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From the margins of the peripheries: female voices from Brazil's and Portugal's hip hop scene

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FROM THE MARGINS OF THE PERIPHERIES: FEMALE VOICES FROM BRAZIL'S AND PORTUGAL'S HIP HOP SCENE

FEDERICA LUPATI

ABSTRACT

This research responds to the need to fill the void in terms of studies and scholarships on female rappers from Portugal and Brazil. Addressing issues such as racism, patriarchy, male hegemony and the silencing or underestimation of women's contributions to the building and evolution of rap both in Portugal and Brazil, the aim is to offer a space where these issues can be discussed, while also acknowledging and understanding the works and experience of female performers. In addition to this, the present work aims at discussing the social, cultural and politcal importance of hip hop as a marginal, yet global, contemporary practice and its evolution into a mass-mediatic culture. Hip hop's contribution to the building of new individual and collective identities, its unapologetic narratives and revolutionary messages are here understood as tools that contribute to the understanding of the dynamics that agitate the social and creative realities of today's post-modern and post-colonial world. Through a methodological approach that looks at interdisciplinarity as its main feature, this work borrows its core ideas from fields such as Cultural Studies, Hip Hop Studies, Gender Studies, Feminist Theory, among many others, as well as from the informal conversations that I have been recording throughout these years with Portuguese rappers Capicua, Telma TVon, Mynda Guevara, and Brazilian rappers Samantha Muleka, Rose MC, Keli Rosa and Sharylaine. Despite the fact some interviews did not make it to this final text, they were all fundamental to it.

KEYWORDS: Hip hop culture; Portuguese rap; Brazilian rap; female rappers; women's voices; male domination

RESUMO

Esta pesquisa responde à necessidade de preencher o vazio em termos de estudos e investigações sobre rappers femininas desde Portugal e Brasil. Abordando questões como o racismo, o patriarcado, a hegemonia masculina e o silenciamento ou menosprezo das contribuições dadas por mulheres na construção e evolução da cultura hip hop, quer em Portugal, quer no Brasil, o objetivo é de criar aqui um espaço onde estas questões sejam discutidas, ao passo que são compreendidos e reconhecidos os trabalhos e as experiências dessas intérpretes femininas. adicionalmente, a presente investigação visa debater a relevância social, política e cultural da cultura hip hop como prática marginal, e ainda assim global. As contribuições dadas pelo hip hop à construção de novas identidades individuais e coletivas, as suas narrativas não apologéticas e as suas mensagens revolucionárias são aqui interpretados como ferramentas que ajudam a entender as dinâmicas que agitam as realidades sociais e criativas do atual mundo pós-moderno e pós-colonial. Através duma abordagem metodológica que olha para a interdisciplinaridade como a sua principal característica, as ideias centrais a este trabalho inspiram-se a campos como os Estudos Culturais, a Sociologia, os Estudos de Hip Hop, os Estudos de Género, a Teoria Feminista, dentro de muitos outros, assim como às conversas informais gravadas ao longo destes anos com as rappers portuguesas Capicua, Telma TVon e Mynda Guevara e as rappers brasileiras Samantha Muleka, Rose MC, Keli Rosa e Sharylaine. Apesar de que algumas gravações não chegaram a ser incluídas neste texto, todas foram fundamentais para a sua construção.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Cultura hip hop; rap em Portugal; rap no Brasil; mulheres rappers; vozes femininas; dominação masculina

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INTRODUCTION

Coming from different areas, scholars have drawn their attention to hip hop with increasing enthusiasm and have followed its growth through time and space. Today, thanks to their work and insight we can observe this global practice as a complex set of elements that interact in the building of one of the most powerful and successful popular cultures of all times. Over the past four decades, in fact, hip hop has evolved and evolved from a local phenomenon that gave voice to the U.S-born Blacks and first and second-generation Latinos, to an international multimillion machine that shocked and changed the music and entertainment industry. As a cultural and artistic phenomenon, it has reached youths all around the world, offering them the opportunity not only to express their struggles and ambitions, but more importantly to build a career out of them.

Hip hop culture has its foundations in the social, economic, political and cultural realities and conditions of those who are marginalized and oppressed, providing those young generations with the means and methods of expression that thrive on social commentary, political critique, religious exegesis and street awareness and fight against racial prejudice, cultural persecution and all sorts of disparities. Then, as a result of both its longevity, its innovativeness and its compelling message, it is widely appraised that hip hop culture can't be discarded as just an ephemeral trend. Instead, hip hop must be acknowledged as a cultural, political, economic and intellectual phenomenon similar to former African American artistic and cultural movements such as the Blues and Jazz, for instance. In this sense, hip hop is part of a long line of Black American and African diasporic cultural traditions, linked to Paul Gilroy's *Black Atlantic* (1993): "one small area in the grand consequence of […] the stereophonic, bilingual, or bifocal culture forms originated by, but no longer the exclusive property of, blacks dispersed within the structures of feeling, producing, communicating and remembering (Gilroy 1993, 3). By pointing at the difficulties of being black in the Western world, and at the specific forms of "double-consciousness" (Du Bois 1897) and unfinished identities that this condition generates, Gilroy explores "the special political problems that arise from the fatal junction of the concept of nationality with the concept of culture" (2) without falling back on the ideas of either cultural nationalism or creolization, mestizaje and hybridity.

Gilroy's understanding of black music have been fundamental to the building of the theoretical frame of this research. In his study, Black music is observed as being obstinately and consistently committed to the idea of a better future; it communicates information, organizes

consciousness and deploys the forms of subjectivity required by political agency, and its moral aspects are worthy of being observed since they translate the struggle and courage of living in the present. Due to its normative character and its utopian aspirations, black music "is not a counter-discourse but a counterculture that defiantly reconstructs its own critical, intellectual, and moral genealogy in a partially hidden public sphere of its own" (38), also reflecting "the idea of doubleness […] which is often argued to be the constitutive force giving rise to black experience in the modern world" (38). More importantly, in his *Black Atlantic* Girloy directly contributes to the debate over the origins of hip hop, to him "the powerful expressive medium of America's urban black poor which has created a global youth movement" (33).

Another fundamental reference for this work was Jeff Chang's *Can't Stop, Won't Stop* (2005) a true anthology of hip hop history in the US. Chang, in fact, offers a very detailed analysis of the intricate network of factors that led to the appearance of hip hop culture in New York in the 1970s. Literary in style, the book offers an engaging text filled with valuable historical data, as well as many original interviews that allow the reader to have direct access to those lively years. Chang's work is a true effort to reconstruct the early hip hop scene, and its moving from New York to Los Angeles, with the implications it had with political and religious movements and its impact in the North American society of that time. His collection of original material was a crucial resource for my investigation, especially when trying to understand the culture's origins and eventually link the Portuguese and Brazilian phenomenon to them.

My work has a first objective: understanding how hip hop evolved from its early steps in New York to becoming a commodified practice, then spreading throughout the globe. In addition to this, given my personal background in Portuguese Studies and my previous works on Portuguese and Portuguese-Speaking African Literature, I decided to focus on its manifestations in Portugal – where I have been living during the past five years – and Brazil. This latter space represents a new stage in my path as a researcher and I believe that during the field work I conducted in Sao Paulo between April and May 2018 I set the grounds for what could be my future works.

As far as Portugal is concerned, researchers such as António Contador, Teresa Fradique, Derek Pardue, Rui Cidra and Soraia Simões, agree that hip hop culture made its first appearance in in the eighties, more precisely between 1984 and 1986, through its performative element - breakdance - while rap's first manifestations as an underground practice have been registered mainly in the area of Miratejo and in the city of Almada. As a culture and a music genre, rap reaches its full expression between 1994 and 1996 - that is, along with its commodification - and today it is considered a fully mass-mediatic culture. A closer look at Portugal's socio-political

situation and at the changes that have affected the last four decades of the country's history, was useful to identify the complex network of factors that stimulated the birth and growth of this culture and its reception among the young generations. It also helps understanding how this peculiar cultural product ended up being interpreted and redeployed transnationally, becoming a global experience and a channel for the expression of the young urban voices around the world.

With regards to Brazil, hip hop culture made its first steps in the country during the very last years of a dictatorial and highly authoritarian regime, maturing into a practice that was strongly connected to politics and social intervention. From its early steps in the African-Brazilian communities of São Paulo, and later Rio de Janeiro, Brazilian hip hop has spread throughout the country and grown into a national phenomenon. Unlike what happened in Portugal, where rap and hip hop were both received as "ready-to-use" products and initially emulated, Brazilian and North American hip hop developed quite simultaneously, or at least quite similarly since they both started out under akin conditions. Since the 1990s, hip hop artists and activists have accompanied the country's politics with vibrant participation. And this became patent during the first years of President Lula's government. Again, these initial steps were given through dance and Black music, later evolving into rap as a proper musical genre; its visual element, instead, is considered being the evolution of a practice that was already known to the country. Today, hip hop and rap are part of Brazil's music industry, proving that the "movement" has gone through deep changes, mainly in terms of media exposure and internal diversification.

Despite taking a general approach to hip hop culture, this dissertation discusses where exactly women stand within this practice and determine the reasons why we hear and read so little about their contributions. Therefore, the second main objective of my work is to acknowledge and discuss the role and contributions by female rappers, especially in rap made in Portugal and Brazil. Moreover, I hope that this works contributes to the recognition and legitimation the various female voices that have been taking part in rap since its appearance. In fact, despite hip hop's legitimation inside and outside the academic arena, I believe that this is one of the main issues that still needs to be addressed: throughout the four decades of its history, women have undergone an uncomfortable, unpleasant and unfair state of subalternity. In most cases, becoming a rapper entails dealing with several challenges to have access to culture (I am referring here to the socio-cultural constraints that affect girls' and women's lives), but more importantly because women have constantly had (and still have) to fight against the oppressive powers of hegemonic masculinity. This, in fact, is imbued in hip hop culture – as it is in society - and its consequences are dramatic in terms of women's visibility and the consideration given to their works. Therefore, the central body of this work focuses on female MCs, and aims at responding to questions such as: what do women tell us with

their works? To which extent do they challenge these dominant mentalities and how do they respond to the different oppressive powers? What is their added value? In view of my research, I conclude that women have been critical to the building and evolution of hip hop culture and that, throughout these decades, they have been as present and active as men. Also, women have always been revolutionary: not only with their mere presence, but also with their powerful messages of resistance, their attitudes, and their feminist militancy. This fact is crucial to the building of new models of femininity, far from the traditional ones, that inspire the future generations.

After discussing rap and its dynamics, I question here if we are facing what Pierre Bourdieu referred to as the "paradox of doxa" (Bourdieu 2002). The French sociologist uses the term *doxa* in his *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977; 1972) to indicate what is taken for granted in any particular society. He identifies its "paradox" then, as the process through which this predetermined order and its power and control relationships, its privileges and injustices, remain unchanged and preserved, without there being transgressions or subversions. The preservation of male domination fits this dynamic: it represents the most shocking example of a "paradoxical submission" (Bourdieu 2002), which is a consequence of "the symbolic violence […], invisible to the eyes of its victims, that takes place essentially through the utterly symbolic channels of communication and cognition, or more precisely, of miscognition" (Bourdieu 2002, 1-2). Following his analysis, male domination can then be considered an ordinary social relationship where the logic of control takes place in the name of a symbolic principle that is assimilated both by the dominator and the dominated: in other words, it functions in the same way as a language does, or a lifestyle, that is, as a code that is absorbed and shared by the community. In this sense, masculine domination often remains unquestioned and ends up being incorporated within social and cultural practices as the "obvious" norm, and much is still needed in order to dismantle "the processes responsible for this transformation of history into nature, of cultural arbitrariness into the *natural*" (Bourdieu 2002, 4).

As far as rap is concerned, and more in general the music industry, women's contributions have constantly and consistently been marginalized, and this fact becomes even more clear when they are of African descendance – since patriarchy is inextricably linked to colonialism within the Western world. Especially in rap, lyrics by men have been often built around themes such as violence, sex, the objectification of women, arrogance and heterosexual masculinity as a hegemonic norm. Hence, women have been relegated to the background, both in real terms – that is, singing merely in choruses during men's performances – and in symbolic ones: their voices and their stories being hard to find and/or hear.

My analysis is grounded upon bibliographical research and critique and uses informal conversations I entailed with several rappers. For this purpose, I interviewed Portuguese rappers Capicua, Telma TVon, Mynda Guevara and Brazilian rappers Samantha Muleka (who lives in Portugal), Rose MC, Keli Rosa and Sharylaine. Some of the material I recorded was crucial to understanding the struggles, challenges and successes of these women. The idea was to let them speak for themselves, without filters or boundaries.

Chapter 1 focuses on the analysis of some pioneer academic studies, as well as more recent documentaries and readings, in order to offer a general overview on the birth and evolution of hip hop culture, underlining the circumstances and steps that led to its appearance in New York in the mid-1970s and to its transformation from a strictly district-based practice to a global mass phenomenon.

After observing how hip hop culture emerged in the United States, in Chapter 2 I aim my attention on its local manifestation in Portugal. Offering a panoramic view not only on the cultural phenomenon itself, I also point at some socio-cultural factors that were crucial to the reception of hip hop in the country, as well as some core concepts that accompany its understanding.

In Chapter 3, the discussion moves on to the central topic of the work: female rappers. This chapter is structured upon Portugal's female voices in rap, stemming from the idea that there is a lack of information with regards to female performers among studies on Portuguese hip hop, and this silencing characterizes all three generations of female rappers. It becomes even more harsh when these are of African descendance.

Chapter 4, the, offers an overview on the emergence of hip hop culture in Brazil and on the different steps that took this practice toward becoming the heterogeneous scene that it is today. As for chapter 2, here the aim is also to discuss some of the social, political and cultural elements intrinsic to the Brazilian panorama that help explaining why hip hop was so powerful, especially in its early years in São Paulo.

Finally, Chapter 5 focuses exclusively on female rappers from Brazil, and more precisely São Paulo. Following the debate opened in Chapter 3, and thanks to the material I collected during my stay there, here I consider some of the female performers who took part to hip hop culture from its the early ages (*velha escola*) up to current times (*nova escola*).

CHAPTER 1

THE BIRTH AND SPREAD OF HIP HOP CULTURE

Over the past four decades hip hop has evolved and grown from a local phenomenon that gave voice to the U.S-born Blacks and first and second-generation Latinos and Latinas, to an international multimillion institution that shocked and changed the music and entertainment industry. As a cultural and artistic phenomenon, it has reached youths all around the world. For many, hip hop expresses the social, economic, political and cultural realities and conditions of those who are marginalized and oppressed, providing the young generations with the means and methods of expression that thrive on social commentary, political critique, religious exegesis and street awareness and fight against racial prejudice, cultural persecution and all sorts of disparities.

As a result of both its longevity, its innovativeness and its compelling message, it is a shared opinion that hip hop culture can't be discarded as just an ephemeral trend, folk art or a youth movement that soon will come to an end. Instead, hip hop must be observed as a cultural, political, economic and intellectual phenomenon similar to previous African American artistic and cultural movements such as the Blues and Jazz, or the Civil Rights, Black Power and Black Arts Movements.

Through the analysis of some pioneer academic studies, as well as more recent documentaries and readings, in the present chapter I will offer a general overview on the birth and spreading of hip hop culture, underlining the circumstances and steps that led to its appearance in New York in the mid-1970s and to its evolution from a strictly district-based practice to a global mass phenomenon.

1.1 Hip hop's foundation: *the holy trinity*

Most of the hip hop-related studies offer a detailed analysis of its practices and its elements, each from a different perspective and through different methodologies. Coming from different areas, scholars have drawn their attention to hip hop with increasing enthusiasm and have accompanied its growth through time and space with their works, building sharp interpretations that allow us to position it through the lens of a more complex set of factors. Since I feel that these processes of deconstruction and decoding of cultural practices cover almost all aspects of the

historical contextualization of hip hop, I chose to offer a brief summary of the fundamental actors and events that allowed things to happen in the first place.

Yet, there is a broad range of material that works as a source in rebuilding the foundation of hip hop culture. In this sense, in order to trace back hip hop's origins, one needs to mention what the community agrees to be the symbolic date and place for the birth the whole culture: on August 11, 1973, a very young DJ Kool Herc holds what is considered to be the "foundation" party at his parent's house, in 1520 Sedgwick Ave, West Bronx, New York. Footage from the first episode of the 2016 documentary *Hip Hop Evolution* directed by Darby Wheeler and Rodrigo Bascunan, shows the original invitation to the party, a handwritten index card where you can clearly read the place and time of the event, and its host:

A DJ KOOL HERK PARTY - BACK TO SCHOOL JAM - AUG 11, 1973 - 9 PM TO 4 AM - .25 LADIES, .50 FELLAS - SPECIAL GUESTS: COCO, CINDY C., KLARK K., TIMMY T.[1]

According to what Jeff Chang reports, the party was held in "a modest recreation room in a new apartment complex […] two miles north of Yankee Stadium, near where the Cross-Bronx Expressway spills into Manhattan" (Chang 2005, 67) and the actual host was Herc's sister, Cindy Campbell, who "calculated it would cost a little more than half her pay check to rent the rec room in their apartment building" (67) and wanted to make some money to buy new clothes before school started again.

House parties were a known practice in the Bronx. Yet, at that time gangs like the Spades were making them unsafe in the South Bronx while the West Bronx had not suffered the same kind of devastation. High school kids could easily have fun there, meet some girls, dance to some good music since "Clive and the post-gang youths were a different breed, more interested in projecting individual flash than collective brawn, and would soon render the gangs obsolete" (Chang 2005, 73). Clive Campbell, who had moved there from the South Bronx with his family after a fire had burnt down their house, had been Djing in house parties for some years by then, using his father's sound system and perfecting his technique with the records in order to please the crowd. That summer party of 1973 became history because it was when he actually made a name for himself as a DJ: Herc's techniques in playing the records, his powerful sound system and most importantly his music choices definitely left a mark within the community, building the foundations of what would become their culture.

[1] Photographs of the pamphlet are available online.

When interviewed about that party and Herc's style in Djing in the abovementioned documentary, Kurtis Blow explains that

> Herc, he was a revolutionary, he revolted, he did not wanna play the disco music that we heard on the radio. He wanted to give us the music that we grew up on, soul music. And it was incredible because in the world of disco here, there's this DJ coming out playing a special kind of music. And that was so important to the birth of hip hop: that we were gonna play funk music (Wheeler and Bascunan 2016).[2]

So Herc's music selection was fundamental to the foundation of hip hop. While in downtown New York people were dancing to the sound of Disco music which by then had become a mainstream phenomenon, the Bronx was finding its musical identity through the sounds of James Brown, The Jimmy Castor Bunch, The Incredible Bongo Band, Babe Ruth and many other funk artists that didn't receive the same attention from the media and radios: "You were listening to like the greatest records you ever heard, and never heard any of them before, and never heard them on the radio. You don't hear them on the radio, you don't hear them anywhere. These are part of the sacred crates of hip hop" (Wheeler and Bascunan 2016).

As I mentioned before, coming from Jamaica Kool Herc knew well how important a powerful sound system was and that the crowd had to be kept moving and excited in order for a party to be successful and a DJ to be known. Dick Hebdige explains that

> when he began dee-jaying at house parties he found that the New York black crowd would not dance to reggae. So he began talking over the Latin-tinged funk that he knew *would* appeal. To start with he merely dropped in snatches of street slang, like the very first toaster djs who worked for Coxsone Dodd's system in the 1950s. (126)

As *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music* (2001) explains "many of the hip hop pioneers were Caribbean immigrants, who brought some of the musical practices from their native countries and adapted them for their new situation" (Norfleet 2001, 692). The Encyclopedia is here referring in particular to the Jamaican traditions of toasting and mobile disk jockeys, which where

[2] Kurtis Walker, professionally known as Kurtis Blow, is the first commercially successful rapper and the first to sign with a major record label, Mercury. His first, self-titled album, was released in 1980 and today it is a reference in hip hop's history. It has been often sampled later in hip hop records. It contains the famous track "Christmas Rappin'" that sold over half a million copies as well as "The Breaks", which was the first certified gold record rap song for hip hop. He is considered a pioneer figure as a producer and rapper, being also an actor and a DJ and minister emphatically dedicated to fighting against racism.

for themselves African-based musical traditions, in particular to the art of chanting over a beat, which can be traced back to the ancient African oral arts.

