Male) Hip Hop Authority, Gender, and Abuse

The whole field of global Hip Hop culture is still largely male-dominated in sheer numbers: cis-gendered men are the vast majority of practitioners, and gatekeepers. The recognized pioneers, and the people who define the culture's history, are usually men and tend to tell the story as one of male accomplishments. Fromm's (1947) distinction between rational and irrational authority can help clarify these hierarchies. Fromm bases rational authority *"upon the equality of both authority and subject, which differs only with respect to the degree of knowledge or skill in a particular field. Irrational authority is by its very nature based upon inequality"* (Fromm, 1947, p. 9f.). A lot of the authority in Hip Hop comes with cultural accomplishments, stylistic innovation, skills, and historic achievements and thus carries rational elements. However, it is often accorded collectively and based on societal hierarchies. In many cases, female accomplishments have less visibility and white appropriations are valued above the originally Black practice. With his practitioner-research, Serouj "b-boy Midus" Aprahamian, for example, uncovers the history of both female and Black contributions and their founding roles within the dance form of breaking (cf. Aprahamian, 2020, 2021). The dance's history had been misrepresented by both commercial mass media and Hip Hop scholarship, foregrounding more light-skinned Puerto Rican b-boys of the second generation. Many of these practitioners neither acknowledged their own African ancestry nor the founding role of Black b-boys and b-girls. Thus, even HHC authority often carries irrational characteristics and primarily rests with men. The "rational", i.e. skill-based aspects of this authority on the one hand enable the above-mentioned mentoring processes. On the other hand, the irrational aspects of Hip Hop authority often tie in with an idolization as well as with machismo and heterosexism. All of these factors can enable sexual abuse, as described about a breaking teacher and various rappers in chapter 7.3.3. Bambaataa's cases of abuse were enabled by the same male authority since many of the victims did not dare to speak out against one of Hip Hop's "godfathers". Further examples are the cases of attempted "blackmailing" described by the members of the female federation "Genji Hip Hop" (cf. 7.4.3), or b-boy pioneer Crazy Legs' messages pressuring young b-girls to engage in sexual activities with him. As in many realms of society, male gatekeepers use their power and authority to abuse others. However, such discrimination and harassment does not only target women or, in the case of Bambaataa, younger boys.

   Hip Hop's masculine dominance equally concerns the more political and teaching projects of the Hip Hop non-profit realms. The fact that the vast majority of

the teaching artists, practitioners and organizers I have met during my fieldwork are male is quite telling. This thesis' selection of interviewees is a testament to this dominance.[298] However, some actors in the field are actively working against this male dominance. Ina Thiam, the organizer of the Urban Woman Week in Dakar as well as the Senegalese all-female Hip Hop federation "Genji Hip Hop" (cf. 7.1 & 7.4) dedicate festivals, spaces and workshops to female practitioners. Urban Art Beat's "Hip Hop HerStory" curriculum addresses female contributions to HHC and systemic inequalities, while teaching teenage girls MCing and spoken word poetry (cf. 5.2.1 & 6.4.1). Women in Europe have started Hip Hop #metoo movements (cf. 7.3.3).

In Senegal and the US, such projects receive funding and so-called "development aid" by Western foundations and states. Many of these funders do not take into account class/economic exploitation but focus on liberal feminism, antiracism and diversity. While this orientation stands in the way of more radical approaches, it can bring more gender equality to the realms of Hip Hop culture and create spaces for self-organization, self-representation and counter toxic masculinity. To really counter the injustices, however, a broader and systemic transformational approach would have to be chosen. Capitalism has historically produced gender-based, racialized, and national divisions among working class people and continually recreates such horizontal divides that cover up vaster vertical class inequalities (cf. Fraser, 2016).

Hip Hop's Homophobia and LGBTIQA+ Perspectives

As in other societal spheres, queerphobic views persist in Hip Hop culture and particularly in mainstream rap, as LGBTIQA+ are often marginalized or met with outright hostility. Hip Hop scholar and political activist/journalist Marc Lamont-Hill (2009b, p. 34) states that *"all forms of popular music are pervasively heteronormative"*, however, *"explicitly homophobic discourses are lyrically overrepresented within hip-hop culture"*. He names various incidents how practices of outing allegedly gay, queer, or bisexual rappers, or even just rumors of their homosexual orientation, can end careers and curb sales.[299] According to Hill (2009b, p. 30 f.), *"the threat of outing […] has facilitated the development of a 'don't ask, don't tell' climate within hip-hop culture. Within this atmosphere, the queer hip-hopper is forced to remain in the closet."* This is also related to the artistic

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[298] I tried to work against this bias by explicitly asking women for interviews, which further confirms the field's imbalance. Had I not corrected for female quotas, there would have been even fewer female voices in this book.

[299] He names the examples of rappers Big Daddy Kane and Ja Rule, who had been publicly "accused" of sleeping with men by competing homophobic rappers and Hip Hop media. Their commercial careers never recovered.

practice as rappers often assert their competitive dominance over adversaries via pathways of toxic masculinity and queerphobia.[300]

All of this is common knowledge and a partly true cliché about Hip Hop in its more commercial varieties. However, homophobic mechanisms also prevail in some of the more underground and practitioner spheres of Hip Hop culture. Heteronormativity, patriarchal violence, and queerphobia prevail in almost all spheres of society and underground HHC is no exclusion. There are long-term rumors and insider stories that some b-boy pioneers are gay, but for them, coming out of the closet would mean closing a lot of career doors. Judging from both my field research, as well as my 26 years of experience as a practitioner, I can say that large parts of the global breaking scene are quite homophobic and many would not hire an openly gay breaker for judging or teaching gigs. In the US, there has been recent movement with some breakers coming out of the closet.[301] This heteronormative dominance is confirmed for the larger field of HH projects by the fact that there are some female perspectives, but no openly LGBTIQA+ voices in this thesis.