Back in Kingston, social events where true arenas for DJs competitions: using large sound systems, they battled ones against the others through volume and song choices; the toasts often were used to capture the audience's and dancers' attention and to give information on the next dance. Therefore, when Dj Kool Herc – who had arrived to the West Bronx from Kingston in 1967 – started providing music at school events, in homes and public spaces, as well as community centers – he brought with him the Jamaican tradition. He also "re-contextualized the phonographs, turntables and mixing units as musical instruments" (694) performing true live shows by scratching, cutting and repeatedly playing his record collection.

Dj Kool Herc also became known for his revolutionary technique in playing the records. As Dan Charnas, author of the book *The Big Payback*, states:

> Herc throws what most people believe is the first Hip hop party. Why is it the first Hip hop party? It's because of the records that Herc plays but also because of the way he plays those records. He plays just the breakdown sections of these records, where all the instruments drop out and it's just the drums or drums and bass (Wheeler and Bascunan 2016).

Herc's "Merry-Go-Round" technique definitely marks a turning point in music history: instead of passing from one record to the other occasionally speaking to the crowd, as a DJ would normally do, Herc realized that the crowd lighted up and danced mainly when the instrumental parts of the songs played. So, he considered isolating these parts and playing them over and over again, in a continuum of rhythm and beats. From there, he began to work two copies of the same record, "back-cueing a record to the beginning of the break as the other reached the end, extending a five-second breakdown into a five-minute loop" (Chang 2005, 79). GrandMixer DXT recalls:

> I've never seen anyone have two copies of a record, and keep going back to the part where we normally would pick up the needle and put it back so there's this silence for a minute. Now, that was continuous, and he called it the Merry-Go-Round (Wheeler and Bascunan 2016)

Gradually he developed a style that became so popular among his peers that he began buying records exclusively for the instrumental breaks, always hiding their names, protecting his "capital"

from his competitors – "Cause if everybody have my record why come to my party? –, in the line with what will became hip hop's well-known competitive ethic. Also:

> DJs needed to establish and identity or niche in this highly competitive market. Herc was determined to find records that no one else owned, to distinguish himself from the pack. […] Herc did his research, checking out what was being played on local jukeboxes to test a song's popularity and picking up rarities a Downstairs Records (Ogg and Upshal 1999, 13)

Soon, he moved his parties from Sedgwick Avenue to Cedar Park, always encouraging peaceful interactions between the crowd. However, Herc wasn't rocking the party on his own. He had a partner with a mic in his hand, who can be considered hip hop's first party rocker: Coke La Rock. Also sun of immigrants, Coke La Rock was pioneer in working with a DJ as an entertainer since "nobody was talking on the mic back then" (*The Hop Hop Evolution*, 2016). With Kool Herc and his Space Eco box, they burst their dances by giving shout-outs and dropping little rhymes, developing their own slang and "translating the Kingstonian vibe of sound system" (Chang 2005, 78), that made them distinguish from the disco DJs.

So, while the grownups of downtown New York were losing themselves in disco music, the young population of the South Bronx went looking for something different and found in Herc's block parties, in his music selection, but most of all his "breaks" the perfect combination between diversion, rebellion and peaceful interaction. As Jeff Chang indicates, "violence did not suddenly end; how could it? But an enormous amount of creative energy was now ready to be released from the bottom of American society" (82).

If Kool Herc was responsible of creating the musical foundation of hip hop, Afrika Bambaataa was the man responsible of building a community around it. He grew up during the late 1960s in a post-war super-development, a fourteen-story tower from the Bronx River Projects and soon joined the local gang life. He was first part of the gang P.O.W.E.R., which "took out the Black Panthers ideology but had the […] purpose of protecting Bronx River for being overrun by the Black Spades" (Chang 2005, 95), and then turned to the Spades, where "he made his rep by being unafraid to cross turfs to forge relationships with other gangs" (95).

His knowledge and respect as a gang leader, as well as his family being devoted Black Muslims and ideologically involved in the Black freedom struggle, mixed with his vision with regards to the future of the Bronx and his charisma, all these elements where fundamental to the

foundation of Bambaataa's biggest contribution to hip hop culture: the Universal Zulu Nation. As he explains:

> a lot of us was killing each other for nothing or fighting against each other for foolishness, that we need to turn this around and get the community to start organizing themselves. But we also had many other consciousness organizations that was out here all coming to wake up many of the communities, like the Nation of Islam, the Black Panthers Party, The Young Lords Party. We had to change the paradigm and try to teach and wake up the communities to be warriors for your community instead of being destructors (Wheeler and Bascunan 2016)

He developed a vision for the Zulu Nation of peace, unity, love and having fun, becoming instrumental in stopping a lot of the gang violence. Also, he is responsible of adding a fifth element to hip hop: knowledge. By appreciating African roots and cultural heritage, as well as the African struggle through time and space, Bambaataa brought the attention on the ancestors of the Black community that was living in the Bronx. GrandMixer DXT explains the scale and impact of this initiative, and how the Zulu Nation transformed entertainment in a conscious act: "I grew up where I was taught and conditioned when I see Africa or hear African, or anything like that, I'm running. I've been trained to disconnect from my heritage. Bambaataaa and the Zulu Nation, that whole ideal rescued that consciousness for me" (Wheeler and Bascunan 2016).

Without doubt, the Zulu Nation was a huge success, worldwide. It is the result of a visionary idea and a breakthrough against gang violence, since it managed to overcome the differences that divided the Bronx through the rescue of a silenced heritage and the spreading of peaceful values. In fact, Bambaataa is applauded for being able to sublimate the energy of the Bronx and minimise the potential for violence. Fab 5 Freddy explains that

> You really have to understand that the Zulu Nation had originally been the Black Spades. They were the biggest, most feared gang in the Bronx. […] This was before gangs had a lot of guns, so it was all about getting beat down with stick and with knives. It was brutal. And Bambaataa had the inspiration to stop this gangbanging nonsense, stop killing each other and let's get creative. So he turned one of the most violent street gangs into one of the most influential cultural organization (Ogg and Upshal 1999, 33).

In order to do this, "Bam" figured out Seven Infinity Lessons, which ended up becoming the fundamental code of conduct of the members and represent the Zulus "way of life". The Lessons focus on the origins of the Universal Zulu Nation and its African antecedents, as well as the origins

of hip hop from a South River perspective, as well as presenting esoteric and biblical elements. Also, elements from the Nation of Islam, the Black Panthers and the Black Muslims are recognizable, such as a keyword glossary, the call for self-defense and the evocation of the African original past. Giving ideological references to this new-born community allowed it to expand quickly through its different "Chapters". Today, the Zulu Nation is a global organization that still represents a reference within the hip hop community, having its Chapters worldwide.[3] It is to say that Bambaataa's Dj sets where characterized by the same esotericism and daring that moved the Zulu Nation.

Defined by his peers as a "local hero", Afrika Bambaataa is an enigmatic figure to date. He still refuses to reveal his birth name or his true age, at the same time never escaping the public eye. Levi-Strauss may consider him a man who lives twice simultaneously, both in history and as a myth above temporality. I would like to summarize this multifaceted figure through Jeff Chang's words:

> Bambaataa is a generative figure, the Promethean Firestarter of the hip hop generation. He transformed his environment in sonic and social structure, and in doing so, he called forth the ideas that would shape generational rebellion. So many of the archetypes of the hip hop generation seem to rise from the body of facts and myths that represent Bambaataa Aasim's life – godfather, yes, but also original gangster, post-civil rights peacemaker, Black riot rocker, breakbeat archaeologist, interplanetary mystic, conspiracy theorist, Afrofuturist, hip-hop activist, twenty-first-century griot (94).

Being probably the most charismatic figure of the Holy Trinity, Bambaataa was also responsible of taking hip hop out of the Bronx into Manhattan's punk-rock clubs, definitely playing a crucial role in spreading the culture to the white-crowds and then towards a global dimension. However, another pioneer personality has to be mentioned, as the third element of the Trinity. So, if DJ Kool Herc managed to find a musical and rhythmic tradition to hip hop and Afrika Bambaataa understood the need of the youths to have a strong, cultural identity and brought knowledge to it, Grandmaster Flash took Herc's DJing techniques to another level, revolutionizing the art of DJing.

Joseph Sadler - this his real name - was born in Barbados in 1958, yet raised in the South Bronx. His fascination with electronics and electrical items was unmistakable since a very young

[3] The Universal Zulu Nation is an awareness community that was founded by Afrika Bambaataa to promote the idea that hip hop was created to provide peace, love, unity and having fun. Its name has been inspired by the 1964 homonymous film that depicted a chapter of the war between the British Army and the Zulus, in Africa. Having arose in the 1970s in New York City from several reformed gang members and from the need to spread a message of peace and peaceful coexistence, the Zulu Nation is today a worldwide organization with different "chapters" all around the globe. Its values and goals have changed through time, becoming today strongly connected to religious views, maintaining its focus on a message based on love, peace and consciousness. Further information on the Universal Zulu Nation is available on its official website: http://new.zulunation.com.

age, and his revolutionary ideas on DJing were a result of his natural propensity and his studies at a technical school for electronics. Grandmaster Flash "was one of the first to pick upon Herc's break-beat music which, after less than a year, was becoming the dominant style in the Bronx" (Toop 2000, 63), and as his reputation and popularity grew his techniques evolved towards a new practice in DJing, and probably his contributions are the main element that led to the well-known techniques of cutting, crabbing, flaring and mixing. According to Zachary Wallmark, "he introduced a number of important techniques to the repertoire of deejay skills, including scratching, backspin, and punch phrasing" (Wallmark 2008, 531).

With him, the final steps were made towards transforming the turntable into a real instrument. With Chang's words:

> When Kool Herc first came on the scene, he stayed ahead of the other DJs with the power of his sound system. Bambaataa changed the game with his programming genius. Both men were titans in the streets, backed up by major crew. But in the beginning, Joseph Sadler didn't have expensive equipment, a deep record collection, or a posse of hordocks. All he had was his style (Chang 2005, 111).

In order to create his unmistakable style, Grandmaster Flash studied assiduously Pete Jones' and Koll Herc's styles to detected their weaknesses and overcome them. In particular, he found it to be very challenging to synchronize the beats and lock the together. As he explains, none of their techniques were satisfactory for him:

> Watching those DJs, I grew up hearing two things: back then there were people doing mixes on the air on radio, and they were doing disco mixes where they would mix in and out of a record, really slow, blends; and then Herc's style was the opposite. I called it "disarray in unison": he would play a song and take a drum solo and expound and extend it back. But the chances to get the needle in the right place was slim to none. So, both styles were frustrating to me.
>
> (Wheeler and Bascunan 2016)

His backspin technique, or "quick mix theory", came precisely as a result of his attempt to isolate the short drum breaks and extend them for long durations: using two copies of the same record, as Herc already did, Flash managed to blend the records perfectly by marking the break's position directly on the vinyl, using a crayon. As he explains:

> [...] The tabu was you are not supposed to touch the middle of the vinyl. Djs are gonna hate you. People are gonna hate you. You're gonna ruin these records. I decided that this was the only way to do it. And then what I did was, so that I could find the break quicker, I took a crayon and I would make a circular mark where the break lived. So, the circular mark is where the breaded lived, and the other mark is the intro to the break. So, what I would do is count how many times it passed the tone arm (Wheeler and Bascunan 2016).

Therefore, the mark allowed Flash to know exactly where the break was in order to rewind the records without ever touching the tone arm and allowing the break to play endlessly and with less effort. In addition to this, he developed punch phrasing, or clock theory, a technique that involved isolating short horn-sections or blasts of sound in order to interplay them rhythmically into the sound pattern: "Far from the earlier deejay model of passively pressing play on a turntable, Grandmaster Flash's new technique was performance" (Wallmark 2008, 532). Finally, he also perfected scratching, the technique that involves creating sound effects by dragging the record backwards and forward under the needle: "Like punch phrasing, scratching allowed the deejay to create new music from old records" (532).

In addition to his ground-breaking techniques that "would sparkle a whole generation of second string cats like […] Grand Wizzard Theodore, GrandMixer DXT, Charlie Chase" (Jazzy Jay in Wheeler and Bascunan 2016), Grandmaster Flash made a name for himself thanks to his performative skills: "while the MCs kept the energy high, Flash unveiled eye-catching tricks – cutting while flipping around, scratching with his elbows, cross-fading with his backbone" (Chang 2005, 114). Hip hop parties became alive through performance that involved music, singing and dancing, representing a true complete act of creative energy. Moreover, Flash is considered to be the conceptual father of modern DJing, since "before his refinements a deejay simply pressed play and listened" (Wallmark 2008, 532); he is also responsible for the well-known deejay gear set-up with two turntables, headphones and a mixer.

Finally, Grandmaster Flash is also responsible for the creation of the first, true hip hop crew: Grandmaster Flash and The Furious Five. Having understood that "being smart and good and scientific wasn't going to rock a party all by itself. […] Flash set his mind to theorizing the rest of the show" (Chang 2005, 113). He understood that he needed a vocal accompaniment in order to have a complete show. Hence, he invited some of his followers who were known to be good on the microphone to perform with him: Robert "Cowboy" Wiggins, Melvin "Melle Mel" and Nathaniel "Kidd Creole" they initially formed "Grandmaster Flash & the 3 MCs"; became "Grandmaster Flash & the Furious Five" when Rahiem and Scorpio permanently joined the group.

Pioneering in many ways (Robert Wiggins is known to have coined the term "hip hop" and

Melle Mel was the first rapper to call himself an MC), they managed a complete show: "while the MCs kept the energy high, Flash unveiled eye-catching tricks – cutting while flipping around, scratching with his elbows, cross-fading with his backbone" (Chang 2005, 114), becoming the first hip hop group to be given a weekly concert at a night venue, the Disco Fever.

According to Back (1996), the DJ's work, his rearranging musical fragments and mixing them into a new sound and rhythmic sequence, is very similar to the *bricoleur*'s job, understood by Levi-Strauss' theory (1976), and later Dick Hebdige (1979), as "an artisan" who culturally reuses objects and symbols, and ends up redefining their meaning. Moreover, the cutting and mixing of fragments of other tracks and other musical genres lead scholars to think that rap music represents a perfectly post-modern form of art and expression, where stylistic and musical barriers between genres, eras and cultures blend together in order to answer to artistic and cultural concerns. Potter explains that the deep connection between the practice of rap and post-modern art is to be perceived in the Afro-American communities' feeling of living "on the edge": the political and economic disappointment for the failure of the dreams and promises given by the civil rights movements, as well as the deterioration of the living conditions in the big cities, both these beliefs find their correspondence in the most post-modern feeling of all, this is, being "haunted by […] a sense of living in the ruins of the abandoned structures of modernism" (Potter 1995, 18).

Having started as a neighborhood based practice that took place in houses or parks, hip hop then entered the clubs and it wouldn't take long for it to break into the music market. If "during the mid-1970s, most of the youthful energy that became known as hip hop could be contained in a tiny seven-mile circle" (Chang 2005, 109), by the beginning of the 1980s the situation took completely different proportions and became quickly a global phenomenon. Therefore, the following sections of this chapter will be dedicated to the different steps that took hip hop out of the Bronx to the rest of North-America, and later to the rest of the world, including Portugal and Brazil. My attention is drawn more towards rap, its origins and its initial purpose: when one thinks about hip hop, rap is probably what comes to our mind in the first place; in this sense, understanding when the rhymes met the beats can be interesting since I believe that, from a retrospective view, rap has always been there.

1.2 When the rhymes met the beats: the birth of rap

Scholars have identified a wide range of influences and connections between rap and previous cultural and musical practices. However, as Michael Eric Dyson's underlines, "trying to

pinpoint the exact origin of rap is a tricky process that depends on when one acknowledges a particular cultural expression or product as rap" (Dyson 1994, 3). Yet, the practice of storytelling on a rhythmic base wasn't new to the young African-Americans and Latinos living in the Bronx; moreover, it is to say that cultural products often come as a result of long-lasting processes of evolution, change and adjustment that take place in new contexts. Hence, I will try to provide here a panoramic view on the ones considered rap's main references.

Within the field of Hip Hop Studies, most scholars agree that rap has three geographical points of origin: Africa, Jamaica and New York City. These three cultural spaces merge into hip hop as a cultural practice, finding in rap their verbal expression and in the MC probably their most notable figure. In this sense, rap's cultural background can be traced back to the West African oral traditions, or the Jamaican technique of toasting and its powerful sound systems, as well as the works of artists such as Gil Scott-Heron, The Last Poet's and The Watts Prophets', among others. Also, conscious rap - mainly from the "golden era" - is considered to be carrying on most of the politics, goals and struggles of the Black Power Movement (Rose 1994; Chang 2005). I would like to further explore here some of these aspects.

The connection between the MC and the West African griot isn't new to the field of Hip Hop Studies. Patricia Tang's studies on Senegalese rap offer interesting insights on the relationship between rappers and these traditional storytellers. She describes the African griots as "hereditary artisans of the spoken word" (Tang 2012, 79), also specialized in different musical instruments. Evidence of their work serving kings and nobility can be traced back to the XVI century, when their role was to transmit the genealogies and histories of their patrons through their music and verbal skills. Tang underlines that "due to their ability to praise or critique individuals with their oratory skills, griots have traditionally held an ambiguous social status, both revered and feared" (80).

Despite the many changes occurred within society, griots continue to play a crucial role in West African cultures and today they are active verbal artists and musicians, dominating the popular music scene in Senegal. Also, their music genre, *mbalax*[4], has become globally known through its major player, Youssou N'Dour.

When approaching the term "modern griot", Patricia Tang points at the limits of an expression that often invokes "a romanticized and historically static idea of the griot" stressing the idea that "the griot is usually historically situated, seen as a thing of the past, from which the

4 According to Patricia Tang's study, the term *mbalax* was coined precisely by musician and singer Youssou N'Dour, who remains, to date, its most popular representative and its international ambassador. This peculiar genre was created in the late 1970s by imbuing Senegalese percussion and Wolof lyrics with Cuban dance music. It reached its maturity as a music genre by the 1908s. Today, it is considered to be Senegal's most popular music genre.

modern griot evolved over time, after crossing the Atlantic to the New Word" (81). Tang then reinforces her point of view by stating that "the griot became an important figure in the way African Americans and others imagined Africa, […] a catchphrase broadly used to refer to modern African and African American artists" (81). Despite recognizing a distinction between griots and rappers in terms of their relationship with confrontational social critique, she reinforces the similarities existing between the two figures.

In addition to this, scholars such as David Toop, S. Craig Watkins, Geneva Smitherman, Murray Forman, among many others, often refer to rappers as "modern griots" (Watkins 2005, 239) or as "postmodern African griots" (Smitherman 1997, 4) and identify the West African tradition of storytelling, and Africa in general, as rap's indisputable source and cultural reference.

In this sense, many artists themselves pinpoint Africa as a reference for their performative practice: above all, Afrika Bambaataa, whose role was crucial in connecting hip hop to its African roots though the Zulu Nation and giving space and voice to the Black struggle. Despite this, Tang argues that rappers create "an imagined Africa that gives historical prestige and precedent to their art forms" (82) and that they situate Africa in a very remote past, this leading to representations of the African motherland that can be highly idealized, almost fictitious and historically incorrect.

In his book *Rap Attack*, David Toop also reiterates the idea of the rapper as a modern representation of ancient griots. In his very peculiar style, Toop argues that

> Rap's forebears stretch back through disco, street funk, radio DJs, Bo Diddley, the bebop singers, Cab Calloway, Pigmeat Markham, the tap dancers and comics, The Last Poets, Gil Scott-Heron, Muhammad Ali, acapella and doo-wop groups, skip-rope, rhymes, prison and army songs, toasts, signifying and the dozens, all the way to the griots of Nigeria and the Gambia (Toop 1991, 19).

Toop's approach is quite unconventional, positing rap's connections with a wide range of Black artists and styles of the 20th century and suddenly shifting – almost "jumping" – to its relationship with the West African traditions. The griot is then described as "a professional singer, in the past often associated with a village but now increasingly independent 'gun for hire', who combines the functions of living history book and newspaper with vocal and instrumental virtuosity" (31-32). In his work, David Toop establishes a parallel between the MC and the griot, paving the way for the future analysis regarding their similar role and the connection between hip hop culture and the African heritage. Damon Sajnani reminds us that "Hop Hop Studies is replete with affirmations of hip hoppers as modern griots, though the vast majority of these references are no more than gestures

– African culture is a mere trope (Sajnani 2013, 159). In fact, in his essay *Troubling the Trope of the "Rapper as a Modern Griot*, Damon Sajnani deconstructs a series of biases on the relationship between hip hop culture and African culture, and more specifically between the role of the MC and that of the griot. Sajnani's positions and critiques come as result of his field work and interviews with Senegalese rappers, whose perception of the griot and identification with its role do not confirm most of the postulates previously mentioned. Hence, in the line of Murray Forman's previous considerations on the limits of the notion of Africa as hip hop's "ground zero", the sociologist argues that "reified notions of African culture continue to circulate in literature" (157) and that this could be part of a larger phenomenon of appropriations that tend to mythicize and preserve the griot as the symbol of all that is positive in the past of the African oral tradition.

Sajnani's criticism of the rapper-as-griot analogy is built on the fact that Senegalese rappers do not identify themselves with the specific institution of griotism and they "reject the strategy of authentication through reified Africanism in favor of forging a diasporic hip hop identity rooted in anti-colonial struggle" (159). He then debates that "there is no question that the griot and the rapper share similarities in aesthetic repertoire. However, their respective social stances – historically and presently – are diametrically distinct" (159).

In fact, if on the one hand hip hop culture represents the "voice of the voiceless" and is adopted worldwide by groups of youths to counter their marginalization, this is, as a tool to "fight the power", on the other hand, and in complete opposition to this, the griots are known as being affiliated to politic power and those who held it. Sajnani explains that it is precisely their propensity for profiteering from this relationship what has led to a perception of them as parasitic and manipulative in contemporary times, and that "the griot's position is subservience to, and advocacy for, the powerful in exchange for patronage; by contrast, hip hop's stance is understood as defiance and advocacy for 'the people', avowedly rejecting any overture to 'sellout'"(161).

By focusing mainly on the discontinuities between these two paradigmatic characters, Sajnani positions rappers and griots in two diametrically distinct social stances with distinct obligations. By referring to his interviews, he shows how most artists, male and female, disagree with the characterization of rappers as modern griots: by identifying hip hop music with a revolutionary purpose and the idea of revindication, this is, the strong claim or demand of a right, they impose a different ethos that griots do not necessarily follow. In substance, based on the Senegalese example, if one can identify some aesthetic similarities - such as the use of samples taken from traditional griots instruments or the affinity with the taasu performance (Appert 2011), according to Sajnani these "the aesthetic similarities contrast sharply with the dissonant social roles

of griots and rappers" (168).

As Emmett G. Price III reminds us in *Hip Hop Culture* that "within the tradition of urban "griots," […] Gil Scott-Heron, Pigmeat Markham, Rev. Jesse Jackson, Muhammad Ali, and countless others set the stage for the rise of the MC." (Price 2006, 35). He also mentions how some of these influential figures were associated with equally relevant political and cultural movements that converged into hip hop, at the appropriate time. Price explains how the 1960s and 1970s represent a transitional decade in terms of cultural landscape in the United States, due to the "lack of access to justice, heath care, voting rights, employment, and other everyday privileges of citizenship" (2); in this sense, they also became the theatre of the struggle of the minorities, who came out in resistance against the highly discriminatory practices that were taking place around the country. Some of the abovementioned figures were precisely at the head of the two powerful movements that shook America back then: as the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Movement.

Having its background in the abolitionist movement that took place before and during the Civil War, between 1955 and 1968 the African-American Civil Rights Movement was led by Rev. Martin Luther King Jr and "sparked a nationwide struggle to gain full citizenship rights for Blacks and to essentially end the practice of segregation and the prevailing Jim Crow lows" (2). Through nonviolent protests and campaigns of civil resistance and disobedience, in 1964 the movement accomplished the passage of the Civil Rights Act, a measure that expressly banned discrimination in its different meaning and in employment practices. Also, with the Voting Rights Acts of 1965 they managed to restore and protect the voting rights of the minorities mainly in those areas where these minorities were underrepresented. Many see the March of Washington in August 1963 as the apotheosis of the nonviolent struggle of the Movement. Around 200,000 people had come from all over the country to gather at the Lincoln Memorial, where Martin Luther King, Jr., delivered his, today iconic, "I Have a Dream" speech. According to Emmett G. Price, however, "the assassination of Dr. King on April 4, 1968, left the movement without its leader and without much steam to continue" (2).

Despite the different aims and approaches, the Black Power Movement was closely connected to the Civil Rights' struggle. Primarily a political movement, it pursued an alternative strategy to the nonviolent methodology and it was led by the Black Panther Party, and "indirectly by Malcolm X" (Price 2006, 2). Its ideology and goals emphasized racial pride and the creation of black political and cultural institutions to nurture and promote black collective interests and advance black values, or in one word: Black Power. Often criticized for alienating himself from the

Civil Rights Movement and for supporting racial segregation and the black superiority over the races, the pillar of the movement was the Black Panther Party, an organization that explicitly supported socialism, anti-imperialism and armed self-defense.

Probably due to Malcolm X's criticism of Martin Luther King Jr.'s multiracial and nonviolent approach,

> most Americans believe that X and King occupied violently opposed ethical universes, that their positions on the best solution to America's racial crisis led them to a permanent parting of paths. More likely, though, they were the yin and yang of black moral responses to white racism, complementing more than contradicting each other in their last years (Dyson 1993, 120).

Again, Malcolm X's assassination in New York, on February 21, 1965 "was a tremendous setback, but none was greater than the creation of the COINTELPRO (counterintelligence program) launched by the then FBI director" and "by the mid-1970s, many of the Black Panther Party members were either in jail, murdered, in exile or underground" (Price 2006, 2).

Nonetheless, the two movements and their leaders were crucial for the building of the practice of rap: Afrika Bambaataa describes Malcolm X's speeches as "political rap" (Wheeler and Bascunan 2016) and King's speeches were often sampled and mixed as part of the tracks. Also, the leaders' efforts for the black's struggle and consciousness are probably their most valuable contributions. As Nelson George recalls:

> it has always been a black thing to talk smooth, and on a mic, and be entertaining. You talk about Barry White, you talk about Isaac Hayes. I mean, there's a huge legacy of rhythmic talking over beats that hip hop is an extension of. And then also, there is a style of talking over a mic that comes out of the radio DJ's of New York: Gary Byrd, Ken Spider Web, Frankie Crocker. These guys were super entertaining. You could find Franke Crocker tapes where he's damn near rapping over beat (Wheeler and Bascunan, 2016).

The relation of spoken and sung language has undoubtedly been explored most fruitfully in African-American music, both because song was culturally important for so long as a means of expression of all sorts, and because, for the same oppressive historical reasons, oral (rather than print) culture remained for so long the source of social identity. According to Afrika Bambaataa, this line of the "smooth talkers" or "poetry rappers" includes personalities such as Gil Scott-Heron, The Last Poets, The Watts Prophets, Sonia Sanchez, Wanda Robinson, among others.

Yet, there is some disagreements within the hip hop community about Frank Croker's pioneer role in rap's evolution. For Grandmaster Caz, "Frank Crocker's the first black cat on the radio that you heard like that […]" (Wheeler and Bascunan, 2016), representing a crucial source and inspiration for the DJs in the Bronx who "picked that up, did the same and it evolved in what we do" (Wheeler and Bascunan, 2016). However, others do not acknowledge him as one on rap's references. According to Dan Charnas, "Frankie Croker is not a founder of hip hop because he hated rap" (Wheeler and Bascunan, 2016).

Actually, there is a controversy within the community regarding who was the first person to start rapping in the style that we associate today with hip hop. Again, Dan Charnas argues: "Out of New York Disco came this cat, Dj Hollywood. Hollywood is the king of rap, the first king of rap. Definitely the golden voice, you ain't get around it. He's the first guy I ever saw do rhythmic rap" (Wheeler and Bascunan, 2016). The hip hop community doesn't necessarily agree with this: Afrika Bambaataa, for example, considers DJ Hollywood part of the radio-jive tradition, having no connection to hip hop. Russel Simmons, founder of Def Jam Records, offers a reasonable explanation of the reasons that could be behind this view:

> DJ Hollywood, Helly Chiba and LoveBug Starski were the ones who were the more high-brow rappers. But a lot of rappers would say that these high-brow rappers they weren't really from the hip hop. Of course they were, they were rappers. […] There were a lot of rappers in the street and they were popular. And they would draw a lot of people for a dollar. But Hollywood would draw people for 6.50 dollars. Hollywood was the one who got payed and the one who had a big car. So, Hollywood was the star (Wheeler and Bascunan, 2016).

Simmons considers DJ Hollywood the first "pure rapper". In fact, at that early stage, the practice of rap was yet to be defined and to some, Harlem's DJ Hollywood may be the first rhythmic rapper. But to others, Hollywood isn't a part of hip hop at all because he was a disco DJ. There is an ongoing debate on what makes hip hop the culture it has become and on which are its foundations. However, even if Disco music and hip hop did not share the same public nor the same "ethics" – hip hop was all about the "breaks" -, I agree that when observing rap at its early stages from a chronological and spatial distance, our evaluation of the elements that merged into this culture has to be wide-ranging.

A profound influence on rap music also comes from another unlikely source: the black church. Black preachers and ministries of church combined testimonials and parables in a way that engaged the audience and brought their sermons to life. A main tool of black clergymen and women

is the "call and response," in which the preacher calls out a sentence or phrase to which the congregation responds, creating a connection between speaker and audience. In fact, many refer to Reverend Jesse Jackson, among others, as an inspiring figure that led to the first manifestations of rap, in New York City.

Furthermore, in the *Garland Encyclopedia of Word Music*, Dawn M. Norfleet argues that "rap music is rooted in cultural and verbal traditions from the Caribbean as well as the United States" (Norfleet 2001, 692). Previously in this chapter, I have mentioned the role played by his powerful sound system in DJ Kool Herc's parties. I have also referred to his friend and "partner in crime" Coke La Rock, who was pioneer in working his way as an entertainer while Herc played the records. In fact, Norfleet explains that the traditions that remain visible in hip hop are "jive-talking" radio personalities of the 1940s and 1950s and oral traditions of storytelling, toasting and 'playing the dozens', a competitive and recreational exchange of verbal insults." (692)

In this sense, North-American radio broadcast was crucial to the building of an original sound in Jamaica, and "rhythm and blues, bebop and swing offered an alternative to the two government-run, British-modelled Jamaican radio stations" (692) that appealed more to the wealthier classes than the lower ones. As the years passed, the demand for Black American music in Jamaica increased and new solutions were found:

> So large mobile discotheques called "sound systems" were set up to supply the need. The sound systems played imported R&B records at large dances which were held in hired halls or out in the open in the slum yards. The music had to be heavily amplified at these venues if it was to convey the right sense of conviction (Hebdige 1987, 45-46).

These dances became a regular feature of the ghetto life on the islands. The sound systems became a very serious business and the DJs competed for the crowd's affection. However, "part of the rivalry between the systems centered on the records themselves" and "to ensure that no other system could get hold of these "sides", they scratched off the labels or stuck on new ones to mislead the competition" (47).

The connection between Jamaican music and traditions and rap also stands in the processes through which music is produced. In both rap and reggae – Jamaican's most emblematic sound – rely on pre-recorded sounds, and despite not sharing the same musical references (rap's beats come from funk, while reggae leans on Jamaican rhythms), in both cases spoken rhymes and limes are "half-sang" in time to rhythms taken from records, frequently sharing similar contents. Moreover:

> There are also other similarities. Just as reggae is bound up with the idea of roots and culture, so rap is rooted in the experience of lower class blacks in America's big northern cities. [In other words] Rap did for poor blacks in America in the 1980s what reggae had done for the "sufferers" in Jamaica a decade earlier. It got them noticed again and it helped to forge a sense of identity and pride within the local community. Like reggae, the music later found an international audience (Hebdige 1987, 125-126).

Finally, both reggae and rap grew out of city slum environments. The Immigrant Act of 1965 abolished the nationality prerequisite for immigrant visas and allowed immigration based on professional skills, leading to an increase of non-European immigration. Asians and Caribbeans took advantage of the situation (Price 2006) and this, together with the plans of urban renewal, explains the massive presence of West-Indian families and their descendants in the Bronx by the mid-1970s. Therefore, with Norfleet's words: "the mingling of Caribbean immigrant and native-born African American and Latino communities in the United States set the stage for the development of the new art form." (693).

It is to say, though, that "toasting already took place in the United States albeit in the form of long, rhymed stories, often memorized and passed on orally" (693), and in this sense, "The Signifying Monkey" is probably the most famous one. Furthermore, the use of toasting can be associated with spoken word artists and groups such as Gil-Scott Heron and The Last Poets, whose politically charged rhymes and their efforts in raising African-American consciousness, I have previously mentioned how the hip hop community considers these acts as being precursors of the art of rapping, and their connection to toasting is meant to reinforce this idea.

However, even if one recognizes rap's ancestry in practices that go from the African rituals to jive-talk, I would like to pinpoint - through Alex Ogg and David Upshal's words - that

> Yet the truth is that neither the Last Poets nor Gil Scott-Heron were the evolutionary missing link. Records like 'Apache', popularized by 60s stalwarts and Cliff Richard sidekicks the Shadows, were. The day Herc discovered the breakbeat was the day hip hop was born and the most definite breakbeat record of them all was 'Apache', discovered by Herc in 1975 (Ogg and Upshal 1999, 29)

Moreover, Kool Herc has to be mentioned as a strong contributor to the development of MCing because of his introduction of the echo-box:

> To improve his sound, Herc had invested in an echo box for his microphone – ensuring his voice will boom out over his record selections. DJs speaking between records had long been accepted practice. What Herc said, and how he said it, was not. […] Coke La Rock, Herc's partner and friend, began to extemporize the vocal introduction to records (40-41).

Busy Bee Starski, and many others, also stared reciting improvised rhymes over records, and pretty soon rapping became an art from in itself.

Finally, I would like to mention Richard Shusterman as a reference in terms of studies on rap. As he points out, rap music and hip hop culture in general have actually very ancient origins: the art of poetry – which is central to rap's style and self-understanding – has always been celebrated as being able to captivate the traditional wisdom, ideals and deepest religious beliefs that were embodied in the myths and experiences of ancient cultures, whereas philosophy was considered the key for good politics, creating in this way a "dogmatic dichotomy". On the basis of the American pragmatist philosopher's studies, this dichotomy suggests that

> art is somehow only fiction and deceit rather than a powerful reality that can purvey the truth and represent in ways just as powerful as the scientific and philosophical discourse. […] From the same dichotomy, philosophers have drawn the dangerous political conclusion that art pertains only to a pure aesthetical sphere, entirely a part from the real world of practical and political action (Shusterman 2005, 55).

Therefore, one of the most interesting and revolutionary aspects of rap is the challenging of this dualism: "One of the more thoughtful MCs claim not only to be creative artists but also philosophers; and they see their artistic expression of truth as part and parcel of a political struggle to achieve greater economic, social, political and cultural power" (55). The subversion of the traditional theoretical divisions is part of what Shusterman calls the deep "philosophy of the mix", which finds its expression also in the aesthetic techniques of sampling, this also proving the connection between the art of rap and the Pragmatist's view:

> Pragmatism and rap understand art not as an ethereal product of supernatural imagination, but as an embodied activity emerging from natural needs and desires, from organic rhythms and satisfactions and also from the social functions that naturally emerge from and reciprocally influence the biological (56).

In his essay on the "fine art of rap" in *That's the Joint*, Shusterman also explains how challenging this practice has been since its appearance. After detecting rap's main features, this is

its artistic appropriation through the sampling of popular songs as well as non-musical content (fragments of speeches by Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, for instance), its verbal virtuosity – in the line of the black tradition - and its funky beats, Shusterman stresses the idea that rap "challenges the traditional idea of originality and uniqueness that has long enslaved our conception of art" (461). By doing this, rap can be seen as an example of postmodern art, allowing us to reconceive originality as a practice that includes "the transfiguring re-appropriation and recycling of the old" (461). Moreover, through the technique of sampling rap also challenges art's traditional ideal of unity and integrity and "reflects the 'schizophrenic fragmentation' and 'collage effect' characteristic of the postmodern aesthetic", offering "the pleasure of deconstructive art" (462).

In addition to this, rap's postmodern nature can be observed in its process of "layered artistic composition" that consists in reassembling musical elements and superimposing to the them the MC's layer, this is, his lyrics. By suggesting that art is essentially "more process than finished product", rap challenges the traditional ideas of monumentality, universality and permanence: "in contrast to the standard view that "a poem is forever", rap highlights the artwork's temporality and likely impermanence, not only by appropriative deconstructions, but by explicitly thematising its own temporality in its lyrics" (462).

In this sense, the content and matters featured in rap, especially the ones of "knowledge rap", insist on the deeply political dimension of culture and end up questioning modern artistic convention of aesthetic autonomy. As I have mentioned before, it overcomes the traditional separation between art and science (see Max Weber and Immanuel Kant) and insists on the idea that rappers' role as artists and poets is inseparable to their role as insightful observers of the sociohistorical reality they are part of. Therefore, the idea of practical functionality is an integral part of the artistic meaning and value of rap.

These general considerations are meant to offer a frame or reference to what can be considered rap's cultural roots. They also would like to show that its presence and value as a powerful cultural tool are today indisputable facts. As a syncretic, polysemic, complex art form and a socio-political tool, rap managed to conquer its space within the music industry, understanding the public's needs and interests without losing its purposes. Also, it managed to spread all around the globe.

Although its "golden era" is now passed, it continues to represent a force to be reckoned with. However, it took a series of steps in order for rap to become the powerful instrument we identify today. Therefore, in the following section, I offer some considerations on what can be

considered the crucial steps that transformed rap, and hip hop culture in general, from a local, party-oriented practice into a global socio-political weapon and into a proper art form.

1.3 From underground to mainstream: the evolution of rap

I have tried to trace the origins of contemporary rapping in a set of very different practices, from the African *griots,* to the political elements of The Last Poets and Gil Scott-Heron. One can also include bepop singers, early rock 'n' rollers and preachers such as Cab Calloway, Bo Diddley and Johnnie Taylor, or American jive-talking radio personalities and Jamaican toasting, as well as Mohammed Ali's boasting. All of these elements, which have in common the idea of competitive jiving (*braggadocio*), represent hip hop's lineage. Yet, "while hip hop borrowed from previous traditions, its development was ultimately organic and self-sustained" (Ogg and Upshal 1999, 39).

I have already illustrated how hip hop has always been all about innovation. The DJs' new techniques changed drastically the way music was going to be played from that moment, transforming the records into true sources of new musical content that turned into the new sound of a generation. However, hip hop culture was also about overcoming limitations: the socio-political exclusion of being young, black and from the Bronx, the lack of economical capital and of opportunities and an ubiquitous state of abandonment and desertion, became the driving force that led to the building of a new response, a more inviting alternative to the ones offered by mainstream culture.

Yet, the culture that we currently identify with hip hop wasn't born the way it is today and it has experienced several changes that transformed a local phenomenon into a global one. Many steps led to the building of one of the most profitable genres in the music industry; among these, some are noteworthy, since they represent true, shifting moments: starting with the proliferation of new crews that changed the dynamic with the parties and the Bronx, up to the recording of the first rap song that transformed rap into a true commodity, as well as the relocation of the parties in downtown New York and the opening to a new public of mainly white people, as well as the recording of the revolutionary tracks "Planet Rock" and "The Message," all of these events represent probably the most remarkable changes that favored the growth of this subculture into a dominating show business.

Nonetheless, I have mentioned before how hip hop culture has always built its foundations on the ability to overcome limitations. The philosophy that lies underneath this is strictly connected

to a "hood mentality", this is, the capacity to profit from any, possibly favorable situation. So, in order to understand the sudden proliferation of DJs and crews, one needs to look at what has contributed to give a strong push towards this change.

In the mid-1970s, a distinct crew became dominant in New York: Grandmaster Flash and Furious Five. Their success was something that everybody in the Bronx and Harlem aspired to. However, creating a crew was expensive, mainly because you needed the right equipment: microphones, mixers, turntables and speakers, and people couldn't afford that.