Had I dug further and explicitly looked for those voices, I probably would have found some in the US. In Senegal, this would not have been possible, however, since the question of non-heteronormative orientations and identities is at a far more precarious level culturally and legally, which has historical reasons. Buckle (2020 para. 5) points out how *"prior to European colonisation, throughout the African continent we see far different, more relaxed attitudes towards sexual orientation and gender identity."* The activist argues that the binary heteronormative standards were imported mostly by Western colonizers with Christian religions and their respective legal codes.[302] While in many former African colonies, the imported Christianity has brought about violence and persecution for LGBTIQA+ people, in Senegal it is also reinforced by Islam, which served as an anticolonial force before and during the struggle for independence (cf. e.g. C. M. Appert, 2018). Irrespective of its hospitality, its peaceful postcolonial history and its religious tolerance, Senegal in some respects remains a culturally conservative and religious country, where homophobic prejudices are very common. In 2013, 96% of Senegalese opposed accepting homosexuality (cf. Pew Research Center, 2013). Same-sex sex is forbidden, and it is mostly

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[300] In a rap battle, questioning the opponent's heterosexual orientation or masculinity are the regular "low blows" to be dealt and dominating the opponent is usually pursued via performed masculinity – but not necessarily, as one can also outwit the opponent, by using self-deprecating humor, or by being more technically skilled.

[301] B-boy Dosu from Peru won a few important competitions as an openly gay man, b-boy pioneer Wicket came out at the age of 40 (attributing his late coming out to the lack of role models in breaking), and many lesbian and gender-fluid breakers talk openly about their orientations (cf. Glass, 2022; Jackson, 2021; Street, 2021).

[302] Buckle (2020 para 4f.) further argues that LGBTIQA+ rights are worse overall in former colonies of the commonwealth than in those of the French empire, which abolished its "anti-sodomy laws" after the revolution in 1791, whereas they were only abolished in Britain in 1967. This is not the case for majority-Islamic Senegal.

gay men that are legally pursued for this on the grounds of what the judicial system calls *"acts against nature".* Many religious and political authorities as well as Hip Hop actors condemn what they see as the *"dangers of homosexuality"* being imported from the West.

As described in chapter 3.4, Senegalese journalist and rap-fan Hamidou Anne remarked during a panel how a lot of the lyrics of Senegalese rap from the 1990s were homophobic and misogynist. Cultural organizer Amadou Fall Ba responded that *"we say that Senegalese rappers are homophobic, but Senegalese rappers didn't invent anything. They follow just the majority of Senegalese people where it suits them. If not being homophobic would suit them better, I'm sure they wouldn't be."*[303] Opportunist or not, I encountered quite some homophobia in and around Senegal's Hip Hop circles (even though the topic did not come up with every interaction). Such views were also shared by some activists who were very engaged in other realms of social justice.[304] I witnessed how a political Hip Hop activist (who plays no larger role in this thesis) outed homosexual men on Facebook with nude pictures and called for judicial measures. Sometimes, activists would explain to me how they simply held different views than Westerners concerning these questions. Others were angry after a performance of a Senegalese Hip Hop dancer who performed a dance piece wearing a dress paying homage to his grandmother. When OXFAM's new country director publicly introduced a pro LGBTIQA+ approach, some of the country's Hip Hop activists broke ties with the organization, even though it had financed many of their projects before. Contradicting OXFAM's approach of external intervention, Buckle (2020 para 12 f.) states that *"African homophobia is a tricky mix of anti-neo-colonialism, politics, and religion. […] Enforcing top-down change from the West would do little to change the attitudes […]; this is a struggle that must be led by local LGBT communities who know best what they need and how to fight for it."*

While this is certainly true, I would add that in global HHC, which strongly relies on pioneering authorities (mostly male), change can also come from its global communities of practice and their authorities. Senegalese b-boy Seska told me that he had left his prejudices behind after taking classes with heterosexual Vogueing dancer Archie Burnett, who had explained how he had been accepted in New York's gay and queer voguing and ballroom communities: *"I understood that there is no problem with it at all […] now, whenever I want to shock people, when we're outside, I just mix in a little bit of vogueing"*, Seska explained laughingly while striking a few voguing poses. Another instance of such a cultural intervention happened during a post-workshop

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[303] He continued to explain how for many rappers the same opportunism led to them rapping positively about certain religious leaders, since this gave them an instant base of fans to whom they could sell their music.

[304] Besides Senegalese homophobia, some US-Afrocentric rap influences might also play a role. Lamont-Hill (2009b, p. 32 f.) describes how *"the progressive agendas of political rap artists such as Public Enemy, X-Clan, Paris, and Sista Souljah were strongly informed by radical Afrocentric, Black Islamic, and crude Black Nationalist ideologies that were openly hostile to queer identities. As a result of these positions, homosexuality was viewed as a consequence of spiritual malevolence, political conspiracy, or European hegemony."*

Q&A by New York house dancer Amy Sekada, organized in Dakar by b-boy Seska. I had asked the instructor about stories I had heard about early breakers and Hip Hop pioneers going to dance in gay clubs in New York because the music was better. She confirmed this and made a short pro-tolerance statement via the dance.[305] Similarly, dancer and organizer Amigo from Berlin has countered homophobic tendencies in Germany's street dance battle scene by integrating queer ballroom culture in his large Hip Hop dance festival "Funkin' Stylez". From my point of view, it is more effective to encourage emancipatory perspectives coming from inside a cultural community, such as the Hip Hop or dance communities, than to enforce it from the outside. It is thus the task of Hip Hop practitioners, organic pedagogues, intellectuals, and organizers to counter the culture's toxic masculinity and queer-/homophobia.

A good example of how such things can happen via Hip Hop authority, is the small shift which has taken place in the music industry during the last decade. Rapper Frank Ocean outed himself as bisexual and gay Lil Nas X combined two of the most homophobic music genres of country and rap to a large commercial success. Whereas early proponents of the sub-genre (half-ironically termed) "Homo Hop" such as the "DeepDickollective" were mostly known in LGBTIQA+ spheres, rap-superstars like Jay Z and Kanye West made statements against homophobia in the wake of Obama's support of gay marriage.[306] HHC's practitioner spheres should follow this (conjunctural) shift and do "our" homework to make the culture the liberating force it claims to be – especially since the religious right is working actively in the opposite direction. Apart from such negotiations of equality and gender, the field of Hip Hop non-profits is marked by various grander political questions. Before getting into these, let us first recap the different organizational types.

9.5 Building Hip Hop Organizations and "Winning Space"

In chapter 4, we have seen how the different organizational types of Hip Hop non-profits allow for certain practices and make others less likely. The four types I have identified are (1) the neighborhood-based cultural center/hub, (2) the educational service provider, (3) the one-element based organization for professionalization and (4) the federation.[307] Each of these organizational types enable different projects,

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[305] While there still is some hierarchy at play with a white US dancer speaking from a position of Western cultural hegemony, this is also more of a pedagogic approach to political change on an eye-to-eye level.