In this sense, the second episode of Netflix's documentary, *Hip Hop Evolution – From the Underground to Mainstream* (Wheeler and Bascunan 2016), explains that the New York City blackout of July 13-14, 1977 represents an enormous breakthrough for the proliferation of hip hop crews. Young aspiring DJs and rappers found their opportunity in that unforeseeable event, and during that "night of terror" stores were destroyed and looted, and a wealth of equipment became available to local crews. Kool Moe Dee offers an insightful explanation of the circumstances back then:

> The hood mentality is the minute there is an opportunity to capitalize on something, we go in. When the blackout happens, if you're a DJ or you want to be one, you're absolutely stealing turntables. And all of a sudden, this guy didn't have anything last week but he's in the park this week, like where'd you get all of that? Nobody says anything, but it is what it is (Wheeler and Bascunan 2016).

After that summer, the Bronx and Harlem were saturated with DJs and MCs, and groups really started to form. David Toop reminds us that "in those early days each DJ was strong in his own district and was supported by local followers. Few had access to the big clubs so the venues where block parties and schools or, in the summer, the parks" (Toop 1999, 60). In fact, the DJs had cut each his own territory in a "seven miles circle". According to Jeff Chang, in order to understand the areas where hip hop was happening back then, you can imagine to take a compass and point it in the heart of Crotona Park and trace a circumference:

> Beginning in the east, there was the Zulu Nation empire; along the northern rim, Edenwald projects and the Valley, where the Brothers Disco and the Funky 4+1 More rocked the parties, and the 2 and 5 Train Yard, […]; to the west, across the river from Kool Herc's Sedgwick Avenue and Cedar Park cipher, the Ghost Yard, the misty, violent backdrop of graffiti lore, and Inwood and Washington Heights, […]; further down through southern curve, Harlem, where disco DJs rapped on demand, and Spanish Harlem, where the Baby Kings chapter of Spanish Kings gag did the outlaw dance on the hard concrete. There were eruptions happening in Brooklyn, Queens, Long Island's Black Belt and

the Lower East Side. But in 1977 this circle felt like a hothouse of style, the tropic zone of a new culture (Chang 2005, 109-110).

Despite being still associated with gang affiliation and territory domain, the DJs confronted each other non-violently through "battles" that relied on the power of the sound system and the audience's response, where the competitive element soon extended to the MCs and to the break-dancers. Reputation and power were at stake, and music became the place into which the old gang-related competition evolved. The parties also showed the potential of these young creative as entrepreneurs, who at that time were all in their late-teens: "The Flash, Bambaataa and Herc sets, which often lasted between five and eight hours, were self-promoted and organized, adopting a spirit of independence and DIY ethic that mirrored the development of punk in the UK" (Ogg and Upshal 1999, 34). Thus, even if it can't be considered a crucial factor in the evolution of hip hop culture into what it has become today, the New York blackout indeed needs to mentioned as a fortuitous event, since it allowed many young aspiring crews to also compete for their space and their place in the city.

Also, at the time of the blackout, "the Furious Five, they was on tour, they was out of the city," (Wheeler and Bascunan 2016) so everybody was now competing for that number one spot in New York. In this new context, where the levels of completion were higher as ever, two crews were considered the primarily street rivals and steadily battled in order to be recognized as the best: The Fabulous Five and the Cold Crush Brothers. Very different in style, the two groups ended up confronting each other during an epic battle at the Harlem World, on July 3rd 1981.

Yet, the year that marks the deepest change in hip hop culture is without doubts 1979, when the first rap song is recorded and commercially released. By the end of the 1970s, rap was becoming known outside the seven-mile circle: thanks to the recording of cassette tapes during live performances of Afrika Bambaataa, the Cold Crush Brothers, Flash and The Furious Five and others, and to their passing hand-to-hand in the different neighborhoods, the battles spread fast all around the city. At that time, hip hop was still based on performance act in clubs and parties, and it hadn't yet been put on vinyl, even if "the DJs themselves wanted more. It was no longer about rocking the block party and establishing a rep. They wanted to make a living" (Chang 2005, 129).

GrandMixer DXT refers that "anybody who's from the first generation of the hip hop circle, the idea of making a record was not a reality in anyone's mind until '79" (Wheeler and Bascunan, 2016) and Bill Adler considers 1979 a symbolic dividing line within the history of hip hop music: "You can divide hip hop into a kind of B.C and an A.D. with the invention of hip hop on wax"

(Wheeler and Bascunan, 2016). Within the community, times were indeed mature for a change. Regardless of that, the idea to put hip hop on a record would not come from within its original protagonists.

Independent black record producers had heard about rap and its appeal to the public, and were looking around the clubs in order to find something that could be financially feasible. Jeff Chang describes:

> Flash and the Furious Five were at the top of everyone's signing wish-list. But Flash refused to meet with any record-label heads. To him, the idea was absurd. Who would want to buy a record of Bronx kids rapping over a record? He and the Furious Five were still a big draw in the cubs, and making a record wasn't guaranteed money in the bank, like getting onstage (Chang 2005, 129).

There was, in fact, a general skepticism from the Bronx luminaries such as Grandmaster Flash and Lovebug Starski, towards the label owners and towards the idea of recording their performances. As Kevin Powell explains, this refusal reminds of what happened in Jazz in its early years:

> When we talk about why people don't know some of the early pioneers of hip hop part of it is no different than we look at early jazz. A lot of the early jazz musicians at the turn of the last century never got recorded. Some of the early jazz pioneers actually did not want to be recorded. Some of the early hip hop folks didn't want to be recorded either (Wheeler and Bascunan 2016).

Sylvia Robinson, a former R&B singer (Little Sylvia) and owner of former All Platinum Records and now of black indie label Sugar Hill Records, had been trying to sign a rap group with no results. The pressure of the market and the financial crisis of the label made things even more urgent, and, in this general run towards success, it doesn't surprise to discover that the performers of *Rapper's Delight*, rap's first ever recorded track, were an improvised collective who had come together during an improvised audition. As Jeff Chang expounds: "when the three anonymous rappers stepped into […] Sylvia Robinson's studio to cut 'Rapper's Delight', they had no local expectations to fulfill, no street reputations to keep, no regular audience to please, and absolutely no consequences if they failed" (Chang 2005, 129).

Henry "Big Bank Hank" Jackson was working at Crispy Crust, a pizza shop, and as Grandmaster Caz's manager, booking his shows and distributing his tapes, when Sylvia and Joe Robinson spotted him and invited him to show them his rhymes in their car. The legend recounts

that Guy “Master Gee” O’Brien and Michael “Wonder Mike” Wright, both also from New Jersey, happened to pass by the car in the exact moment Hank was showing his skills and asked to join the audition and they all sang their improvised rhymes. As Wonder Mike recalls, Sylva Robinson wasn’t able to make a decision between the three of them, and that’s how the Sugar Hill Gang was born.

The song *Rapper’s Delight* was released on October 13, 1979: a seventeen minutes, totally improvised track, recorded in one take. The song aimed at reproducing hip hop’s party style:

> When we came in the studio, Mike, Hank and myself, I really had no concept of what recording was like. We put on headphones, we decided on who was gonna go first based on what was being said. […] Mike started, he passed it to Hank, Hank passed it to me, I passed it back to Mike, Mike passed it to Hank. We just kept going. Nobody told us to stop. They didn’t say stop and we didn’t think to stop. We just kept passing it back and forth, as if we were doing a party (Wheeler and Bascunan 2016).

The track opens with Wonder Mike singing the famous doggerel-inspired verses “I said a hip hop / Hippie to the hippie / The hip, hip a hop, and you don't stop […]”. The three alternate and encourage an imagined crowd over Chic’s “Good Times” beat, bragging about their sexual prowess, money and peerless skills on the microphone.

Despite its international success, reaching number 36 in the US charts and becoming “the biggest-selling 12-inch record ever” (Toop 2000, 811) and inestimable influence on future generations of rappers, "Rapper's Delight" remains one of the most controversial rap tracks ever released. Not only it used Chic's disco groove without permission, but Big Bank Hank's verses were stolen outright from Grandmaster Caz of the Cold Crush Brothers. Among these, lines such as “never let an MC steal your rhymes” and the references to Casanova were known as being Grandmaster Caz’s. This meant violating one of hip hop’s most fundamental ethical values:

> Hank was saying a rhyme that we was hearing at the parties already, and he’s saying somebody else’s rhyme. And for us, that’s a catastrophic no-no. There were people who would get beat up for saying somebody’s rhyme. And here’s a record where this guy bites, and actually records it. Like, that was just the worst thing ever (Wheeler and Bascunan 2016).

So, if for the general public thought that the song had novelty, for the hip hop community it was nowhere close to representing what the culture was; moreover, it was recorded by three, not known nor particularly skilled MCs who weren't even from the Bronx and had no experience in rapping:

> The rap amateurs of the Sugar Hill Gang never had a DJ. Assembled in a New Jersey afternoon, they were a studio creation that never stepped on a stage until after their single became a radio hit. The wrote with the ears of fans and the enthusiasm of dilettantes. Their raps on "Rapper's Delight" were the stuff that sounded good not in the parties, but on the live bootleg cassettes playing in the OJ Cabs and on the boomboxes. […] "Rapper's Delight" was tailor-mad to travel, to be perfectly accessible to folks who had never heard of rap or hip hop or the Bronx (Chang 2005, 132).

However, David Toop offers a different perspective and states that *Rapper's Delight* wasn't the first rap record. As he explains:

> earlier in 1979, The Fatback Band released a single called 'You're My Candy Sweet' on Spring Records. The B side was given over to a rap called 'King Tim III (Personality Jock). New York record stores began playing the rap in preference to the rather feeble top side. […] Both the single and the album were surprise hits (Toop 1999, 81).

Even in this case, the uptown MCs were derisive about it, since Fatback were a Brooklyn band and their rap was too minimalistic. Yet, this previous release proves that "the energy of the Bronx scene had been spreading to other areas of New York City and in 1979 rapping was widespread throughout the city" (82).

In 1979 hip hop got exposed and took off as a global phenomenon. It soon reached the mass media and the advertising industry, through rap and graffiti, almost becoming a cliché. Most of the performing artists singed with labels and even Grandmaster Flash finally made up his mind about the possibility to earn money through a record. It also marked the year when hip hop turned into popular music, and many started thinking it was going to be a temporary experience that was going to die soon.

The pioneering DJs were worried that the success of *Rapper's Delight* could damage the real parties: "Ironically, the Sugar Hill Gang helped revive the dying Bronx club scene. But club-going turned into a more passive experience than ever" (Chang 2005, 132). Anyhow, we know today that hip hop didn't die in 1979 and that, in fact, it survived the drastic change of going from being roughly recorded on tapes to being sold on vinyl in the most disparate record stores. Jazzy Jay

pinpoints Afrika Bambaataa as the man who "saved" hip hop from disappearing as a mere, transitory phenomenon:

> It looked like it was getting ready to just like be one of those fads. Hip hop was just gonna, came on the scene, everybody loved it, and it was getting ready to die. What saved the culture of hip hop in its purest form was when Afrika Bambaataa had said: 'You know what, let's take it from the Bronx down to Manhattan'. That kind of opened up a whole new world for hip hop (Wheeler and Bascunan 2016).

According to Jeff Chang, Alex Ogg and David Upshal, however, the connection between the Bronx and Manhattan happened through graffiti, and more specifically through the figure of Fab 5 Freddy (Frederick Brathwaite). As the 1970s came to an end, New York was "more separate and less equal than ever, the culmination of three decades of top-down urban renewal, Third World dislocation and while flight. […] Pop culture mirrored the segregation" (Chang 2005, 145).

Graffiti had already affected the young generations gathering in Central Park and in was starting to melt with the art scene of that time. Fab 5 Freddy, "a tall slim African American raised in the do-or-die Bed-Stuy" (Chang 2005, 147), managed to build connections to the blooming downtown art scene and with personalities such as Jean-Michel Basquiat, Keith Haring, Andy Warhol and Blondie, among many others, while he was collecting pirated cassettes of all the rap crews. In Chang's words: "The nineteen-year-old found himself moving through two very different worlds, and he had both the charisma and the desire to bring them together. […] Bambaataa's vision of a revolutionary youth culture was unfolding before FAB's eyes and he began to see what his role could be" (148).

Metaphorically speaking, Fab 5 Freddy is considered the "bridge" that connected the Bronx to Manhattan. He started inviting DJs from the Bronx to perform at parties downtown and opened a whole new world to hip hop music. However, hip hop really "hit downtown" when Bambaataa played at Keith Haring's art exhibition at Club 57, where Fab 5 Freddy not only brought the "Master of Records", but also performers such as The Cold Brush Brothers, the Fantastic Freaks and Bambaataa's Jazzy Five MCs. As he explains:

> At this time, I am involved in the downtown art scene as a painter myself, but also turned a lot of people in the downtown art scene on to the whole visual art of hip hop culture. There was an audience of people in that downtown world that were definitely open to different ideas, which was the cool thing about downtown New York culture at that time (Wheeler and Bascunan 2016).

From the encounter between hip hop and the rockers downtown, "a weird, new nightclub elite emerged" (Chang 20015, 151), and Bambaataa soon started to have a whole new body of followers: the new wake punk rockers. In his interview with Shadrach Kabango for Netflix's documentary, Grandmaster Caz illustrates how punk rockers and hip hop actually shared a same attitude and a same purpose:

> The punk rock scene was cool, because it was kind of wild. […] But, hey, hip hop was kind of wild. So we identified with that movement because it was kind of like the alternative to rock. And hip hop was the alternative to disco. So it was like, you know, we both shared that same plight (Wheeler and Bascunan 2016).

According to Dyke Hebdige and his studies on style, British punk was born as an alternative to glam rock, which "tended to alienate the majority of working-class youth" (Hebdige 1979, 62). In order to expose glam rock's contradictions, punks build an more grounded, maybe harsh aesthetic that "ran directly counter to the arrogance, elegance and verbosity of the glam rock superstars" (62). Hebdige also explains that the punk's devotion to alienation and to losing themselves in alien forms as a representation of the "crisis of modern life" and of the perceived condition of "unmitigated exile, voluntarily assumed" (66), allows us to read punk's aesthetic "in part as a while 'translation' of black 'ethnicity'"(64).

Hebdige's studies on punk mainly focus on the British phenomenon. Continuing the line of these previous considerations despite not necessarily agreeing with them, Andy Bennett also approaches the study of this subculture, though "not as a localized British phenomenon but rather as a global youth culture with roots in the US garage band scene of the mid-1960s" (Bennett 2001, 58). In his view, US punk finds his roots in the US garage band scene of 1965 to 1968 and the revival of its ethic by New York-based musicians in the mid 1970s, this is Patti Smith, Richard Hell, the Talking Heads, among others. In addition to this, Bennet explains that "the mid-1970s punk scene in New York represented a rejection of the stadium rock ethos. It was small-club music, played in straightforward, musically uncomplex fashion" (59).

Also characterized by a strongly pronounced "do it yourself" ethic and by having bricoleurs' qualities, in his contribution to *That's the Joint*, Andy Bennett refers to Beadle's studies when trying to explain hip hop's relationship with punk culture. In fact, Beadle has suggested that rap is "to the black American urban youth more or less what punk was to its British white counterpart" (Beadle 1993, 77).

Places such as Studio 54, the Negrill and The Mudd Club became the usual location where the punk rock crowd and the street-based artists met and mixed, since "the only membership card was creative, artistic talent" (Price 2006, 83). This radical change in terms of audience, which now was of primarily white people, marked the true beginning of hip hop's entrance in the mainstream: "There was always the cool alternative whites who bought into the new black phenomenon, a new cultural phenomenon, and then they would bring it to the mainstream. Even if it wasn't there, you could recognize it, you know, and that punk rocks and alternative people identified with hip hop" (Wheeler and Bascunan 2016).

Hence, by the early-1980s hip hop wasn't a local phenomenon anymore, happening in the Bronx's parks and house parties: it was blending with New York's underground culture and its artists. It didn't took long before the mutual influence became visible and the phenomenon went global. According to Dick Hebdige, by this time "the Zulu Nation had thousands of members worldwide. By this time a style had grown up round hip hop" (Hebdige 1987, 129).

If on the one hand, the release of *Rapper's Delight* by the Sugar Hill Gang represented a true explosion for hip hop in terms of media exposure and commercial success, on the other hand this product can't be considered legitimately representative of the culture. In this sense, I have previously explained how the idea of recording the first rap song didn't really come from within the hip hop community and how a close look at its contents proves its fragility in terms of originality and innovation. Therefore, *Rapper's Delight* marks probably just the first, yet controversial step towards the building of the phenomenon as we know it today, setting the ground of the long-lasting contradictions that characterize it.

Hip hop finds and owns its true voice only some years later. It is agreed that two tracks, both released in 1982 by two of the pioneering figures of the movement, are the musical proof that hip hop had reached its maturity as an art form and was finally ready to own its space: Afrika Bambaataa & The Soul Sonic Force's *Planet Rock* and Grandmaster Flash & the Furious Five's *The Message*. Despite their distinctiveness as musical products (they are very different in terms of style and content), these two hits were undoubtedly revolutionary, marking two fundamental turning-points within the culture and its perception and impact worldwide.

Bambataa's *Planet Rock* came as result of his encounter with Tom Silverman, "a white music journalist who has started a record label for twelve-inch dance singles" (Chang 2005, 171), under whose label, Tommy Boy, he had already released *Jazzy Sensations* in 1981. The record actually turned out to be a success, also thanks to Arthur Baker's contributions with drum machines, synthesizers and other sampling technology, and they were willing to produce more together. In the

meantime, according to what Chang refers, Bambaataa had realized that he could use his records to send out his message and the record companies would then spread it everywhere, and in *Planet Rock*, in fact, he managed to materialize this farsighted view and his well-known intention of merging funky beats and techno pop sounds.

Groundbreaking in many ways, mysterious like its creator, innovative and unexpected, the track perfectly captured not only the DJs intuitions and charisma, but also the spirit of that time in terms of production, lyrics and musical syncretism, proving that hip hop was a vehicle and a messenger that could now reach the world. With its unmistakable "trans-European" notes and its futuristic ambience, it's release also represents the birth of a new sound: electro-funk. Nevertheless, it came out as something completely different of what everybody else was doing at the time. In Chang's words:

> "Planet Rock"'s polycultural pastiche, framed by swooping, synthetized orchestral stabs, sucked the listener into another world – where dramatic melodies drifted across a barren landscape, […] where everyone could rock it, don't stop it. Not only did it sound unlike anything that had ever come out of the Bronx, it sounded unlike anything else anywhere. "Planet Rock" was hip-hop's universal invitation, a hypnotic vision of one world under a groove, beyond race, poverty, sociology and geography (172).

In fact, the philosophy behind it was as groundbreaking as the technology used to put it together. The idea that there were no boundaries, both in music and in public, and the merging of unexpected, distant music sources managed to send out a message of inclusion and union, finding the approval of its different receivers, from uptown to downtown, from New York to the world. It is, indeed, an example of how hip hop can be considered a postmodern art form.

The pioneering technology used to produce the track also made it a unique product for that time. As Afrika Bambaataa recalls: "We had the 808s, we had the Synclavier's synthesizers, and John Robie and he's playing the synthesizer as funky as Kraftwerk. That way we had with the Emulator, they did the scratching sounds, so we was getting heavy into all the new technology that was coming out (Wheeler and Bascunan 2016). Therefore, another important factor that expedited the evolution of hip hop culture from local to global is represented by the technological changes in music production. As Sarah Thornton explains, "in the 1960s, with the increased use of magnetic tapes, producers began to edit their wares into records of ideal, not real, events" (Thornton 1995, 51). Furthermore, in the 1970s and 1980s new instruments were introduced, such as samples and synthesizers that allowed producing original sounds and contributed to "the shifting of the record

from a secondary or derivative form to a primary, original one" (51). In Thornton's opinion, the recording technologies did not corrode or demystify the 'aura', indeed relocating it, and to her "the mass-produced cultural commodity is not necessarily imitative or artificial, but plausibly archetypical and authentic" (51).

With regards to hip hop music, technology indeed represents a decisive factor, since it made music production available to all those young artists who had no access to traditional musical instruments; it also allowed to create a dialogue between what was freshly produced (the beats) and what was circulating through the radios and other records, making it possible for this newly-born genre to somehow insert itself into a wider cultural landscape, with its very postmodern way of reinventing what already existed.