[306] Kuperstein (2012) welcomes these developments but points out that some of these rappers' decisions might be sales-motivated since LGBTIQA+ make up between 5–10% of US consumers.

[307] This list is not exhaustive and there are further organizations, such as Hip Hop archives, museums, etc. However, these did not constitute the focus of my thesis and remain to be investigated in future research.

relationships and practices. They differ according to their spaces, institutional access, and demographic as well as project focus.

The neighborhood-based cultural center/hub with its own open space centered in the neighborhood can not only bring together all of Hip Hop's elements under one roof, but also various parts of the local population and their projects. El Puente in Brooklyn, the Rebel Diaz Arts Collective in the Bronx, Africulturban and G Hip Hop in Dakar's Banlieues Pikine and Guediaways all provide(d) spaces for local dancers, DJs, MCs and style writers. At the same time, El Puente also founded its own accredited high schools and is able to combine both official state education with a more caring and informal approach in their after-school and neighborhood activities. This combination and their integration of cultural practices of and beyond HHC lead to their exceptionally high graduation rates in the formerly poor neighborhood of Williamsburg (cf. Westheimer, 2007, p. 184, chapter 4.1.3). At the same time, it also leads to them producing young and accomplished artists of Hip Hop and other disciplines. Africulturban has been able to produce its own "ecosystem" of social reinsertion programs, artistic support and professionalization of all HH elements and especially its own infrastructure for producing, performing and distributing Rap music (cf. 4.1.1). Similarly, G Hip Hop combines urban gardening, local neighborhood clean-ups, civil society initiatives, various educational formats and regular cyphers and exchanges in all HH elements in their space. The RDAC has also provided a space for local neighborhood groups and young and older generations of New York Hip Hop practitioners, while also launching political education formats and campaigns. With such spaces come up and downsides. They enable long-term and intergenerational relationships of Hip Hop learning, building social capital and neighborhood ties, and breaking social isolation. It allows the combination of classroom and scene-based Hip Hop learning, event-hosting, and workshops. At the same time, the space demands a lot of maintenance, funding and legal knowledge - depending on the ownership status. The organizers here also have to constantly mobilize and invite people into their programs.

The second type of the educational service providers usually does not have its own space and instead mostly accesses the populations of other hosting institutions such as schools, prisons, or public libraries. This enables this Hip Hop non-profit to spend less time on the recruitment of learners and they can be smaller and more flexible than a neighborhood center. Bringing Hip Hop education into classrooms of standardized school learning, the educational service-provider is able to counter the "banking model of education" (cf. Freire, 2000), with more liberatory, dialogical and fun approaches. With their smaller administrative costs, they are sometimes able to pay better hourly rates for the Hip Hop pedagogues, as is the case with BEATGlobal (cf. 4.2.1). As we could see with Urban Art Beat, an organization's political orientation often depends on individual pedagogues; Y? had focused more on cultural openness, while Spiritchild had helped morph it into a social justice organization teaching in prisons and alongside social movements (cf. 4.2.2). These organizations usually focus less on scene involvement and events and more on

classrooms. However, the organic pedagogues often emulate scene-formats of HH learning in these classrooms with the goal to bring the learners from the institutions into the scenes and transform them into full practitioners. As discussed in chapter 4, the organizers usually find various institutional solutions to the limited time-frames of semesters by cooperating with other (hosting) organizations.

The third type of the one-element-based organization for professionalization is somewhat the opposite of the educational service providers, since it focuses mostly on people who are already part of the community of practice. These organizations sometimes have a space and usually work within one of HHC's elements – such as dance, DJing, or style writing. They mostly enable scene-based learning by providing the spaces and events for the cultural practice. At the same time, they also help professionalize the actors by organizing workshops and masterclasses in the artistic craft for one thing. At the same time, they also work towards professionalization in respect to income, as they try and provide trainings and opportunities to make money by organizing shows, paid teaching or helping explain grant-writing and self-marketing. They frequently organize festivals, competitions and exchanges focused around their respective HH element as well as more long-term commitments of mentoring. Kaay Fecc not only organizes the national qualifier for the international Battle of the Year but also the winner's journey to Europe. In addition, they host their own dance theater festivals and encourage interdisciplinary learning (4.3.1 & 7.1.2). Urban Artistry is more akin to a crew structure and runs a plethora of activities around their own dance studio. They not only focus on teaching and learning various dance styles but they also have an innovative mentorship model as the base of their organization, and they host different events (4.3.2 & 7.3.1). The typical problems of this organization are often due to the artistic and personal divisions in the field of their art form.

The fourth type of the federation constitutes only a minor focus of this thesis, as it fulfills often more bureaucratic and representational functions than the other HH non-profits. Nevertheless, the federations can also host educational formats of both scene and classroom-based varieties. Federating a scene, this organizational type often pursues the internal goals of more exchange and professionalization among the practitioners. Externally they often take on representational functions for better recognition of the "street" cultural practices by state or non-state institutions and actors. These federations often function at the national level and can focus either on one particular element, such as breaking for the UDEF (7.4.5) or slam poetry for Africulturban's league of slam and the "carrefour poetique" (7.1.2.). They can also be focused on a particular identity or role present in various HH elements, such as the female federation "Genji Hip Hop" (7.4.3) or the HHC-management organization "wemanagement" (7.4.4).

The field of Hip Hop organizations is globally interconnected, and many practitioners travel the globe, visit other HH non-profits and cultural centers and try to recreate and adapt these inspirations to their localities. Just as skills and styles, cultural organizers also take up and "flip" organizational models. As some practitioners

from austerity-ridden Senegal and the USA witnessed well-funded organizational landscapes and events in Europe and Asia with access to sizeable state budgets, they tried to import these models. At home, however, they often faced different structural realities and adapted mostly to a context of non-profit funding and grant-writing to build their own or enter other institutions.

To better understand the accomplishments of building such organizations, I propose Hall et al.'s (1991, p. 41f.) analysis of post-WWII cultural struggles in the UK/US. The authors state that

> *"institutional solutions […] structure how the dominant and subordinate cultures coexist, survive, but also struggle, with one another inside the same social formation. […] working class culture has consistently 'won space' from the dominant culture. Many working-class institutions represent the different outcomes of this intense kind of 'negotiation' over long periods. At times, these institutions are adaptive; at other times, combative. Their class identity and position is never finally 'settled.'"*

In a similar vein, the sub-cultural Hip Hop non-profits can be seen as space "won" from the state, dominant institutions of education, and so-called "high culture." Lower-class, Afrodiasporic cultural formats that were previously frowned upon are now practiced in schools, universities, and prestigious theaters. Many of these spaces in the US had only been desegregated a few decades earlier and still adhere to Eurocentric and racist hierarchies of "high vs. low" culture. In Senegal, similarly, the institutions of prestige either held a privileged position for European "high" art or for traditional Senegalese culture. Hip Hop practitioners' entering these institutions is an impressive achievement in the struggle for cultural recognition, social positions, and resources. The building of the various Hip Hop non-profit organizations proves the organizers' determination and their belief in their culture and its potential for social change. It is both an individual and a collective success in terms of building structures and spaces for Hip Hop's communities of practice. For the organic pedagogues and organizers to enter public schools, universities and found their own schools, as in the case of El Puente, shows and proves their institutional, bureaucratic, and street smarts.

9.6 Hegemonic Boundaries and NGOization: Who Owns the Means of Cultural Production?

While the Hip Hop non-profits might win space from the state, their political position is, however, "*never finally 'settled,'*" and this "victory" also comes at a price: there are new dependencies and influences. These range from the hosting institutions, such as schools, prisons, or universities and their gatekeepers, to the funders of these projects, who also have their own agendas. These influences set the boundaries within which HH education and activism can take place. As discussed in chapters 4 and 8, social movements, on the other hand, expand these boundaries to

social justice teaching and more radical activism. Similar to the class analysis of cultural relations mentioned above, I argue that one of the most important questions to ask for Hip Hop here is: *Who owns the means of cultural production?* In a traditional Marxist understanding, ownership translates into control. Seen from this perspective, those who own the means of Hip Hop's cultural production also control its ideological messages and political direction. For the mainstream rap industry, the answer is quite clear, as Chang (2006, p. 443) documents how in the early 2000s five large monopoly media corporations controlled 80% of the music industry through their record labels, music video channels, radio stations, and distributing and marketing structures. Almost 20 years ago, Brooklynite MC Mos Def gave this a different ring:

> *"Old white men, is running this rap shit / Corporate forces is running this rap shit / […] Hey lil soldiers you ready for war? / But don't ask what you're fighting for, […] / You get in the line of fire, we get the big ass checks / You getting your choice of pimp / […] MTV, is running this rap shit / Viacom is running this rap shit / AOL and Time Warner running this rap shit / We poke out our asses for a chance to cash in"* (Mos Def. *"The Rape Over"* The New Danger. Rawkus. 2004. CD).

For Mos Def, the situation is one of forced domination and selling out, or, as the title of the song suggests, one of a *"Rape Over"*[308]. Ownership here translates into (corporate) control over the messages of the rap industry. The dominant tales are often of the drug dealer and the individualizing hustle and grind variety and support the American dream's myth of social mobility.[309] These ideological underpinnings are beneficial to racialized, patriarchal capitalism and serve the prison-industrial complex (cf. Nielson & Dennis, 2019). At the same time, such individualized success stories hinder collective perspectives and class-based responses of organizing and transforming society(cf. McAlevey, 2016).[310] In Ortner's terms (2008, p. 152) the rap industry's *"cultural games"* mostly reproduce the system's *"ideological underpinnings."*[311] At times, they transform these underpinnings, often under the pressure of

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[308] Mos Def flips the title and song of Jay-Z's "The Take Over" to show how rappers claiming to be in control of the rap industry are under corporate control instead.

[309] Rap's celebration of highly exceptional 'from rags to riches' only confirms the rule of poverty for the many. Mainstream rap music speaks little of the growing levels of poverty, exploitation and expropriation for the vast majority. Instead, a consumption-driving "bling-bling" type of materialism is dominant, as well as a tendency towards what Rose (2008) calls the *"gangsta-pimp-ho trinity"* and its one-dimensional depictions of Blackness.

[310] This is a general tendency with a few prominent counterexamples of, e.g., commercially successful rappers with more class-conscious positions, such as Noname, or RunTheJewels and Cardi B endorsing Bernie Sanders.

[311] Freire (2000, p. 44 ff.) further explains how for the oppressed, *"the very structure of their thought has been conditioned by the contradictions of the concrete, existential situation by which they were shaped. Their ideal is to be men; but for them, to be men is to be oppressors."* Mainstream rap's focus on violence, riches, and sexual conquest can be seen to represent the oppressor's mindset inherited by the people of color in the underclasses.

social movements. In the wake of the Black Lives Matter protests, famous rappers emphasized their solidarity with the movement, donated money to bail out protesters, and made radical statements for abolishing police and prisons. However, the pull of the culture industries remains strong and acts as a bottleneck for rap's political messages (cf. Hart, 2010; Rose, 2008).

After looking at the industrial realms, let us turn to Hip Hop culture next. As defined at the outset of this thesis, HHC does not primarily revolve around producing a sellable product but rather around collective artistic face-to-face practices. In the case of most of the above projects, the product is a teaching service, or an organized event. But who owns "the means of cultural practice" of the projects analyzed in this book? What is the impact of the non-profit realm on these pedagogical, social, and political initiatives and what are its ideological underpinnings?

Even though there is not always a product and thus no clearly identifiable means of production, the equivalent concerning control would be the two major aspects of ownership and finances in these projects. Concerning ownership, a major part of the means of cultural production are the spaces where this practice takes place. As described in chapter 4, the fact that the Rebel Diaz Arts Collective did not own a space but squatted in the candy factory of their neighborhood cultural center in the South Bronx and later paid some rent, gave the police the legal grounds for a fast eviction of the radical activists to end their organizing endeavors (4.1.4). For El Puente, it was their ties to the local church diocese that provided them with their original space. In combination with their relation to local movements and supporters, these ties could prevent the eviction of the neighborhood-based cultural hub. Their official status of administrating their own high schools recognized by the state was another helpful factor (4.1.3). Cultural center G Hip Hop's successful resistance to eviction in Dakar's Banlieue also illustrates the importance of local neighborhood ties. The organizers of the style writing mecca "5 Pointz" did not own the building, which thus fell prey to ongoing gentrification processes in New York City, where real estate is foremost a financial investment. Thus, ownership of the premises is a clear factor in whether Hip Hop cultural centers can maintain their practices. This becomes especially relevant when the centers engage in leftist organizing and radically challenge the authorities. As Rebel Diaz's Rodstarz put it: "*the reason [the Hip Hop cultural center] 'The Point' is still there is because they owned the space. If they didn't own the space, they'd be the same place we are.*"