As I said before, the year of 1982 saw the release of anther, fundamental recording, considered by The Rolling Stone hip hop's number one song of all time.[5] With its poignant lyrics and its harsh, honest description of the urban ghetto, *The Message* demonstrates that hip hop finally had found its voice as a powerful social loudspeaker, a proper art form, committed to making a change in society: "That song is like a window into urban America for people that have never seen urban America or too afraid to go in. That's what that song was." (Grandmaster Flash in Wheeler and Bascunan 2016). If until then hip hop had been mainly worried with making good party records, from that moment on things will change forever and rap will become a synonym for information, knowledge and counterculture. In other words, from that moment it was clear to everybody that it had a true, poignant message to deliver:

> This was a record that allows people to see the potential to this as an art form. It really shows that hip hop could be very explicitly about politics, could be about pain, and about anger, and about all of these things that before that it really hadn't been that much about. I remember Rolling Stone, which had really never paid much of attention to hip hop at that point, gave that record, like, five stars or something. So even people who were like, anyone who was like a hater or a disbeliever, they all, their ears had to perk up and go: "Wow, this is something different" (Wheeler and Bascunan 2016).

Recorded by Sugar Hill Records, the song was credited to Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five. However, it seems that Flash took small part to its recording, and the track's authorship is to be seen in Sugar Hill's "creatives". Ogg and Upshall refer that a reference vocal track that already presented some verses, as for example the opening "It's like a jungle, sometimes

5 For further reading: https://www.rollingstone.com/music/lists/the-50-greatest-hip-hop-songs-of-all-time-20121205/grandmaster-flash-and-the-furious-five-the-message-19691231

it makes me wonder, how I keep from going under", was taken to Grandmaster Flash and his rappers, who were reticent about it. Yet, Mel Melle ended up adding his rhymes - among these, the famous "a child is born without state of mind" inspired by Steve Wonder's *Living for the City* – and the record was finally released. The rapper recalls its success as unanimous:

> When radio started playing it, the song really took off. And it became the first critically-acclaimed hip hop song, to whereas people that, they didn't like hip hop, even to this day there will be people that never really liked hip hop but they like "The Message": It actually changed the landscape. That broadened the horizons of what hip hop could be. (Wheeler and Bascunan 2016)

Despite not being the first rap song that had chosen to cover social issues such as institutional racism and social displacement (see Kurtis Blows' "The Breaks", "Tough" and "Hard times"), the structure of the song, its slow, discreet and repetitive beat, allowed the lyrics to stand out and the rapper to predominate over the DJ: "because it was set to a beat too slow to rock a crowd, [it] focused the listener on Bootee and Melle's vivid lyrics and their delivery – neither frenetic nor flamboyant, but instead, by turns, resigned and enraged" (Chang 2005, 179).

The deference that passed though the rhymes was a perfect representation of the state of dissatisfaction and disgust with Reagan's recession and economic plan, the years of neglect, unemployment, depression and hopelessness that were transforming, actually consuming and destroying, America's urban youths. Michael Eric Dyson considers that "*The Message* along with Flash's *New York, New York* pioneered the social awakening of rap into a form combining social protest, musical creation, and cultural expression" (Dyson 2004, 62; italics are mine).

The record was unanimously applauded by both the public and the critics, hip hop lovers and outsiders. Moreover, it shifted the paradigm of what type of records will be made from that moment and what type content was going to be in those records. It was shocking, probably as unexpected as *Planet Rock*, but revolutionary in a very distinct way. If *Planet Rock*'s vision was of "universal communion and transcendence", *The Message* translated the ghetto's "strive and specificity" (Chang 2005, 179), proving to be so truthful about the generation's present and so influential for the future of their culture.

The Message proved that hip hop had the insight to move beyond the parties. It also proved that as a culture and an art form, hip hop as mature enough to acknowledge the power of its voice and use it to fight the socio-political depression that America was going through back then. Ten years after "making its first noise", thanks to the innovative sounds of its DJs, their insightful

visions of unity and love and their compelling, universal, struggle against injustice, abandonment and poverty, hip hop reached the world and became the voice of many youths scattered globally.

By the mid-1980, while North-American rap was living its well-known "Golden Age", new local expressions started to make their appearance on the global level, each one as a product of the appropriating and reterritorialization of the original forms and strategies, enriching them with their own peculiarities.

1.4 Hip hop culture in the academic arena

When approaching hip hop culture, the first thing one may notice is that in four decades it has grown into a global practice with a very peculiar code, a mixture of language, clothes, attitude, music and values. Hip hop, in fact, besides owning its place a music genre, has also become a "style" recognized and adopted worldwide.

According to Dick Hebdige, "the meaning of subculture is […] always in dispute, and style is the area in which the opposing definitions clash with most dramatic force" (Hebdige 1979, 3). In his well-known book, *Subculture. The meaning of style* (1979), the British media theorist and sociologist analyses Britain's post-war youth subcultures emphasizing the historical, class, racial and socioeconomic conditions that favored the formation of each subculture (from the teddy boys, to the mods, up to the punks, among others) and underlining how each style represents a symbolic form of resistance to dominant ideology, hegemony and social normalization.

Starting with the definition of culture in its different aspects and through various theoretical approaches that have been questioning its functioning, Hebdige stresses the idea that "all aspects of culture possess a semiotic value, and the most taken-for-granted phenomena can function as signs: as elements in communication systems governed by semantic rules and codes which are not themselves directly apprehended in experience" (Hebdige 1979, 13). However, the author's attention goes to some aspects that are considered being more relevant, such as Roland Bathes' theory on myths and signs, the impact of ideology in everyday life under the form of common sense and the dynamics through which hegemony finds its manifestations and how it "refers to a situation in which a provisional alliance of certain social groups can exert 'total social authority' over other subordinate groups" (16).

According to his observation, the meaning of youth subcultures is noteworthy because their emergence has marked a breakdown in the consensus in the post-war period. In other words:

> the challenge to hegemony which subcultures represent is not issued directly by them. Rather it is expressed obliquely, in style. The objections are lodged, the contradictions displayed (and, as we shall see, 'magically resolved') at the profoundly superficial level of appearances: that is, at the level of signs. For the sign-community, the community of myth-consumers, is not a uniform body (17).

Style becomes extremely meaningful within subcultures since its transformations are "gestures, movements towards a speech which […] challenges the principle of unity and cohesion, which contradicts the myth of consensus" (18).

Even if Hebdige's research doesn't focus explicitly on hip hop culture, his contributions and his analysis of British post-war youth subcultures can be crucial to the understanding of this specific cultural phenomenon, representing a model through which we can observe it. Moreover, what is particularly relevant to our study is Hebdige's position with regards to the similar functioning of all subcultures: they initially form through a shared struggle of resistance and generate a response of fear and skepticism within society; however, their spreading normally attracts the attention and pressure of the media as well as the market and these entities end up commodifying the different styles and music, causing their "death" as subcultural forces and shifting their elements to the mainstream ground. In other words, "as soon as the original innovations which signify 'subculture' are translated into commodities and made generally available, they become 'frozen', […] they become codified, made comprehensible, rendered at once public property and profitable merchandise" (96).

In this sense, hip hop's path isn't different and I believe that today its subversive, rebellious and radical force has "frozen" due to its commodification, and that one of the consequences of its entrance in the music market was its diversification and internal division. We will focus on this aspect later since it represents a fundamental shift at both a global and a local level.

Hip hop has always been a strategy through which the young generations overcame their condition of marginalization, becoming quickly a dystopian narrative through which a state of abandonment and the lack of opportunities could be negotiated and retransformed. By readapting musical techniques and traditions, the young DJs of the beginning of the 1970 — such as Dj Kool Herc, Afrika Bambaata and Grandmaster Flash, this is "the Holy Trinity" — started filling the houses and the streets with beats, inviting the community to dance and speak to their rhythms, imposing new rituals of aggregation and socialization that gradually became an alternative to criminal activities and violence.

As any other subcultural movement or manifestation, hip hop wasn't designed with a specific "plan". It was just a product of the moment, a way to pass time having fun together, living the streets as meeting points where people could finally socialize peacefully. At the time, there was no political intention in the act of meeting in houses or public spaces, nor there was an artistic manifesto. Hip hop became a new, subversive, political tool for the youths through time and space, probably thanks to the powerful message of its rhymes and its ability to represent a state of subalternity not as a passive or marginal position, but as a conscious condition of strength, where the power to resist against adversities turned into free, creative, self-expression. It soon became the narrative of a new generation of voices, a new perspective on reality and the answer to all sorts of inequalities, as well as a socio-political movement.

David Foster Wallace and Mark Costello suggest an interesting interpretation of rap in their book *Signifying rappers* (2013): after explaining that a stereotype and a synecdoche share the same ground by referring to a part that stands for a whole, the authors note that the latter's symbolic power allows it "to absorb, comprehend and represent" (Costello and Wallace 2013, 81) the whole it belongs to, while the first one lacks of this symbolism. Hence, following the authors' argument, the power of the synecdoche depends precisely on the existence of a community that serves as a setting and a context, as well as on the presence of a public and a referent. In their words, it depends on "a world to which the Part belongs and at the same time, for its powerful dual function, that it transcends" (82), and in order for this community to reach its expression it also needs to feel the external pressure of a real or imagined Other. According to the authors, it is very easy to make the mistake of interpreting rap on the basis of some poor simplifications and stereotypes, while it is actually an element of a complex network of relations that make it an even more powerful and meaningful phenomenon. In fact, we are actually in the presence of a perfect example of a synecdoche, a part that stands for a whole, the symbol of a community that reacts to the oppression of its Other.

However, nowadays, we can observe that somehow the Part has become the Whole, or even better, it has created a new Whole. Hip hop has built its own identity, amplifying its horizons and its aesthetics, charging its manifestations with political and social meanings that have been received worldwide by both performers and public. If once one could see in hip hop exclusively as a marginal and irreverent cultural product, which claimed its peripheral position, nowadays rappers are extremely notorious public figures, who have acquired more social, economic, and cultural capital — or in other world symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1992) — than they probably ever expected. Also, as a musical genre and product hip hop occupies a central position worldwide, within the marketplace as well as among the most varied public.

As Morgan and Bennet state, hip hop is today "a lingua franca for popular and political youth culture around the world" (Morgan and Bennett 2011, 179) representing a transnational community with which youth groups identify and thanks to which they find their own ways of expression. Moreover, the impulse for the creative ferment of the young Afro-Americans and Latinos that led to the first *block parties* around 1973 in the West Bronx can be traced back to some radical urban changes, to the lack of employment due to New York's economic paralysis, as well as the migratory fluxes that from the Caribbean, and more specifically from Jamaica, draw entire families to the United States seeking for a job and better quality of life in the 1950s and 1960s.

Jeff Chang's reference book *Can't stop, won't stop* (2005) offers a more detailed analysis of the intricate network of factors that led to the appearance of hip hop culture in New York in the 1970s. Literary in style, the book offers an engaging text filled with valuable historical data, as well as many original interviews. In Chang's view, the man responsible of causing the major damages to the citizens of New York at that time, was named Robert Moses, who the author describes as "the most powerful urban builder of all times" (Chang 2005, 11). Chang argues that, on one side, Moses' project of the Cross-Bronx Expressway (built between 1948 and 1972) was "a modernist catastrophe of massive proportions" (10) since it "left behind a wake of environmental violence […] destroying entire apartment buildings and private homes" (10). This led to what he calls "the white exodus out of the Bronx" (11), also drastically lowering the property value in the area. On the other hand, Moses' proposal was part of a bigger plan of urban renewal that gave him the right to relocate the poor African-American, Puerto Rican and Jewish families living in Manhattan's ghettos in new "tower-in-a-park" vast housing complexes, a concept by the modernist architect Le Corbusier as part of his vision of a "Radiant City".[6] According to Chang "in New York's area's construction explosion of the 1950s and '60s, middle-class whites got sprawling, prefab white picket-fence […] suburbs, while working-class strugglers and strivers got nine or more monotonous slabs of housing rising out of isolating, desolate, soon-to-be crime-ridden "parks" (12).

In fact, one of the consequences of the radical change of the social fabric of this area was precisely the dramatic increase of the conflict between white and black and brown youths in

6 The *Ville Radieuse* was an unrealized project designed by Le Corbusier in 1930. Influenced by the theories of the syndicalist movement, he formulated his own view of the ideal city, a utopian dream to reform the polluted industrial city by building "towers in a park" where workers might live high above the streets, surrounded by green space and far from their factories. Le Corbusier was trying to find a fix for the problems of urban pollution and overcrowding. His plan, also known as "Towers in the Park," proposed high-rise buildings each surrounded by green space. Each building was set on "superblocks," and space was clearly delineated between different uses. The project and ideas were collected in the book *The Radiant City*, first published in 1933 and then republished in 1964. It ended up influencing planners for decades to come, who used it as a reference in their projects of urban renewal. However, these places have often been considered popularizing high density social housing and savagery. Most of the copies around the world became crime-ridden tenements, and many have since been classified as errors in social engineering.

schoolyard and street battles. The white youth gangs started to ambush the new arrivals, who responded by uniting in new gags. Either as an act of self-defense or for the seeking of power, these conflicts transformed the Bronx into the theatre of uncontrolled violence. Another consequence of "the Manhattan decontamination" that forced most African-American and Puerto Rican families to move to the South Bronx - "where public housing was booming but jobs had already fled" (11) - was that by the mid-1970s the official youth unemployment hit one of its highest rates. The vast majority of the youngsters didn't finish high school and were unemployed, and street gangs like the Savage Nomads and the Black Spades had divided the district's neighborhoods up on a block-by-block basis. All these factors contributed to the aggravation of the state of uncontrolled violence in the streets, but more importantly led to the aggravation of juvenile delinquency and criminal occupation.

This plan of urban renewal ended up increasing the social and political gap within the population exacerbating the urban space as a field of segregation and exclusion. Due to the state of abandonment and dissatisfaction, the young generations of the neighborhood found their response to this situation through new, alternative ways of self-realization that allowed them to reinvent themselves as well as the space they belonged to. With Chang's words, we can say that "if blues culture had developed under the conditions of oppressive, forced labor, hip hop culture would arise from the condition of no work" (13).

According to the New York Times review, Jeff Chang's history of what he calls "the hip-hop generation" is "less a history of music than a record of the cultural movement the music inspired" as well as an attempt to "define a generation who's only unifying characteristic may be its opposition to any definitions an outsider might impose" (Abramovich 2005).[7] Through his stories and interviews, Chang manages to explain thoroughly how this culture arose due to innovators such as DJ Kool Herc and Grandmaster Flash, who turned their turntables into musical instruments, and to rappers, break-dancers and graffiti writers, who came to integrate the "four elements" of hip hop. He also points out at the figure of Afrika Bambaataa as a leading figure, formerly in charge of the Black Spades, who then became the founder of the Zulu Nation, a peaceful organization that organized cultural events for youths (see note 3 of this chapter).

Chang's efforts in reconstructing the early hip hop scene, from New York to Los Angeles, the implications that it had with political and religious movements and its impact in the North American society of that time, are all undeniable facts. His collection of original material represents a true, valuable resource for today's investigations and a source of priceless knowledge for those

[7] Full review is available at https://www.nytimes.com/2005/09/04/books/review/cant-stop-wont-stop-a-nation-of-millions.html

who are interested in thoroughly understanding the roots of this culture.

Emmet G. Price also offers an interesting perspective on the changes that affected the Bronx and transformed it into "America's worst slum", nonetheless the tireless creative laboratory that led to the birth of hip hop. In his book *Hip Hop Culture*, Price explains how the transition of the Bronx from a middle-class residential area to one of the worst neighborhoods in the country was due to three major factors. In his own words: "The actions of the city coordinator, Robert Moses; the opening of Co-op City; and an abundance of arsons during the 1970s. These three factors causes the mass exodus of working- and middle-class families from the Bronx" (Price 2006, 6). Hence, in line with Chang's view, Price identifies once again Robert Moses as the man responsible for the critical worsening of the situation of this specific borough. With the construction of the Cross-Bronx Expressway, which "devastated the once stable community" and his plans of removing the single-family homes in exchange of the above-mentioned tower-in-a-park buildings, "the demographic of the inhabitants changed" (6). In addition to these measures, in an effort to "clean and clear the areas of Chinatown, Soho, Greenwich Village and Little Italy, and to make room for the lower Manhattan Expressway" (6) the "master builder" proposed an Urban Renewal Project in 1961 that further relocated people in the Bronx.

Moreover, Price illustrates how the opening of Co-op City in 1968, "a massive offering of 15,000 new subsidized apartments in massive towers in the north-east corner of the Bronx" (6) created an opportunity for many families of highly competitive housing. He then explain that "the mass departure of economically stable families from the central and lower Bronx, and the influx of more impoverished families into the Bronx, transformed the formerly thriving area into a 'city of despair'" (7). The over 12,000 reported fires that took place from 1973 to 1977 were another consequence of the abandonment in which the Bronx had fallen. The majority of the properties then fell into the hand of slumlords who chased profit with no regard to means and fires spread all over the area among mover 5000 buildings: more than 100000 units of housing were destroyed in order to take money from insurance companies.

After New York's power blackout, on July 13, 1977, the term "South Bronx" came as an effort to separate the "good" Bronx – some north-eastern areas – from the "bad" Bronx – the southern, western and central areas – that had been devastated by vandalisms, thefts and destruction and were the result of years of decline and downfalls. If at first the term was used to describe just a small area of the borough, it soon grew and covered over 20 square miles, "pretty much everything south of Fardham Road" (7). Also, "the overwhelming signs of urban decay and political disenfranchisement, made a fertile territory for the crime, drugs and gangs" (7), yet, at the same

time they were the fertile ground for the birth of a new, subversive, culture.

Despite being officially rooted in the Bronx, hip hop is part of a long line of Black American and African diasporic cultural traditions. As a cultural manifestation, it can be linked to the space Paul Gilroy theorized as the *Black Atlantic*. In Gilroy's words, the black Atlantic world corresponds to "one small area in the grand consequence of […] the stereophonic, bilingual, or bifocal culture forms originated by, but no longer the exclusive property of, blacks dispersed within the structures of feeling, producing, communicating and remembering (Gilroy 1993, 3). By pointing at the difficulties of being black in the Western world, and at the specific forms of "double-consciousness" (Du Bois 1897) and unfinished identities that this condition generates, the author looks beyond Britain to the United States, stressing the idea that an international perspective is needed.[8]

Gilroy's interest is about exploring "the special political problems that arise from the fatal junction of the concept of nationality with the concept of culture" (2) without falling back on the ideas of either cultural nationalism or creolization, mestizaje and hybridity, since all these terms are "rather unsatisfactory ways of naming the process of cultural mutation and restless (dis)continuity that exceed racial discourse […]" (2).

Thus, in order to avoid all forms of ethnic absolutism, whether of Eurocentric or Afrocentric nature, he proposes the concept of Black Atlantic as the vehicle for a new approach: "In opposition to both of these nationalist and ethnically absolute approaches, I want to develop the suggestion that cultural historians could take the Atlantic as one single, complex unit of analysis in their discussions of the modern world and use it to proceed an explicitly transnational and intercultural perspective" (Gilroy 1993, 15).

Through the detailed analysis of individual writers and performers, Gilroy's critical perspective on British cultural studies, as well as African American literary and cultural studies and Pan-Africanism allows him to build new postulates on the application of the concept of race. Sound, movement and written texts offer interesting glances of the strategies through which the oppressive

[8] The concept of "double-consciousness" was coined by sociologist W.E.B. Du Bois with reference to the African American condition. In his well-known article, *Strivings for the Negro People*, Du Bois explains how psychologically challenging it is to live in a racist white society. He describes the Negros' condition as a feeling of two-ness: "an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings." (DU BOIS 1897, 194). This peculiar sensation of double-consciousness resembles a "sense of always be looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (194).
Du Bois then explains how the history on the American Negro is the history of his struggle, "the longing to attain self-consciousness manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self" (195), being both a Negro and an American. However, he also points at the limits of prejudice, which opposes culture to barbarism and "higher" races to the "lower" ones. In Du Bois' view, the Negro hopes for "a higher synthesis of civilization and humanity" as well as a "unifying ideal of race" (197) through "the fostering of the traits and talents of the Negro not in opposition to, but in conformity with, the greater ideals of the American republic" (197).

past of slavery and the long-lasting diaspora finds its expression and race is used as a metaphor of essence.

In Peter Erickson's review of the book, "what differentiates Gilroy's work [from other related researches] is Gilroy's greater stress on cross-national exchanges and his much sharper political vision" (Erickson 1997, 507). Gilroy's *Black Atlantic* is a structure of thought as well as the historical nexus between contemporary identities; it is also a symbolic space where we can observe the different manifestations of the memory of slavery, of a condition of displacement and of the tensions of a double-consciousness that need to be understood following Zygmunt Bauman's idea of "counterculture of modernity".