The repression experienced by Rebel Diaz's cultural center represents the coercive side of Gramsci's (2000, p. 235) view of capitalist rule via *"hegemony protected by the armour of coercion."* One aspect of the hegemony is the censorship by gatekeepers in state institutions and by larger non-profit directors. As described in chapters 5 and 6, censorship can take place both when social justice curricula are reviewed, or when artistic performances or publications happen. At times, this is met with censorship, as in Senegal school-access is restricted for Y'en a Marre activists (6.3.2). Rabbi Darkside described the "selective editing" by school officials during the final performance, aka the "proverbial dog and pony show" and during a Hip Hop

diplomacy tour (6.5.4). Counterstrategies here include using academic credentials, code switching and studying radical rap lyrics from a "neutral" perspective as "just literature" (6.3.1). As analyzed in the empirical chapters, the organic pedagogues nevertheless bring social-justice curricula to the classrooms, tie their teaching to social movements and bring the students to street protests.

According to a large body of academic/activist literature, the "softer" forms of hegemony and of silencing dissent of radical movements happen via the processes of *"NGOization."* In allusion to the military-industrial and the prison-industrial complex, some activists and scholars speak of a *"non-profit industrial complex"* (NPIC), which fulfills the agenda of capital and the 1% who own the large private foundations[312] that are the main funders of the Hip Hop non-profit organizations. Thus, parts of the actual "ownership" of Hip Hop's non-profit organizations and of the means of cultural production lies with its financiers of the NPIC. But does this always imply control as well?

The FBI's Counter Intelligence Program persecuted, murdered and criminalized the Black Panthers, the Young Lords, and other radical movements/organizations of the 1950s-1970s. For Rodriguez (in: Incite!, 2017, p. 29), the NPIC is an extension of such violent state repression, since *"the US state has found in its coalition with the NPIC a far less spectacular, generally demilitarized, and still highly effective apparatus of political discipline and repression that (to this point) has not provoked a significant critical mass of opposition or political outrage."* Ahn (in: Incite!, 2017, p. 66ff.) analyzes the non-profit sector in the context of growing inequality and a constant redistribution of wealth from the poor to the rich. While public services such as education and health care are cut and military expenditure is expanded, private foundations grow rapidly in size, as the super-rich use them for tax evasion purposes.[313] However, their spending remains not publicly accountable and their boards are filled with white upper-class men who for the most part have a neoliberal or, worse, right-wing agenda.[314]

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[312] The HH projects receive money from, e.g., George Soros' OSIWA, OXFAM, Plan International, or the Ford Foundation. Secondly, there is also direct financing by corporate sponsors, such as PUMA, Coca-Cola, and Red Bull, as well as in Senegal by French corporations, such as Auchan, Orange, or Eiffage. Thirdly, Senegalese projects also receive so-called "development aid," paid mainly by the EU and Western countries (the German Agency for International Cooperation – GIZ, cultural budgets from the Goethe Institut, French Institute, and the British Council). At times this EU funding is used for anti-migration initiatives (cf. Abrahams, 2013).

[313] Ahn (in: Incite!, 2017, p. 66 ff.) thus questions whether these foundations are actually "private." The author argues that since they are used for tax evasion, their money should be classified instead as public or state money.

[314] Freire (2000, p. 44) states that liberation of both oppressors and oppressed has to arise from the side of the oppressed, and he is highly critical of the "false generosity" of the charity from the rich: "In order to have the continued opportunity to express their 'generosity,' the oppressors must perpetuate injustice as well. An unjust social order is the permanent fount of this 'generosity,' which is nourished by death, despair, and poverty. That is why the dispensers of false generosity become desperate at the slightest threat to its source." This maximalist position concerning the non-profit

Even in cases of liberal or "progressive" proponents, the model of their politics is either based on advocacy, mobilizing, or representation at best, while excluding "deep organizing"/people's power (for a clarification of these models cf. McAlevey, 2016).

As analyzed in chapter 4, some of the more politically-minded activists, such as Urban Art Beat's Spiritchild, El Puente's staff, and Rebel Diaz, refuse certain types of funding that – according to them – come with ideological strings attached. During a panel at the University of California's Show and Prove Hip Hop Studies conference, a round of political Hip Hop activists and organizers reflected on their practice of code-switching when applying for funds. Upon my question, they quickly agreed that it made a lot of sense to use liberal diversity discourses on the grant application forms of various foundations as well as on their flyers and webpages, while speaking differently during their actual practices and events. While this is undoubtedly a viable strategy for attaining funds, it can also lead to long-term self-censorship and a de-radicalization of the public messages of an organization and its practitioners. Often such funding partnerships also lead to neoliberal messages being propagated in the programs, as described for the cultural management workshops in chapter 7.4.2. Some of the bigger organizations that stem from traditions of radical antiimperialist and anti-capitalist movements and today enjoy private and public funding and accreditation have deradicalized their public language to mostly human rights and democracy terminology.[315] The organizations' dependence on either non-profit or state funding can thus act as a hegemonic bottleneck for publicized radical political messages. There remains, however, the possibility for radical education behind closed doors and at social movement events. This brings us to the final question of whether HHC and rap can conctribute to the transformation of society and the strenghtening of social movements.

9.7 Y'en a Marre and the Attempt at Societal Transformation

Chapter 8 analyzed the Y'en a Marre movement's potential and limits of transformation. The movement was founded in early 2011 by some of Senegal's most famous rappers, journalists and activists. They illustrated clearly that rap can carry some political weight and help as a tool for mobilization. During the movement's first phase (8.2.1), the activists made use of the opportunity structure of a widespread frustration of the population with the ongoing austerity politics, their government's corruption, and the deteriorating standard of living. They used their Hip

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sector and the influence of the richest capitalists on the planet points to the limits of the non-profit organizations' power to set their own agendas and the movements and projects they enact. The 1% would not want to finance movements aiming to redistribute wealth and power and threaten their class. Their "philanthropy" is only possible in a world systemically divided into haves and have-nots.

[315] While this illustrates a deradicalization of sorts, it is not necessarily a bad thing to stay away from leftist jargon to reach more people with radical content and avoid preaching to the choir.

Hop specific social and sub-cultural capital to mobilize supporters through their music, the country's many radio shows and stations focused on rap, their own fanbases, and their scene network. They organized press conferences, launched a grassroots council network of supporters, and compiled grievances via an innovative campaign of a "letter of a thousand complaints", which they had people sign in Dakar's Banlieues.

During the movement's second phase (8.2.2), the Hip Hop organic intellectuals launched their concept of the "New Type of Senegalese" (NTS), which focused on a model of active citizenship. Being an NTS thus meant not only criticizing their corrupt government, but also oneself and initiating behavioral changes on the micro level. It is a program of gaining agency on a smaller level, which ties into what founding journalist Barro calls the "new imagination of action". This approach also worked against widespread fatalism and aligns with HHC's imperative for practice. A prominent example of the NTS' activities included the Senegalese traditions of cleaning up the neighborhood after a protest, which helped counter the many clichés older people hold against Hip Hop. The organic intellectuals also started a voter registration campaign and were able to mobilize enormous street protests and engaged more people from their growing numbers of grassroots councils.

During its third phase of consolidation (8.2.3), when it became even clearer that president Wade would not shy away from what the activists called "a constitutional coup", they were able to mount massive street protests in a larger network of opposition parties, labor unions, and civil society groups. Some of the leading rappers were jailed but maintained a strategy of non-violent protests, while the police continued to violently repress the demonstrations. When protests were forbidden for the rest of the year, the rappers used the Hip Hop practice of writing diss tracks against their president and mounted an innovative protest format of the fair of problems. After the two rounds of elections and the successful mobilization, opposition party leader Sall became the new president and offered the activists various government posts. Adhering to their self-understanding of the "Sentinel of Democracy", they refused these positions to remain a counterpower in civil society (8.3). This decision against entering the government and the state's institutions is also interesting in terms of Hip Hop's institutionalization – as the MCs adhere to a Pan-Africanist movement perspective and to an underground political HH framework.

Their decision rang in the fourth phase of the movement's evolution, internationalization, and NGOization (8.4). As they had previously financed their activities by selling t-shirts, they now mounted a non-profit structure to carry out projects of their own and receive international financing for these. With the first larger funded project, they were able to finance project offices in all of Senegal's regions for their local councils. Via these offices they organized meetings between citizens and politicians to hold the latter accountable and educate everyday people about state budgets, their country's political system, as well as about topics of neocolonialism. The latter took the form of boycott campaigns against certain French companies as well as educational initiatives and protests against land-grabbing, selling out the country's

resources, oppressive trade deals or the colonial currency FCFA. The activists mounted a plethora of further projects in the following years ranging from a redistribution of EU-funds among smaller neighborhood initiatives ("Sunu Gox"), to supporting Dakar's bakers in establishing a union-like organization, founding various small companies, and organizing political rap competitions. At the same time, the movement connected internationally and advised other African and international protest movements on how to effectively protest their governments. Via documentary movies and movement conferences, they sparked similar movements in various countries, including the equally impactful "Balais Citoyen" in Burkina Faso. While the movement's organic intellectuals launched a lot of effective projects via their non-profit structures, they – at the same time – lost a lot of their mobilizing potential (8.4.3).

Chapter 8.5 discusses the reasons for this lost capacity of mounting mass protests and the declining support among the general population. Soon after the change in government in 2012, the new president turned out to be as corrupt as his predecessor, but he made a few strategic moves, which substantially hurt the movement. As mentioned before, these strategies follow the Gramscian duality of coercion and consent. The latter aspects included a diplomatic intervention to free some of the movement leaders from jail in the DR Congo in 2015 (8.5.1), which led them to be publicly in his debt. As a second strategy of cooptation, the government introduced the "Fund for the Development of Urban Cultures" which in 2017 started financing Hip Hop projects in the country. The HH organizations had previously only received international funds and had been demanding funding by the state for a long time. However, this also relaxed the antagonism between rappers and the government (for a more complex discussion cf. 8.5.2). As a third strategy, Sall's government followed the common line of argument that Y'en a Marre's funding by international foundations, NGOs, and Western development money turned the movement into "a Western agent" and "proved" that they were only interested in their own financial gains (8.5.3). Movement activist Sofia admits that their decision to not respond to these critiques and their failure to be more transparent about them led to a drastic decline in public legitimacy and mobilizing potential. By drawing on research about NGOization (cf. Brunnengräber, 2015; Choudry & Shragge, 2011), I would argue that a further factor was a shift in a political modus operandi, from the movement's early organizing and mobilizing focus, more towards more of the mobilizing and advocacy typical of non-profit organizations (cf. McAlevey, 2016 & 8.5.3). The Sall government's final strategy was one of coercion, as the movement's leaders were regularly beaten and jailed by state forces. This also applied to their radical allies from the FRAPP movement and opposition candidate Sonko, who stands for a course of anti-corruption and anti-neocolonialism (cf. 8.5.4).

With a change in the movement's leadership in 2019, a new transparency initiative concerning their funding, and more radical movement alliances it looks like the movement could regain some of its former mobilizing power. At the same time, building critical media and rap-based journalism may help to set the record straight

on leftist HH movements. This potential was discussed with the examples of Y'en a Marre and the "Journal Rappé" in Senegal, as well as for Rebel Diaz's show "Ñ Don't Stop" (8.6).

Chapter 8 holds many insights concerning Hip Hop's potential for social movement building, as well as its limits therein. The case of Y'en a Marre also illustrates the issues of NGOization and the danger of losing legitimacy and mobilizing power due to international funding. I argue that movement actors (from HH or outside of it) should be very conscious of this potential trade-off between funds enabling various projects on the ground and the power to mobilize and organize the masses and make a conscious decision, as well as clear plans of communicating about these issues.

After having discussed so many of the structural problems, I also want to express my sincere respect for Y'en a Marre and its activists' vast accomplishments. They have been to jail and have faced prosecution, physical violence and intimidation. Yet, they still produce music to lay open their president's corruption, and neocolonial realities, while continuing to mobilize against these issues. This proves that there is a vast potential in rap and popular music if the genre's more popular figures use their social and subcultural HH capital for mobilizing purposes and for writing diss tracks against government elites.[316]

9.8 Historically Zooming Out for Transformation and Institutional Solutions

Kitwana (2002) argues that the cultural and individualized rebellion through Hip Hop was a direct reaction to the state oppression of the civil rights and Black Power movements of the 1960s and 1970s. When the FBI through its Counterintelligence Program had murdered or jailed these movements' charismatic leaders and organic intellectuals, Black and Brown ghetto youth took their frustrations and energies to a cultural outlet. The result of Hip Hop culture did not provide a counterhegemonic movement, but a more than spectacular set of artistic practices, which took the world by storm.