Particularly relevant to my study are Gilroy's observations on black music because of his many different examples that go from the slave spirituals to contemporary hip hop. Black music is considered being obstinately and consistently committed to the idea of a better future; it communicates information, organizes consciousness and deploys the forms of subjectivity required by political agency, and its moral aspects are worthy of being observed since they translate the struggle and courage of living in the present. Due to its normative character and its utopian aspirations, black music "is not a counter-discourse but a counterculture that defiantly reconstructs its own critical, intellectual, and moral genealogy in a partially hidden public sphere of its own" (38), also reflecting "the idea of doubleness […] which is often argued to be the constitutive force giving rise to black experience in the modern world" (38).

In order to explain the controversy and the debate over the origins of hip hop – "the powerful expressive medium of America's urban black poor which has created a global youth movement" (33) - Gilroy argues that:

> the musical components of hip hop are a hybrid form nurtured by the social relations of the South Bronx, where Jamaican sound system culture was transplanted during the 1970s and put down new roots. In conjunction with specific technological innovations, this routed and re- rooted Caribbean culture set in train a process that was to transform black America's sense of itself and a large portion of the popular music industry as well (Gilroy 1993, 33).

By underlining its malleability and transnational character the author manifestings his intent to avoid interpretations that reproduce an absolutist and exclusive approach to the relationship between race, ethnicity and cultures that ends up segregating cultures and prevents us from understanding these production as hybrid cultural forms.

Gilroy looks at hip hop music as an example of fusion, not only in musical terms, but also with regards to class and politics related matters. Being part of the black music expressions, it can be "used as a means to gauge the social progress of spontaneous self-creation which has sedimented together by endless pressure of economic exploitation, political racism, displacement, and exile" (82). In addition to that, the author states that "hip hop culture has recently provided the raw material for a bitter contest between black vernacular expression and repressive censorship of artistic work" (83), becoming a symbol of racial authenticity.

However, African cultures in the diaspora have never avoided contact with other cultures and have never formed a homogeneous group. In some ways, the African diaspora represents a nation without territory and without a state, therefore putting its constituents in constant need of cultural and historical affirmation while giving rise to a continuous process of hybridization. Its aesthetics accentuate the hybridity and fragmentation of the black subject, now even more in conflict because of questions of class and gender. As part of the productions of black music, hip hop opposes the world as it is, confronting it with a world that the marginalized would like to see. Gilroy notes two functions of hip hop music: the first is "fulfilment," which demands that modernity delivers what it promised, while the second is "utopian," through which music presents alternatives to the modern vision of society (36).

Studies on black music and black cultures have increasingly dedicated their attention and analysis to hip hop, precisely due to its profound connections to a variety of black traditional cultural and musical practices. The first academic works strictly on hip hop made their appearance between the mid-1980 and the beginning of the 1990s, and since then scholars from many different areas have been contributing to the building of a solid body of publications. Moreover, the global spreading of the culture has inspired studies on this practice coming from many different geographical areas.

Yet, pioneer works on north American rap are Tricia Rose's *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (1994) and Robin D. G. Kelley's *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class* (1994). Both studies have helped lay a solid foundation for contemporary investigations on hip hop's history and development.

According to Derrick P. Alridge and James B. Stewart, Rose's dissertation was the first to provide an extensive historical study of hip hop (Alridge and Stewart 2005): by focusing mainly on rap music, Rose examines the historical development of hip hop and its impact on youth cultures, also anticipating the discussion on black female rappers. In her review of the book, Venise Berry states that "it is a timely critique of the musical, social and cultural relationship between rap music,

black culture and American society" (Berry 1996). Rose analyses four main fields of the rap phenomenon: its historic evolution, the technological and musical development, its political impact and reception, and its sexual implications from a female perspective. Organized in five chapters, the book offers an in-depth understanding of rap and its relationship with today's society. By supporting her thesis with interviews with rappers, personal remembrances and anecdotes, as well as deconstruction of lyrics and videos, Rose's work lays a solid foundation for contemporary investigations.

In the latter work mentioned above, Robin D. G. Kelley adapts several of his previously published articles into one single study describing black working-class resistance outside traditional organizations and political movements. Keely's study follows the perspective of the "history from below", following radical historians such as W.E.B. DuBois, E.P. Thompson, and C.L.R. James, who interpret events from the spectrum of class struggle. In aiming at memorializing history's marginalized, Kelley doesn't focus solely on hip hop culture. However, he brings to the surface events and issues that needed to be addressed, as the blacks' early fight for space on buses in Birmingham during World War II and the tensions between working-poor and middle-class blacks or black's involvement as volunteers in the Spanish Civil War. His analysis helps with the understanding of the civil rights movement and detects the collective effort to gain power over institutions on which black people depended though history. Also, in his analysis of present times, Kelly links rap to black history and locates it along the continuum of black working-class culture, underlining that, if on the one hand the phenomenon has changed since its appearance, on the other hand the conditions that generated it haven't.

Another fundamental contribution to the field of Hip Hop Studies is David Toop's "trilogy", *Rap Attack*. Covering a wide time frame – from the 1980s up to the late 1990s – Toop's works provide an interpretation that transcends the historical contextualization and framework and channels hip hop's attitude and values, probably because they were written and reviewed in close contact with the hip hop community. Having published the first edition of the volume in 1984, according to Kai Fikentscher "Toop's work is a genealogy of rap, offering a chronical of rap's development as a music stylistically defined by the names of its protagonists" (Fikentscher 1994). The core body of the book, in fact, is a step-by-step chronology of rap's progression from the street to the music market. The second edition, published in 1991, is enriched with four additional chapters; however, "Toop's prose leans toward a somewhat sensationalistic newsflash-style" (Fikenstscher 1994) and sometimes it lacks the insightful interpretative framework of other works. Finally, the last edition (and third element of the "trilogy"), *Rap Attack 3* (1999) is another, updated, version of the previous one. As the author explains, "the story now ends at the beginning of the first

section – Millennial Tension: Octopus People Invading – and then goes back to the beginning and ends" (Toop 1999, vii): providing a somewhat nostalgic reflection of the 1970s and 1908s that wasn't part of the previous editions, Toop maintains his peculiar style and the book presents a wide of photos of the first years of the practice.

Similar to Toop's work is Alex Ogg's and David Upshal's *The Hip Hop Years: a History of Rap* (1999). It is, in fact, an account of rap's rise through the voices and experiences of hip hoppers from the past to more recent times, towards its transformation into a commercial phenomenon. Also, the book offers an interesting glossary at the end, which can be helpful with the specific terminology that accompanies this culture, as well a central section with photographs of some of the most relevant MCs.

As I said earlier, contributions about hip hop culture are being continuously updated. Here, I am offering a panoramic, retrospective view. Therefore, I have to mention the important works by Bakari Kitwana, who's *The Hip Hop Generation: Young Blacks and the Crisis in African American Culture* (2002) offers a sharps analysis of this generation, confronting the crisis and the challenges that the African American youth had to face during those times. Kitwana describes the hip hop generation as "African Americans born between 1965 and 1984 who came of age in the eighties and nineties and who share specific set of values and attitudes" (Kitwana 2002, 4) and identifies six factors that have impacted its worldview: the visibility of Black youth within popular cultures, the globalizing forces, segregation and its universal presence, the racial implications of public policies and criminal justice, media representation of the black youths and finally the change of the quality of life for the black youth in the decades of the 1980s and 1990s. Kitwana also discusses the appropriation of black youth culture by mainstream America, showing how male culture has increased visibility and influence in shaping popular culture. Moreover, he examines the challenges of a generation who had to "come to age with feminism and women rights so much apart from mainstream culture" (90), and for this and the many other topics discussed Kitwana's work is essential to the understanding of hip hop culture.

Another fundamental work in the building of the field of Hip Hop Studies *That's the Joint!: The Hip Hop Studies Reader* (2004) a collection of essays edited by Murray Forman and Mark Anthony Neal that provides contributions from scholars and journalists covering almost the whole range of topics raised in Hip Hop studies. The collection features essays from a variety of disciplines and perspective, and from many important scholars such as Paul Gilroy, Robin D.G Kelley, Joan Morgan, Tricia Rose, Richard Shusterman and many other central figures to the study of hip hop and the building of this peculiar academic field. It represents a rich, wide-ranging source

of information and observation on hip hop culture, from the early years up to more recent times and from distinct perspectives, and its relevance is also given by the fact that it (finally) integrates a section on women's participation.

As I said, literature on hip hop has been expanding every year since it became a subject of interest for academics. It is almost impossible to keep track of all the publications that focus on the understanding of the movement. Therefore, we have suggested here just a few, reference works for my research, and more is to be mentioned throughout the chapter.

The present chapter is meant to offer a general, panoramic view on how hip hop culture slowly paved it's way not only into people's lives and in today's world, but also into the academic field. Studies on the phenomenon have increased drastically in the past decades, and it's almost impossible to trace all of them down. To conclude my analysis, I would like to stress that today hip hop culture has achieved legitimation in the academic arena – proved by the existence of journals dedicated exclusively to it (such as the *The Journal of Hip Hop Studies* for instance) while it has also built its own field: the field of Hip Hop Studies (Miller, Hodge, Coleman, and Chaney 2014). Hence, its impact and value are both undeniable.

Yet, since I had to rely mainly on male voices in order to build the body of this chapter, in its last part I offer a brief introduction on the central issue of my work: women's participation as rappers. My focus here is on the figures that took part to the culture in its early years, using the opportunity to discuss what can be considered one of hip hop's most evident limitations: male chauvinism, and the consequent exclusion or marginalization of female performers.

1.5. Female rappers: a brief introduction

Despite hip hop's legitimation inside and outside the academic arena, many issue still need to be addressed. As I will explain in depth further in this work, women have been suffering, throughout the four decades of its history, of an uncomfortable, unpleasant and unfair state of subalternity: not only because of their struggles for actually being part of the culture, but more importantly because they have constantly been fighting against the oppressive power of hegemonic masculinity. This, in fact, is imbued in hip hop culture – as it is in society - and it has been constantly attempting at making women less visible than men. Focusing on female MCs, I aim at offering here a brief overview of their early participation both in the building of hip hop as a

cultural reference and in contributing to its consolidation: women, in fact, have been as present as men throughout the past decades, and have become true feminist and womanist icons.

After observing rap and its dynamics, I question if we are facing what Pierre Bourdieu referred to as the "paradox of doxa" (Bourdieu 2002). The French sociologist uses the term *doxa* in his *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977; 1972) to indicate what is taken for granted in any particular society. He identifies its "paradox" then, as the process through which this predetermined order and its power and control relationships, its privileges and injustices, remain unchanged and preserved, without there being transgressions or subversions. The preservation of male domination fits this dynamic: it represents the most shocking example of a "paradoxical submission" (Bourdieu 2002), which is a consequence of "the symbolic violence […], invisible to the eyes of its victims, that takes place essentially through the utterly symbolic channels of communication and cognition, or more precisely, of miscognition" (Bourdieu 2002, 1-2). Following his analysis, male domination can then be considered an ordinary social relationship where the logic of control takes place in the name of a symbolic principle that is assimilated both by the dominator and the dominated: in other words, it functions in the same way as a language does, or a lifestyle, that is, as a code that is absorbed and shared by the community. In this sense, masculine domination often remains unquestioned and ends up being incorporated within social and cultural practices as the "obvious" norm, and much is still needed in order to dismantle "the processes responsible for this transformation of history into nature, of cultural arbitrariness into the *natural*" (Bourdieu 2002, 4).

As far as rap is concerned, and more in general the music industry, throughout history women's contributions have constantly and consistently been marginalized, especially when they were of African descendance – since patriarchy is inextricably linked to colonialism within the Western world. Especially in rap, lyrics have been often built around themes such as violence, sex, the objectification of women, arrogance and heterosexual masculinity as an hegemonic norm. Hence, women have been relegated to the background, both in practical terms – that is, singing merely in choruses – and in symbolic ones: their voices and their stories being hard to find and/or hear. Yet, since the genre's early days, female rappers have been building their space within it, unapologetically sharing their experiences of the world, and the community, they lived in. Despite having different styles and contents, women who rap(ped) all share(d) the same fierce and independence when willing to remain true to themselves and to achieve recognition, frequently exposing how violent masculine domination could (and can) be. Among these: Mc Lyte, the first rapper to release a solo album (*Lyte as a Rock*, 1988); Queen Latifah, who became known for addressing issues within the lives of Black women – such as sexual harassment, domestic violence and the need to build a strong coalition; Salt-N-Pepa, known for being the he first females within

rap music to win a Grammy (1995) and for openly speaking about sexuality and feminism; Lauryn Hill, a milestone not just in female music history but in music as a whole; Lil Kim, who subverted the implicit rule that stated that female MCs had to present themselves with masculine attitudes and embraced feminine sensuality and its expression as a means to dominate a male centered world; Missy Elliot, whose body of work makes her a fundamental figure within modern music; Erykah Baduh, who merged rap with soul, blues, jazz and a wide range of historical and musical references. These women are just some of the powerful characters that have emerged from rap and have achieved global recognition. And today the list has grown bigger and stronger with names such as Cardi B, Noname, SZA, Rapsody and Beyoncé, who are just another few examples.

Moreover, studies about rap have already pinpointed at their presence so my intention here is to reinforce this. In its chapter on Northamerican hip hop, the *Garland Encyclpedia of World Music* refers that "women have been part of hip hop's expression since its early days, primarily as part of MC crews such as Family Four Plus One and Sugar Hill's female group, Sequence" (Norfleet 2001, 696). This latter trio, in fact, was the second group to sign with the famous record company (known for producing rap's first global hit, *Rappers' Delight* in 1979): Cheryl Cook (Cheryl The Pearl), Gwendolyn Chislom (Blondie) and its leading singer, Angie Brown Stone (Angie B.) became known for the success of their song *Funk You Up*, that was released the same year as the one by their male peers (Sugar Hill Gang). Yet, according to the author, "women MCs were mostly seen as novelty acts, with [only] a few exception" (696). According to the *Encyclopedia*, the mid-1980s saw the "momentary" popularization of female rappers through answer songs against male rappers; in 1984, Roxanne Shante released her hit record *Roxanne Roxanne* starting the feminist movement in hip hop (Mohammed-baksh and Coy Callison 2015); also, the year of 1986 sees the release of Salt N Pepa's first album (*Hot, cool and vicious*), and the group became "the most successful hip-hop group with its first album" (696), as well as of Queen Latifah's *Hail the Queen* – loaded with empowering messages directed to women - and MC Lyte's *Lyte as a feather*.

As Mohammed-baksh and Coy Callison mention, "the 1980s saw a strong feminist movement in hip hop music" (354). And women didn't stop making their appearance with the market and the music scene also during the 1990s, when artists such as Lil' Kim and Foxy Brown, for instance, start openly celebrating female sexuality and sensuality through very explicit lyrics and publicity campaigns that promoted them as sex symbols (Norfleet 2001). Yet, their attitude towards sexuality has often threatened the understanding of their messages. Being mostly produced by men (the question here is: were there many female producers back then?), these artists also struggled to achieve full independence and equal recognition, again triggering the reflection about the

constraints suffered because of male hegemony, especially within rap. According to the researchers mentioned above, today

> many popular female rappers today seem to play into the stereotypes created by society at large and male rappers, resulting in the dominant masculine hegemonic overtones that are ever-present in modern hip hop music, regardless of the rapper's gender. Although there is a growth in female rappers, both in numbers and popularity, male rappers still dominate the field (Mohammed-baksh and Coy Callison 2015, 354).

Moreover, female MCs have been disregarded not only by the mass media, but also by scholars. With regard to this, Morgan (2004) considers that women have become almost invisible within rap and Hunter (2011) argues that their objectification within rap is due to white consumers. Yet, "since the summer of 1989, there has been a marked increase in media attention to women rappers. Most of the articles have been written by women and have tried to shed some light on female rappers and offer a feminist analysis of their contributions" (Rose 2004, 292). Just a few other studies have pointed their attention towards them. Among these, Tricia Rose (1994) was within the first academic voices to dedicate a space for the debate about the contributions by female rappers. In her view

> Black women rappers interpret and articulate the fears, pleasures and promises of young black women whose voices have been relegated to the margins of the public discourse. They are integral and resistant voices in rap music and in popular music in general who sustain an ongoing dialogue with their audiences and with male rappers about sexual promiscuity, emotional commitment, infidelity, the drug trade, racial politics, and black cultural history (Rose 1994, 146).

Hence, women's contribution and participation to hip hop is much more than a musical matter: it's also about resistance and struggle against dominant discourses. Women also have their peculiarities, mostly in the themes around which they build their works. Again according to Rose (1994) "black women's rappers central contestation in the arena of sexual politics" (147) while men focus more on police harassment, for instance. In this sense, female rappers are to be considered "sexually progressive, antisexist voices in rap music" (147). Tricia Rose also identifies three predominant themes in the works by female MCs: "heterosexual courtship, the importance of the female voice and mastery in women's rap and black female public displays of physical and sexual freedom" (147) which are all articulated both in dialogue with male rappers and in response to related issues such as dominant ideas of femininity, feminism and female sexuality. In her pioneering work, *Black noise* (1994), Rose argues that discussions on women rappers tend to have two main positions:

either they argue that women are feminist voices who fight against sexism in rap, and/or they devalue women's significance as a consequence of a sexist exclusion (149). Hence, often works by women are observed as being opposed to men and they are rarely considered in dialogue with them, or just as being part of the same community.

Previous to Rose's analyses, Nancy Guevara (1987) had already offered her insight to the debate about women within hip hop culture highlighting the "exclusion and/or trivialization of women's role in hip hop" (Guevara 1987, 163) and later Joan Morgan (1997; 1999) identified women's rap as a useful cultural site for examining constructions of gender, sexuality, and feminist discourse. However, my aim here is to make a first step within the debate about the issues and potentiality related with women rapping, and how their contributions have to be taking equally into consideration once we acknowledge hip hop's role in shaping and giving voice to youth that globally struggle and resist dominant narratives and cultural stereotypes.

CHAPTER 2

HIP HOP CULTURE IN PORTUGAL

After observing how hip hop culture came to birth in the United States, the present chapter focuses on its local manifestation in Portugal. Researchers such as António Contador, Teresa Fradique, Derek Pardue, Rui Cidra and Soraia Simões, among others, agree that hip hop culture made its first appearance in Portugal in the eighties, more precisely between 1984 and 1986, through its performative element: breakdance. Rap's first manifestations as an underground practice have been registered mainly in the Miratejo neighborhood and in the city of Almada – which Barbara Barbosa Neves' describes as the Bronx of Portugal (Neves 2004, 88). As a culture and a music genre, rap reaches its full expression between 1994 and 1996, this is, with its commodification, and today it is considered a fully mass-mediatic culture.

However, a closer look at Portugal's socio-political situation and at the changes that affected the last four decades of the country's history, can be useful to identify the complex network of factors that stimulated the birth and growth of hip hop culture and its reception among the young generations and the media in general. It also helps understanding how this peculiar cultural product ended up being interpreted and redeployed transnationally, becoming a global experience and a channel for the expression of the young urban voices around the world.

The aim here is to offer a panoramic view not only on the cultural phenomenon itself, but also on the socio-cultural factors that were crucial to the reception of hip hop by means of the Portuguese youth. The chapter focuses on what I considered being the most impacting changes that affected (and in some cases, such as racism and urbanism, still affect) the Portuguese society and cultural space starting, approximately, around 1985.

2.1 Immigration in the postcolonial world

The second half of the 20TH century has deeply changed the Portuguese society in terms of increasing its heterogeneity: with the end of the dictatorship and the fall of the colonial empire, the years after 1974 have been marked by intense mass movements from the Portuguese-speaking African countries (PALOP) back to Portugal. After the wave of returnees that followed April 25th that brought back to Europe all those Portuguese families who had to live in exile due to the

dictatorship, another important wave of immigration took place throughout the 1980s and 1990s, when a heavy flow of manpower from several areas of Africa deployed essentially around Lisbon's metropolitan area, probably attracted by the hope of better life conditions. With António Barreto's words, we can say that:

> Being traditionally a country of emigration, for a short period [Portugal] turned into a country of immigration: this is probably one of the most notable changes that took place in Portugal in the last decades. […] At the end of the 1990s, Portugal is the European country with the fastest growth of immigrants' proportion (Barreto 2015, 120).[9]

However, a narrative that depicts Portugal as having changed from a traditional country of emigration into one of immigration in the early 1990s (also called "Thesis of migrant transition") downplays the structural role that emigration has played for Portugal. It also underestimates the part played by immigration along the Portuguese history and minimizes colonialism as a fundamental aspect of it.