Another outcome of the historic loss of the earlier movements was a reflection among movement actors about strategies for change. I asked the head of the neighborhood-based cultural hub El Puente, Frances Lucerna, about the CoIntelPro and her organization's ties to the Young Lords Party (the Latinx equivalent to the Black Panthers). She responded that *"the powers that be are clearly going to create the context for our demise, right? and it's always from within. In the case of CoIntelPro, you know when you have*

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[316] As mentioned in chapter 3 Senegalese rap is traditionally much more political than Western rap music due to the absence of / exclusion from large-scale music industrial structures. Additionally, Senegalese rappers – in contrast to Western Black and Brown rappers – can speak for their country's ethnic majority and lower classes.

people infiltrating […] or in our case in the eighties, you know a community's infused with drugs […] and then you know you couple that with the disinvestment in community and take away its infrastructure" For her both of these historical contexts are *"part of the same intentionality."* As a neighborhood-based cultural hub with various sub-institutions and even their own high schools, the El Puente organization brings together education, diverse cultural practices and movement building. For the cultural organizer, their mission and approach are clearly tied to the historic experiences mentioned above:

> **Lucerna:***"institutional oppression is historic and […] here at El Puente we kind of really started to think […] about institutional change, right, […] many in the Young Lords Party see El Puente as really sort of the extension of their legacy […] because of the fact that we were clearly focused on creating an institution that was going to […] be sustainable and really be about you know, […] creating the catalyst for institutional change, right. I think the El Puente Academy has been our greatest act of revolution. […] this has been sort of the reflection in terms of the movements […] they were powerful movements, they raised consciousness, and had incredible charismatic leaders. But there was no real kind of thought to: and then what? Who comes after us? […] where is this leading in terms of ultimate change?"*

Naming their high school as their greatest act of revolution gives a clear answer to the question of why to build institutions. El Puente's fusion of movements, social work, and cultural activism, including Hip Hop and social justice education, could be one piece of the puzzle of a larger counterhegemonic strategy. Other forms of Hip Hop's institutionalization in the non-profit sector and entering state institutions also always bear the dangers of deradicalization. Following Lucerna's example, I argue that historically zooming out and looking at Hip Hop culture's precursor movements, as well as the current stakes can sharpen the perspective for Hip Hop's organic pedagogues, intellectuals, and cultural organizers. We live in times of a worsening climate crisis, an ever richer, ever more destructive 1%, and a global polarization between more and more leftist, ecologist and antiracist young people and movements on the one hand and fascist and (neo-)conservative alliances on the other (cf. Fraser, 2019; N. Klein, 2019; Taylor, 2016). As more people start questioning the neoliberal dogmas, Hip Hop culture's social justice-infused forms of teaching and its potential for moving and engaging young people could be part of a broader emancipatory strategy.

To do so, the events, pedagogy, and organizational set-ups have to move beyond the individualist perspectives that are so dominant in Hip Hop. By building in more cooperative, collective approaches, tying in Hip Hop practices into protest events and movement organizing, Hip Hop activists can further collective strategies, hope,

and solidarity. To do so, the culture's organic pedagogues, intellectuals, and cultural organizers will have to put the "WE" before the "I" and expand their cypher.[317]

9.9 Outlook

My thesis was exploratory in nature and gives somewhat of a broad overview of the field of Hip Hop cultural activism between non-profits and social movements. Further research could be conducted in any of the projects analyzed e.g. by real "immersive" ethnography, where researchers could stay for longer durations with just one project. I encourage my academic colleagues and Hip Hop scholars to reach out to the activists who shared their perspectives in this thesis project. If COVID had not hit and there had been neither time nor money constraints, I would have loved to spend more time at El Puente, G Hip Hop or some of the other institutional mergers between realms of education, movements and Hip Hop culture. As stated at the outset, my thesis has a large focus on the elements of dance and MCing, since those are very dominant in the HH non-profit realm and also the most accessible to me personally. Looking more into style writing and DJing and their pedagogic merits could be a further point of research.

On a final note, I do not think it is possible to capture all the magic of HHC in a thesis project – particularly not in one of critical sociology / anthropology. To witness some of this magic, called a *"magical resolution"* by Hall et al. (1991, p. 189) (even though I think I have shown that Hip Hop can sometimes be more than that), go to a local jam, or step into a cypher near you!

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[317] This is in line with a Gramscian vision of the organic intellectuals of the subaltern classes, who should form many more organic intellectuals via political parties, schools, and cultural education. Gramsci (2000, 318) says that *"democracy, by definition, […] must mean that every 'citizen' can 'govern' and that society places him, even if only abstractly, in a general condition to achieve this. Political democracy tends towards a coincidence of the rulers and the ruled […] ensuring for each non-ruler a free training in the skills and general technical preparation necessary to that end."*

10 Acknowledgements & Shout-Outs

Finally, I want to thank my supervisors Professor Dr. Moritz Ege and Professor Dr. Michael Rappe without whose help this research endeavor would not have come to its finalization. While the fieldwork was (mostly) fun, I could not have followed through on the writing without your support, and insights. Moritz, thank you for taking me in after having to switch supervisors and making this transitional process so smooth. I have learned a lot from you, your intensive reading, discussion, and feedback concerning both my writing and anthropological research in general. The mountain retreats and discussions on an eye-to-eye level with you, your doctoral students (shout outs to Julian and Laura from the PHD Flow Show!) have been very inspiring and have kept me afloat during the long and strenuous writing. Your broad knowledge, and analytical ability to take in both the birds-eye view and the individual and personal level have helped a lot. You have also converted me to the merits of "conjunctural analysis" (even though this isn't one) and the Birmingham merger of Gramsci and popular culture. Your time, input, and not to forget the deadlines enabled me to finish this thesis. "Merci" as they say in Switzerland.

To Micha, thank you so much for everything! By inviting me in for an interview and for a thesis supervision you have really helped me see the light at end of the tunnel and convinced me that it is not a train. Thanks for your emotional support when things were rough, and for sharing literature and research-based teaching methods with me! Your colloquia have been equally inspiring and you have always

had an open ear for my ethical, analytical, and personal questions. Your empathetic writing on Hip Hop and our conversations on the culture prove you are not faking the funk! Particularly, your visit and contribution to our "HollyHood Filmfestival" showed that Hip Hop scholarship can bridge more than a few gaps. Thank you!

Prof. Dr. Regina Bendix, thanks a lot for the exchanges in Göttingen, the invitation to publish in your amazing series, and for chairing my defense!

I also want to express my gratitude to my hugely inspiring interviewees, Hip Hop activists, teachers, organizers, practitioners, and learners in Dakar and New York. I won't mention you all by name, the thesis is already too long with all of your wisdom, lol. Thank you for opening the doors of your classrooms, offices, studios, and sometimes even homes and hearts to let me visit and take a few notes. Hip Hop is alive in a few more corners of the earth thanks to your amazing work and nurturing of the culture's communities of practice. You provide real, human alternatives to the shallow illusions of the rap industry! And you made me come full circle by filling exactly 360 pages of my thesis with your amazing ideas, stories, and actions.

I also would like to thank the homies who have kept me going: Denis – thanks for being my sparring partner, a true friend, and support in this hyper-isolated writing adventure. You saved my ass many times Brudi! To my biggest inspiration in dance, culture, and art Amigo – Abi thank you for always enlightening me, for our endless sessions in your studio, and for our many philosophical talks. And a huge Teşekkürler for the amazing cover design! Your light, ink, and colors always shine bright! To my Flowjob crew/Kuh brothers and sisters – thank you for making my cypher complete, sharing so many circles, stages, battles, trips, friendship, insights, and mad stupid jokes – and for always coming correct and funky fresh. You are still my favorite b-boys and b-girls! To my homeboy Äleks for taking on new challenges, and making me believe in HHC. To my Mugiac brothers: you have kept my cypher complete! Thanks to my friends Ali (for our super dope workshop and freestyle action), Lukas (for endless sessions and political discussions in the flatshare and for rocking projects and cyphers together and for your musical genius), Ben-J, Laura, cypher-cat Daniel, Bernie, Flo, Marius, Mona, Marie (for your carpet magic methods!), Micky, and all other supporters during these long years.

To my partner and love of my life Frizzi – thank you for bearing with me during this seemingly endless endeavor. Thank you for your love and support. The day I handed in my thesis marked our five-year anniversary – wow! I love you and look forward to a thesis-free future with you!

Endless thanks and love go out to my mom, Lucie for everything (honorary Flowjob crew member and battle veteran proven during my 30 bday rounds). You have accompanied and partly proofread all my theses and survived the literal last minutes. More importantly, you have read infinite stories to me and instilled in me the love for the written word and the world! Big ups to my dad, Fachir! Without your moral & political compass, I wouldn't be who I am today. Even though you were not always a healthy father, you were an amazing human being with endless

creativity and dream-abilities. Thanks for putting little Chomsky into my crib, and opening my eyes to the world's injustices. I carry you in my heart!

Thanks to Tommi, Mari, Fang Chi and the whole Battle of the Year Team for letting me learn from your heavy event organizing skills, for being such great friends, and for all the fun times on the road. Merci à Thomas et Romejeee from Attitude for taking me in to your Montpellier office and for the dope madness of your crazy events. My times as a double/triple agent in France were nothing short of legendary!

Thanks to all my former student-teachers at Potsdam University and beyond for the inspiring times and discussions. Thanks to Dr. Peter Jehle for opening my eyes to Gramscian analysis in your amazing seminar and writing, as well as our talks. Dear Prof. Dr. Eva Kimminich, thank you for opening a few doors for me and giving me ideas. Thank you to all colleagues and supporters of the various refugee breaking projects (BGC, KBC). We rocked right and prevented a few deportations! Huge shoutout to the whole HollyHood team, especially Ella, Bernie, Robi, Frizzi, Noah, and Nelli! The funky times we had! To all my breaking fam around the globe!!! Muchas Gracias to Ansgar, Penelope and the whole innn.it (formerly change.org) team and the petition starters for insights and inspiration! I learned a lot from you! Last but not least a huge thank you to the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation for the air to breathe during times of writing and for all of the amazing educational initiatives you organize. The world is a better place with you doing what you are doing!

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What can Hip Hop culture and its art forms—dance, rap, DJing, and graffiti/style writing—contribute to the development of individuals, communities, and society at large? This book delves into Hip Hop activism in social work, education, and political movements in New York City and Dakar. It follows the efforts of Hip Hop practitioners who teach their art forms in high schools, neighborhood centers, prisons, and community events, using Hip Hop's Afro-diasporic practices to foster community building and social justice.

Drawing on 40 interviews and extensive ethnographic research, the author examines various projects of resistance within Hip Hop. Building on Gramscian terminology, the book differentiates between Hip Hop's "organic intellectuals" (movement organizers) and "organic pedagogues" (educators), who include DJs, rappers, dancers, and graffiti artists. These pedagogues bring their cultural practices into classrooms and informal spaces and design social-justice-driven curricula and mentoring approaches. The book critically explores their teaching and Hip Hop's learning processes in both formal settings and within the culture's communities of practice.

The book also investigates how Hip Hop organizers build non-profit organizations, such as cultural centers or federations, and navigate the challenges of sustaining their initiatives amid financial limitations, state repression, and the complexities of Hip Hop's "NGO-ization." The author analyzes four types of Hip Hop non-profits, highlighting the struggles and successes of their founders. A case study of the "Y'en a Marre" movement in Senegal, founded by prominent rappers, serves to assess Hip Hop's capacity to drive social change through movement organizing and mobilization. In parallel, New York activists draw on traditions from groups like the Black Panthers and the Young Lords Party, engaging in climate justice and antiracist movements.

On the one hand, this book aims to inspire Hip Hop activists to critically reflect on and expand their practices by learning from others. On the other hand, it also contributes to the academic understanding of Hip Hop's potential—and limitations—in social justice education, community building, and movement organizing. Whether you are a Hip Hop artist, educator, student, fan, or just curious about the culture's impact, this book provides insights into the transformative power of Hip Hop.

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GÖTTINGEN

Universitätsverlag Göttingen