According to Marta Araújo, even if "in 1999, these African immigrant flows still represented almost half of the total *foreign* population of Portugal" (Araújo 2013, 34), the migratory movement from Africa to the metropolitan territory wasn't new to the twentieth-century, yet it escalated because of globalization. Araújo reminds us that in the 1960s "workers were recruited from the Cape Verdean archipelago to fill the demand for labor created by white Portuguese emigration" and "the inward movement of people from several areas of Africa […] was intensified with the end of the colonial administration in the mid-1970s" (33).

When taking about the migratory flows of the 1980s and 1990s, Carlos Elias Barbosa stresses the idea that "we are talking about flows of immigration in a post-colonial context, which would deeply mold the identities of these immigrants' descendants who were already strongly associated to a diasporic experience" (Barbosa 2011, 2).[10] Since modern migratory fluxes are a global phenomenon in a post-colonial world, postcolonial dynamics must be considered when observing contemporary immigration in Portugal and, as S. Sayyid explains, "ex-colonial settlers have to be understood within the context of the postcolonial condition. The postcolonial here refers

[9] All translations are mine unless otherwise mentioned. Original: "Um país tradicionalmente de emigração transformou-se, por um breve período, num país de imigração: eis talvez uma das mais notáveis mudanças ocorridas em Portugal nas últimas décadas. [...] No final dos anos de 1990, Portugal é o país europeu onde cresce mais rapidamente a proporção de imigrantes."

[10] "Estamos perante fluxos de um contexto pós-colonial que vai estruturar em grande medida a identidade dos descendentes desses imigrantes, também, muito interligada com as suas experiências diaspóricas."

to a conceptual not just a chronological category" (Sayyid 2006, 4) and we should renew the epistemological framework though which we understand it in order to avoid distorting it.

Contemporary migrations also reinvigorate the challenge in terms of the relationship with otherness and with cultural differences, and the past is frequently silenced in order to construct a renewed idea of the nation as a heterogeneous space. These definitions are built and imposed upon the "Other" and still end up enhancing the idea of an authentic and original identity.

In his studies on Asian immigrants in Britain, Salaman Sayyid detects the unfulfilled goals of the postcolonial reason and the issues that it brings to the surface, mainly in the definition of new identities and the relationship between spaces, being these cultural and geographical ones. Through his lens, postcolonialism doesn't really mark something intrinsic in itself, that is, a new world order, but it continues to refer to the colonial past despite the efforts in going beyond it: "in other words, the 'post' in the postcolonial reminds us that we have not arrived at something that can have its own name" (Sayyid 2006, 5). In fact, the relentless framing of the settlement of communities of ex-colonial populations shows how the colonial reason persists as an epistemological, political and cultural reference and reveals that efforts are still needed in order to bring closure:

> The postcolonial condition of the world order most visibly highlighted by the 'de-centring of the West' (Young, 1990; Sayyid, 2003) has disrupted the possibility of uncontested coloniality. It has meant that the attempt to impose the practices and logics of coloniality has not led to the closure enshrined in a fully formed naturalized order, but rather the constant displacement of such a possibility. The continued reliance on colonial framing in the context of the postcolonial condition has been largely responsible for the inability of 'race relations' paradigms to cope with ethicized minorities' attempts to re-write the history of the nation. (Sayyid 2004, 3)

Through its conceptualization of the immigrant, unfortunately the former colonial nation reproduces and attempts to reinforce its old spatial dimensions. In fact, immigrants aren't fully integrated in society. Immigrants exist as a result of laws and are ethnically marked as a minority in order to separate them from the national majority:

> this process of mass migration would be the device used to represent the conjoining of two distinct spaces and temporalities, through the elaboration of the 'race-relations' paradigm or what I prefer to call the 'immigrant imaginary' (Sayyid 2004). The immigrant imaginary is a product of the spatialisation of the ex-colonial ethnically marked settlers (Sayyid 2004, 3).

Referring to Sayyid's postulates on the "immigrant imaginary," Marta Araújo argues that the new emphasis given to immigration as a recent phenomenon also reinforces the traditional distinction between a global North, developed and modern, and a global South, poor and diseased. In Portugal, this imaginary also reinforces the old, official rhetoric centered on the myth of tolerant conviviality and colonialism is, again, used as a symbolic, and positive, resource that proves the tolerant character of the nation, disallowing the debate on contemporary issues such as racism, for instance:

> In the national context, the prevalence of the "immigrant imaginary" secures the self-assuring idea that 'tolerant' Portugal is a desirable destination for migrants due to its positioning in *Europe* – that is, in the modern and developed world – disproving the nineteenth-century views that *Africa begins in the Pyrenees*. Conversely, it naturalizes the idea that the African continent is premodern and underdeveloped, which informs much political, scholarly and commonsense thinking. (Araújo 2013, 37)

With regards to this, we will like to remember that the colonial empire and colonialism as a practice have both represented a fundamental element in the definition of Portugal as a nation, through time and on different levels (ethnical, spatial, political, cultural). And in particular, after Brazil's independence in 1822, Portugal directed its colonial projection towards Africa. Given the deep impact of colonization in today's Portuguese society, the following section is dedicated to debating on the persistence of a series of narratives and perceptions as a consequence of the country's difficulty in detaching from this past.

2.2. National identity, lusotropicalism and *otherness*

Despite the numerous changes that affected the political, social and cultural context in Portugal during modernity and its late period, the narratives that today picture the country as tolerant, multicultural and heterogeneous are anchored to the myths and ideologies of the past. In order to understand this, one needs to comprehend how nations are built and the specificities of the Portuguese case.

As Stuart Hall reminds us, nations settle on long processes of identity-building and on violent mechanisms of conquest that aim at suppressing cultural differences, gather classes, ethnicities and genders over social divisions, often ending up suggesting a strongly gender-focused image of the nation – which is presented as being primarily masculine (Hall 2006). With this is

mind, one has to consider that nations are symbolic, or imagined, communities (Anderson 1983) and that they are designed as narratives (Bhabha 1990). In other words, instead of considering national identities as uniform (as intended during modernity), "we should think about them as if they formed a *discursive device* that pictures difference as a whole or as a body. They undergo deep divisions and internal differences, yet being "unified" solely through the exercise of different forms of cultural power" (Hall 2006, 62).

Actually, it is well known that nations don't consist of a single folk, a single culture or a single ethnicity. Despite the efforts in implementing homogenizing and unifying narratives, all modern nations are cultural hybrids: any representation or discourse that silences differences and a nation's heterogeneity will never correspond to its nature and its reality. In fact, as Homi Bhabha pinpoints in his introduction to the collection of essays *Nation and Narration*, we can't deny that the attempts of the nationalist discourse constantly focus on producing a narrative of national progress and development. According to Boaventura de Sousa Santos, this was precisely what the Portuguese government did after entering the EEC by avoiding to acknowledge the country's underdevelopment.

Hence, as Bhabha explains, these narratives of national progress generate a strong ambivalence within the very concept of nation, in the discourse of those who write about it or even in the lives of those who experience it. Bhabha finally argues that "nationalism is, by nature, ambivalent" (Bhabha 1990, 2). So, given their close connection to the language used to recount them, nations are the results of a power discourse, of an ambiguous rhetoric because ambiguous is the language that produces them.

National identities are not permanent, steady and predetermined, but they are reiterated practices, experiences, ideologies and imaginaries, in other words narratives, that depend from and respond to a specific historical, cultural, political and social context. They often face the need to be renewed and tend to adjust to the need of time and space. However, the hegemonic discourse tends to preserve its power, recreating its narratives through new strategies and promoting a distorted idea of the nation in order to maintain control. Bhabha, again, explains that:

> The representation of difference must not be read hastily as the reflection of *pre-given* ethnic or cultural traits set in the fixed tablet of tradition. The social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transition. The 'right?' to signify from the periphery of authorized power and privilege does not depend on the persistence of tradition; it is resourced by the power of tradition to be reinscribed through the contingency and contradictoriness that attend upon the lives of those who 'are in the minority' (Bhabha 1994, 2).

Portugal, then, represents an interesting case study with regard to its perspective towards otherness and cultural differences. As António Costa Pinto reminds us, "Portugal reached the "mass era" without going through some of the disruptive factors that changed many European democratic regimes during the interwar period" (Pinto 2004, 11), referring to the small changes that took place in terms of its political borders – that today are almost completely the same as they were in the early Middle Ages – and to the almost total absence of national or ethnic-cultural minorities as well as religious or cultural-linguistic differences, and the dearth of Portuguese minorities in the neighboring countries. This could explain why "until recently, issues on the national identity have been almost absent in Portuguese historiography" (Monteiro and Pinto 2004, 205).[11]

However, when observing the various processes of identity-building that took place throughout history, we have to take in consideration the violent measures through which this idea of the nation has been achieved. Araújo explains that

> Portugal has been constructed through political and academic discourse as one of Europe's first nation-states, with ancient and stable borders: the perfect textbook example of the nation as the natural coincidence of a territory, a community and a culture. These statements have often sustained the idea of national homogeneity while evading how such homogeneity was achieved, managed and policed. Any process of imposing national homogeneity entails violence, however symbolic. Only through the *invisibilization of violence* can presumed homogeneity be reinforced. […] The naturalization of a foundational white, Christian, national "we" goes hand in hand with the invisibilization of the violent governance of Others through death, expulsion, exploitation or exclusion (Araújo 2013, 33).

In fact, nation-building narratives in Portugal have always favored perspectives that exclude Others or that are built in opposition to them, using the colonial past as a device that adjusted to ideological and political needs through time. With this in mind, using Eduardo Lourenço's words, we could say that "the horizon where one can perceive what the [Portuguese] national reality is and what it isn't […] reveals the extraordinary *lack of realism* of the idea that the Portuguese build of themselves" (Lourenço 2010, 23) in an attempt to "hide from ourselves our true status of historical being in a condition of intrinsic fragility" (25).[12]

11 Original text: "Até tempos mais recentes, as questões sobre a identidade nacional têm sido quase ausentes da historiografia portuguesa."
12 "O horizonte próprio onde melhor se apercebe o que é e o que não é a realidade nacional [...] revela o *irrealismo* prodigioso da imagem que os portugueses se fazem de si mesmos"; "esconder de nós mesmos a nossa autêntica situação histórica de ser histórico em estado de intrínseca fragilidade."

This "intrinsic fragility" started showing since the early ages, and in the many myths and memories through which identity has been built, frequently constructed in relation to an external, *other* element: since the conflicts of the end of the 18th century, when Portugal manifested its hostility against Spain, as well as some xenophobia, and up to the "sacralization of the colonies" manufactured by the republicans at the end of the 19th century and revitalized during the Estado Novo, once can observe the extent to which in Portugal the building of a narrative of national identity featured, since its first steps, the urge to exclude or manifest against Others. This reminds of what Stuart Hall mentions as being part of the process of identity-building of modern nations, in other words, that they are formed through processes of comparison and negotiation with the negative and positive traits of other cultures, in particular those that formerly were under their control (Hall 2006).

With the Estado Novo, the merge between nationalism and colonialism became a dogma that featured its political propaganda right up to the last years of the regime. It is precisely during that time when the official documents start fostering works on the "specificities" of Portuguese colonialism and legitimate the Portuguese presence in Africa adapting Gilberto Freyre's luso-tropicalist theory on the spontaneous ability to miscegenate of the Portuguese people and on the existence of a luso-tropicalist entity.

In his book *Casa grande & Senzala* (1933), the Brazilian sociologist draws on Franz Boas' theory – where the cultural phenomenon gains autonomy and is untied from any biological characteristic – in order to respond to the racist doctrines that consolidated Brazil's "whitening" theory. Freyre's intention was to identify and define the characteristic traits of Portuguese colonialism: the hybrid ethnical origins of the population and its long-lasting contacts with different people (Jews, Arabs) explained its innate empathy and the strong capability towards miscegenation and cultural interpenetration. Yet, Freyre's intention was to demystify the notion of racial determinism in order to redefine Brazil's cultural identity, at a time when the eugenic discourse was emphasized and gaining consensus.

It is a well known fact that the Estado Novo initially rejected Freyre's analysis as it fostered the idea of the racial mixture of the Portuguese population. Castelo explains that:

> The colonial policy of the New State in the decade of 1930-1949 went far from Gilberto Freyre's theory. Armindo Monteiro, Colonial Secretary between 1931 and 1935, and chief ideologist of the "imperial mixture", was affiliated to the thesis of "social Darwinism." He did not imagine the existence of an harmonious and fraternal relationship, based on equality, between white and Black people. He bestowed to Portugal the "historic duty" to civilize the "inferior races"

> under its control. It meant protecting the "indigenous", convert them to Christianism, and educate them for work, to lift them morally, intellectually and materially (Castelo 2013).[13]

Thus, Freyre's theory on the Arab and African origins of the Portuguese population and its characteristic interracial mixing wasn't exactly in line with one of the oldest founding myths of the Portuguese nation, this is, that of the heroic Christian reconquest. The only issue raised by the Brazilian sociologist that the Estado Novo actually embraced was about the Portuguese having unique skills for colonizing and their peculiar ability to adapt to the tropical climate.

With the end of the Second World War any plan for racial pureness was condemned. Also, Portugal started facing international pressure and its incitement to acknowledge the African territories' right to self-determination. Freyre's theories were then resumed and reintroduced in a simplified and nationalist-oriented version that was used as a propaganda and as a strategy of foreign policy in order to justify the anachronistic enduring of the colonial empire and legitimize the African domains through an academic approach. Again, Castelo points out that:

> In its official discourse, Portugal represents a multiracial community, formed by territorial patches that are geographically distant, inhabited by population of different ethnic origins, united by the same feeling and the same culture. As can be read in Freyre's allegedly unsuspicious studies, the power performed in the Portuguese "overseas provinces" is not of a colonial nature, contrary to what happens in other countries (Castelo 2013).[14]

The former colonies were reclassified as "overseas provinces" and considered extensions of the metropolitan area, reinforcing Portugal's control over them and enabling it "to redefine itself as an 'Afro-European power'" (Arenas 2003, 7). The lusotropicalist ideology ended up permeating the cultural production of that time, this is, the academic and scientific fields, mainly to address the urge to maintain the *status quo* in the overseas territories. As a result of this, I agree with Castelo

[13] Original: "A política colonial do Estado Novo nas décadas de 1930-1940 andava longe da teoria de Gilberto Freyre. Armindo Monteiro, ministro das Colónias entre 1931 e 1935, e principal ideólogo da «mística imperial», filia-se nas teses do «darwinismo social». Não concebe um relacionamento harmonioso e fraterno, numa base igualitária, entre brancos e negros. Atribui a Portugal o "dever histórico" de civilizar as "raças inferiores" que se encontram sob o seu domínio. Trata-se de proteger os "indígenas", de os converter ao cristianismo, de os educar pelo (e para) o trabalho, de os elevar moral, intelectual e materialmente." Full article is available at: http://www.buala.org/pt/a-ler/o-luso-tropicalismo-e-o-colonialismo-portugues-tardio.

[14] Original: "No discurso oficial, Portugal constitui uma comunidade multirracial, composta por parcelas territoriais geograficamente distantes, habitadas por populações de origens étnicas diversas, unidas pelo mesmo sentimento e pela mesma cultura. Como se comprova pela leitura dos estudos supostamente insuspeitos de Freyre, o poder exercido nas «províncias ultramarinas» portuguesas não é de natureza colonial, ao contrário do que sucede em territórios sob soberania de outros países."

when she claims that "since then, a simplified version of lusotropicalism began penetrating the national imaginary in order to consolidate a self-image whereby the Portuguese best recognize themselves: that of tolerant, fraternal people, flexible and of ecumenical vocation" (Castelo 2013).[15]

Despite the fact that since 1974 Portugal has been reduced to its precolonial territories in the Iberian Peninsula (with the Azores and Madeira), it continues to maintain its economic, cultural and linguistic ties with Portuguese-speaking Africa. The lusotropicalist dogma is still particularly persistent in the national collective imaginary and in the perception of the national identity. This can be detected in the hegemonic discourses that "sanitizes" the colonial past in order to consecrate the pioneering role of the country in the management of diversity, or in other words, in the discourses concerning today's immigration. In fact, "in contemporary discourse, two mains ideas seem to persist: 1) a national identity is strongly anchored in Portugal's imperial past and in supposed exceptionality of its history of 'expansion'; and 2) the universalistic values of Portuguese society, seen as less racist than other European societies" (Araújo 2013, 36).

The idea of Portugal as a tolerant, immigrant-friendly space doesn't reflect the actual situation within the country. As we have mentioned before, Portugal tends to favor narratives that picture the nation as a "center", at a geographical, cultural and economic level. By means of this, as a matter of fact, the racial inequalities are perpetuated: the "center" belongs to the majority of white, European population and the migrant populations coming from the ex-colonies experience discrimination and marginalization. This allows us to state that in Portugal, as in other post-colonial contexts of reception, the notion of space and race persist as forces of separation. To this regard, Prof. Boaventura de Sousa Santos often argues that in the contemporary postcolonial world, the notion of immigration has managed to replace the notion of race, dissolving class consciousness, and today we are witnessing what he calls the "decolonization's racism" [racismo de descolonização]

2.3. Racism in Portugal

The racist ideology (scientific racism or Racialism), defending the idea that humanity can be divided in different races to which white are superior, dates back to the XIX century and to the *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines* by Arthur de Gobineau (1855). However, what started as a

[15] "Desde então, uma versão simplificada do luso-tropicalismo foi entrando no imaginário nacional contribuindo para a consolidação da autoimagem em que os portugueses melhor se reveem: a de um povo tolerante, fraterno, plástico e de vocação ecuménica."

philosophical theory that aimed at offering a scientific explanation to West's domination, ended up becoming a long-lasting practice with dramatic effects through history and upon people.

Having its climax in the 20TH century – when the actual word "racism" came to common use - racist practices can be observed back in the Middle Ages. According to George M. Fredrickson "it originated in at least a prototypical form in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries rather than in the eighteenth or nineteenth (as is sometimes maintained) and was originally articulated in the idioms of religion more than in those of natural science" (Fredrickson 2002, 6). Racism, then, is more than the mere ethnocentric dislike or distrust of the Other. It can be traced back to xenophobia - a Greek term that defines the feeling of fear towards foreigners and strangers in general - and in religious intolerance, yet representing a distinct phenomenon with specific consequences.

In fact, scholars agree on the fact the "no concept truly equivalent to that of "race" can be detected in the thought of the Greeks, Romans, and early Christians" (Fredrickson 2002, 17). In fact, the Greeks classified people as "civilized" and "barbarous" where neither one of these categories was considered to be hereditary or innate, but was merely used to define one's participation to the political life of the cities, while the Roman society was known for its diversity, where the distinction between slaves and free citizens did not translate a specific preference to a given nationality and skin color. Also in the early Christian era, skin color wasn't seen as an excluding factor since priority was given to religious beliefs. However, it can't be proved that ethnical prejudice was totally absent from the social and political environment of that time.

Actually, hostile attitudes took place even in ancient times. Particularly relevant to the development of modern racism, the attitude of European Christians toward Jews during the XII and XIII centuries – when, due to intense religiosity, Jews were considered a spiritual threat, as well as strong competitors in commerce - is considered to have laid the foundation for the racial antisemitism that developed later. Fredrickson explains that: "by the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, a folk mythology had taken root that could put Jews outside the pale of humanity by literally demonizing them." (20) Yet, with the expansion of Catholic Europe towards the periphery of the continent in the late Middle Ages, the "protoracism" extended beyond the Jews and "attitudes of superiority to indigenous populations anticipated the feelings of dominance and entitlement that would characterize the later expansion of Europeans into Asia, Africa, and the Americas" (23). Fredrickson again argues that "if the demonization of the Jews established some basis for the racial antisemitism of the modern era, the prejudice and discrimination directed at the Irish on one side of

Europe and certain Slavic peoples on the other foreshadowed the dichotomy between civilization and savagery that would characterize imperial expansion beyond the European continent." (23)

Yet, in the late Middle Ages, ethnical discrimination and the consequent ghettoization took place with regard to native, peripheral populations when these did not convert to Catholicism. Medieval Europe, thus, was increasingly intolerant, not only against Jews but towards any of those who manifested different beliefs or behaviors, not adapting to religious and moral conformity, and "it stands to reason that such a drive for uniformity and homogeneity would engender resistance to cultural pluralism and provide fertile soil for ethnic intolerance." (23)

With regards to Africans, though, in the period between the second Crusades and the Portuguese arrival in West Africa – this is, the mid 15th century – an increasing glorified and favorable representation of blacks seems to take place, with the purpose of enhancing the power of Christianism in term of spiritual conversion of Others. In fact, the "heroic" representation of Africans had specific purposes, this is, "it seemed to say that *even those* who are as alien and different from us as black Africans can be brothers and sisters in Christ." (27). The late medieval Negrophilia was based on the figure of Prester John, a legendary Ethiopian, Christian patriarch and king who was said to have battled against the Islam and was then identified with one of the Magi. In his book *Racism. A short history,* George M. Fredrickson explains that "while it lasted, the cult of Prester John and Ethiopia was only one of several signs that blacks could be represented in a positive and dignified manner in the late Middle Ages. Another was the practice that developed of representing one of the Magi in Nativity scenes as black or African" (28).

However, the positive representation of Africans in the Christian narrative is considered a transitory phenomenon. In fact, when the context changed in Europe and the contact with Africa became more sustained, enslavement became a commonly adopted practice and skin color as well as religious beliefs were used to justify the subalternization and exploitation of the African populations. The slave trade, in fact, represents a crucial turn in the implementation of the modern racist ideology in the Western world. Despite the fact that the principle that human beings could be used as instruments of production was already established in Africa, the European role in human trading is central to the definition of what will become the idea of white supremacy.

During the 16th and 17th century, the practice of slavery was justified through religious beliefs and superstition: the Bible was frequently used to confirm prejudices, reinforcing the idea of European superiority though Christian universalism. Yet, as we have mentioned before "the modern concept of races as basic human types classified by physical characteristics (primarily skin color) was not invented until the eighteenth century" (52), when the idea of a single pan-European or

"white" race started to take shape. With regard to this, the scientific thought of the Enlightenment definitely influenced the growth of modern racism based on physical typology, mainly after Carl Linnaeus' attempt to divide the human species into varieties - where the scientific classification of humanity featured some "monstrous creatures" and the detailed, and not impartial, description of each variety – and Johann Friedrich Blumenbach's ethnocentric vision of "Caucasians" as the original human race from where the others had developed. The eighteenth-century's studies opened the way to scientific racism by considering human beings merely as part of the animal kingdom without considering environmental factors as the explanation for the different physical features within humanity.

Despite the fact that the 18th century's ethnological thought and differentiation of racial typologies didn't see an immediate practical application, it did influence the building of the paradigms for biological racism that affected the XIX century: "before the mid–nineteenth century […] Europeans did not generally regard their penetration and dominance of other parts of the globe as the result of their innate biological superiority. They saw it rather as the fruit of acquired cultural and technological advantages (Fredrickson 2002, 61). So, although practices of discrimination had been taking place in Europe since the late medieval and early modern periods and though colonialism had reinforced the unbalanced relationship with regards to Otheness, the two main modern forms of racism, that is, the white supremacist variety and the essentialist one of antisemitism, find in the Nazi ideology and the German, totalitarian regime of the 20th century their climax. During the Nazi regime, ethnic differences were abrogated based on pigmentation or language diversity in name of an imagined collectivity considered directly descendant from a superior race.

Yet, after the defeat of Germany at the end of the Second World War, Europe officially fights any apology of racism. Unfortunately, the phenomenon is frequently considered to pertain to the past and the perpetuation of the ideology is minimized or not officially acknowledged. Nevertheless, I would like to pinpoint Hanna Arendt's contributions to the understanding of modern racisms (1944): to Arendt, racism was a political tool used to carry on the fight between empires based on specific national strategies, being very different from "race-thinking", this is, the scientific thought that led to Racialism. Racism, to Arendt, is a product of imperialism more than a scientific theory or a doctrine. Both doctrines, though, have been used by states due to their enchanting powers and their ability to move people on a large scale, transforming the past into a space "immune" to any dogmatic revision. As a consequence of this, racism persists as a political tool of fear and terror and its "immunity" turns it hard to confute. Moreover, as the legitimated discourse of the modern imperial order, racism has affected and transformed the means by which alterity is

perceived, having strong consequences at a social, cultural and economic level: "the echoes and effects of unequal imperial relationships clearly persist, with more or less visibility" [os ecos e os efeitos das desiguais relações imperiais e coloniais persistem com clareza, de modo mais ou menos visível; Henriques 2016, 219] and racism is one of the every-day grammars of today's societies.

Indeed, racism doesn't require the explicit support of the state nor a scientific ideology of biological subalternity to find its way into contemporary, post-colonial societies. In fact, "discrimination by institutions and individuals against those perceived as racially different can long persist and even flourish under the illusion of nonracism" (4) and it is precisely through this lens that I am approaching Portugal. Understanding the persistence of racism, not only as an ideology, but more importantly as a practice in the contemporary Portuguese society is crucial to the comprehension of the forces that led to the appearance of hip hop as a subversive culture.

With regard to the persistence of racism in the Portuguese society, Joana Gorjão Henriques explains that

> Racism is a system, it is an ideology and it is a practice based on power relations that are reproduced and perpetuated up to the present – also in Portugal. These are historic and hierarchical relations whereby the top of the pyramid continues to be taken by white people, precisely because inequality is a secular practice, deep-rooted and cyclical, that has been unable to change within its self-remedying engine (Henriques 2018, 12-13).[16]

In her recently-published book *Racismo no país dos brancos costumes* (Tinta da China, 2018), the Portuguese journalist continues the work started with *Racismo em Português. O lado esquecido do colonialismo* (Tinta da China, 2016). Having noticed that the critical production on the role of the West with regard to racial discrimination was consistently produced in English, but almost absent in Portuguese, with her first work, Henriques tries to fill this gap through five reports on the five African ex-colonies: Angola, Guinee-Bissau, Cape Verde, Sao Tome e Principe and Mozambique. By giving space to the different African voices that suffered Portuguese colonialism, through more than a hundred interviews Henriques questions "to what extent these ideas of race still persist today, diffused by Portugal in these countries, how do the populations of the colonized countries look at

[16] Original text: "O racismo é um sistema, é uma ideologia e é uma prática que se baseia em relações de poder que se reproduzem e perpetuam até hoje – também em Portugal. São relações hierárquicas e históricas em que o topo da pirâmide continua a ser ocupado pelos brancos, justamente porque a desigualdade é uma prática secular, enraizada e cíclica, que tem sido incapaz de se converter no seu motor de autocorrecção"

Portugal's role as a colonizer, and if the version where the Portuguese are good colonizers, who mix with the colonized people, still survives today" (Henriques 2016, 12).[17]

Aiming at offering a global, realistic view of each social reality, the Portuguese journalist focused on offering samples of different interviews for each country, in order to translate the internal diversity of each reality: in term of social class, gender, geographical origin, personal experience and interpretation. In the meantime, as she explains in the introduction to the book, the work also presents for each country a "Route of Slavery" (Rota da Escravatura), "a sort of historic track, that adds context for those who want to know more" [uma espécie de banda histórica, acrescentando contexto para quem quiser saber mais; 15].

Since "Portugal would become, after all, the first country to transport enslaved people from Africa to the Americas, that is, to be the initiator of what became known as one of the worst atrocities of the world's history" [Portugal viria a ser, afinal, o primeiro país a transportar pessoas escravizadas de África para as Américas, ou seja, o grande iniciador daquela que ficou conhecida como uma dais maiores atrocidades da história mundial; 14], Henriques explains that colonial racism served as a "blackout" [apagão] of African culture, since people were forced to give up their own identities, and an ideological "dragnet" [arrastão], since it corrupted mindsets during centuries in a so deep manner that its effects can be registered today.

In her latter and more recent project, then, the Portuguese journalist observes precisely the colonialist marks that persist in contemporary Portugal, in order to "show some of the effects of the colonial past, expose how racisms rewed itself and which shapes it took" [mostrar alguns dos efeitos do passado colonial, expor como o racism se reactualizou e que formas tomou; Henriques 2018, 13]. In fact, the re-actualization of racism in Portugal can be observed in various spheres of its society, where old ideologies such as Lusotropicalism are perpetuated, and Portugal is depicted as a tolerant and welcoming country, prone to racial conviviality, in the line with the Estado Novo's narrative.

Racism is, yes, an ideology, but it's also a practice and a system, "a pact of silence about the condition of inequality of some and the benefits other are born with, due to their 'color' and 'phenotype' [um pacto de silêncio sobre as condições de desigualdade de uns e as vantagens com que outros nascem devido à sua "cor" e fenótipo; 11] As I mentioned before, racism is based on

[17] "Até que ponto persistem, ainda hoje, as ideias de raça espalhadas por Portugal nesses países, como é que as populações dos países colonizados olham para o papel de Portugal enquanto colonizador, e se a versão dos portugueses como bons colonizadores, que se misturaram com as populações colonizadas, ainda vinga até hoje." (Henriques 2016, 12)

power relations that can be observed in different social spheres. As W.E.B Dubois(1899) pointed out in his pioneer work on the social situation of African-Americans:

> The history of the American Negro is the history of this strive,--this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost.
>
> He would not Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world.
>
> He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face (Dubois 1899, 3).

DuBois offers here an insightful analysis of the condition of social exclusion experienced by African-Americans showing how racial discrimination and unequal opportunities condemn "the Negro" to poorness, crime and illiteracy despite the advancement and diversity of the Negro community itself. Henriques, then, finds inspiration in Dubois' analysis and proposes a collection of reports – originally published in *Público* between August and September, 2017, under the title of "Racismo à Portuguesa" - that follow the American sociologist's methodology. In fact, Henriques' book is organized in five sections, each representing a context where racisms against Afro descendants finds its way within the Portuguese society, and two final ones where Henriques offers a quick overview on the twenty-two activist organizations that have presented to ONU the diagnostic on racism in Portugal, in December 2016, as well as some final considerations on colonialism and the country's "phantoms".[18] The five central sections of the book touch topics such justice, nationality, housing, employment, education, in the line of the analysis proposed by the abovementioned letter.

[18] As the article "Vinte e duas associações de afro-descendentes queixam-se de Portugal à ONU" published in *Público* on the December 5, 2017 explains, organizations such as a SOS Racismo, Plataforma Gueto, Afrolis, Djass, Associação Caboverdeana de Lisboa, Griot e Femafro among many others, sent an open letter to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination in order to report the persisting lack of targeted policies towards the communities of afro descendants in Portugal. The organizations denounce the State's "holistic" silencing with regard to the population of afro descendants: "Em plena Década Internacional dos Afrodescendentes (2015-2024), o estado português apresentou um relatório em que o racismo e a exclusão social de que os afrodescendentes negros são alvo não são reconhecidos na sua especificidade e gravidade, relegando-os para a condição de problema "global" que deve ser tratado de forma "holística", isto é, subsistindo um silenciamento político do racismo e uma nociva abordagem "color blind". Assim, não são propostas medidas excecionais de ação afirmativa, contrariando os pressupostos da própria Década Internacional dos Afrodescendentes". After reporting how racismo is still affecting minorities in Portugal, the letter concludes that: "Sem reconhecimento, é impossível uma estratégia de desenvolvimento e de superação dos problemas, é impossível que haja justiça". The letter also comes as a response, through data and verified statistics, to the report submitted by the National Human Rights Commission and to the noncompliance with the ONU's recommendations, such as data collection on the basis of ethnic origins and the review of the legislation.
Further information on the letter can be found at https://www.publico.pt/2016/12/05/sociedade/noticia/xxxx-associacoes-de-afrodescendentes-enviam-carta-a-onu-a-criticar-estado-1753485 and its full text is also available online.

Through interviews and statistical data, each section offers an insight on how racism still affects afro descendants living in Portugal and through which practices it manifests. In the first chapter – dedicated to detention, police violence and (in)justice as a whole -, Joana Gorjão Henriques explains that there is a massive disproportion between the representation of the negro population in prisons and the one in society, being that in the first case they represent a majority while in the latter case a minority. Moreover, Henriques reports that in February 2018 the Council of Europe's European Committee for the Prevention of Torture stated that "Portugal is right at the top of Western Eurpoean countries with the highest number of cases of police violence, and the risk of abuse is higher for foreign citizens or people of African descent" [Portugal está no topo dos países da Europa Ocidental com o maior número de casos de violência policial, e que o risco de abuso é maior para os afrodescendentes e estrangeiros; Henriques 2018, 25]. In other words, the agency recognizes the persistence of racial discrimination by authorities and security forces.

After describing a series of episodes of police violence experienced by her interviewees, the Portuguese journalist offers some statistical data on recent incarceration rates in the country. Thanks to a cross-study between the National Directorate of Prison Services and Social Reintegration's information (December 2016) and the Censos 2011, Henriques refers that:

> One out of 73 citizens coming from the PALOPs and who are over 16 years old is in prison, and the majority of the population in these countries is Black. This proportion is ten times bigger than the one referring to Portuguese citizens – where only one out of 736 people within the same age range, is in prison. If we consider only men, who actually represent the majority of the population inside prisons, we see that one out of 37 citizens from PALOP in incarcerated, in opposition to one out of 367 men from Portugal (and one out of 1071 women from the PALOP *versus* one each 6732 women from Portugal (Henriques 2018, 31-32).[19]

Moreover, racial discrimination can be detected in the duration of the penalties for the same crime since "6,8% of the African detainees gets the maximum penalty versus the 3% of the Portuguese" [6,8 por cento dos reclusos africanos tem pena máxima contra três por cento dos portugueses; 35] as well as in terms of quality of the defense to the point that experts question the existence of a specific code for ones and another code of others. Or, as the subtitle to the chapter states, "there is

[19] Original: "Um em cada 73 cidadão dos PALOP com mais de 16 anos em Portugal está preso, e a maioria da população destes países é negra. É uma proporção dez vezes maior do que aquela que existe para os cidadão portugueses – onde apenas um em cada 736 cidadão na mesma faixa etária está na prisão. Se tivermos apenas em conta os homens, que constituem, na verdade, o grosso da população prisional, concluímos que um em cada 37 cidadãos dos PALOP está preso, por contraste com um em cada 367 homens portugueses (e uma em cada 1071 mulheres dos PALOP *versus* uma em cada 6732 portuguesas."

one law for white people and another one for Black" [há uma justiça para brancos e uma justiça para negros; 35]. Henriques repeatedly refers to the lack of ethnic-racial statistical data and how this affects the building of the real perception of afro descendant's social and judicial condition, also remembering that the collective subconscious is that of a colonizing country where imagination, prejudice and discrimination subconsciously merge and are not acknowledged as existing.

In past years, debates for a fairer Citizenship Law in Portugal have increasingly brought attention to its discriminatory nature. In fact, since 1981, Portuguese Citizenship stopped being automatically obtained by those who were born in the country (*ius solis*) and began depending on the parent's origin.[20] As a consequence of this and being that Portugal is a (formerly) colonial country -where immigration flaws have been taking place since the XV century – the generation(s) of people who were born after 1981 from non-Portuguese (read: African) parents have been forced at living as "foreigners" despite having lived for their entire life in Portugal. This law, in fact,

> created thousands of citizens who belong to a country they have never been to, and it affected the descendants of immigrants who arrived to Portugal, in different phases, starting from 1960 and 1970. These are thousands of people who feel as Portuguese immigrants who are living in Portugal: a generation of "Portuguese immigrants" (51).[21]

The "post-1981generation" of afro descendants, then, ends up living in a state of illegality: for financial reasons (because they can't afford paying the fees for the Portuguese certificate, for example), for bureaucratic reasons (because the process is too intricate), and/or for negligence (because their parents didn't take care the situation, for the abovementioned reasons).

Issues with Citizenship not only affect the identity of these people but have serious repercussions in their lives: in terms of job or house seeking, in terms of legal "protection" and, of course, in terms of education as well as sports. In fact, Henriques refers that, once one obtains the Portuguese citizenship, everything becomes easier, such as "renewing IDs, opening bank accounts, how police approaches you" [a simple renovação do Cartão de Cidadão, abrir uma conta bancária, a abordagem da polícia; 56].

Having lived in Lisbon for the past five years, I have personally assisted and took part to numerous demonstrations against the discriminatory nature of the Law 37/81 by the Campanha por Outra Lei da Nacionalidade [the Campaign for a New Citizenship Law], where artists (among these

[20] The law's full text is available at:
http://www.pgdlisboa.pt/leis/lei_mostra_articulado.php?nid=614&tabela=leis

[21] Original: "Originou milhares de cidadãos que pertencem a um país onde nunca foram, e que afectou os descendentes de imigrantes que chegaram a Portugal, em diversas fases, a partir de 1960 e 1970. São milhares de pessoas que se sentem como imigrantes portugueses a viver em Portugal: uma geração de "portugueses imigrantes.""

may rappers) frequently perform. The fact that the Portuguese law does not recognize all its citizens as equally valuable - yet charges them all with the same "duties" - reiterates the colonial mentality and social hierarchy where there were first-class citizens (white) and second-class ones (Black and mestizos).

In the past couple of years (2017-2018), changes to the Law have actually been made. Last June, President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa enacted some legislative amendments that extend the Portuguese citizenship and the naturalization of those who are born by immigrant parents. Despite the improvements on the Law n. 37/81 – for instance, children will automatically obtain their citizenship after two years form their birth in the country and even if they don't speak Portuguese - the law's changes do not have retroactive effects and for this reason, many practical, discriminatory issues continue unsolved.

As I mentioned before, the illegal or immigrant condition of people who were born in the country affects several spheres of their social life. In terms of housing and house seeking, the lack of documentation, as well as the low salaries, do not allow the access to proper homes and push minorities towards the peripheries of the cities. Indeed, this represents one of Portugal's most frightening realities. As Henriques again explains, "a house is a reflection of the position one occupies within society: it's not just about the area one lives in, but it's also about the conditions his/her house is in, with how many people he/she shares it and how far it is from the center" (69).[22] Residential segregation on the basis of ethnicity has grown in the past years (Malheiros 2016) due to the increase of house rental prices; however, it is not an unknown phenomenon to the Portuguese urban reality: since the immigrant flows of the 1980s, African immigrants have always been located in Lisbon's peripheries. Yet, what can be seen as a merely "practical" move since people had to live in the outskirts in order to stay closer to their workplaces, in the factories, actually recalls the colonial urban housing where white people lived in the center and could afford decent homes, and black people lived in precarious buildings in the periphery of the cities.

Furthermore, today, non-Portuguese people suffer discrimination in housing, being excluded or ignored just based on the assumption of their ethnicity. Therefore, "for a Black citizen, the issue with housing is one more adversity that adds up to the other discriminations that obstruct his access to better schools and better jobs, to escalate the social ladder" (70).[23] About this, climbing the social ladder becomes even more difficult for African people in Portugal also because, in terms of job seeking, alongside discrimination due to skin color, afro descendant have to face exclusion due to

[22] Original: "A habitação é um reflexo da posição que alguém ocupa na sociedade: não conta apenas o sítio onde mora, mas em que condições está a sua casa, com quantas pessoas a partilha e a que distância fica dos centros de decisão."
[23] "Para um cidadão negro a questão habitacional é mais uma privação que acumula com outras desigualdades que, em conjunto, o impedem de aceder a melhores escolas e a melhores empregos, a de subir na escada social."

lack of documentation or education (which is also linked to racial segregation). In practical terms, black people have limited access to power positions or to any qualified profession:

> in Portugal, Black people stay in the *back office*, in the factories, in the kitchens, in the supermarkets […]. According to the Censos 2011, the number of Portuguese people in positions of power, of leadership and management is four times bigger than the one of citizens from the PALOP, as well as the number of Portuguese working in intellectual or scientific fields is five times bigger than the one of these latter ones. That is, 3% *versus* 0.8% in the first case, and 6.1% versus 1.3% in the latter (100-101).[24]

In Portugal's National Assembly, for instance, there is only one Black representative, and the media also shows an underrepresentation of black employees. As a result of the lack of access in professional terms, Black citizens end up having non-qualified jobs, or in other words, working as domestic employees or construction workers, among other professions. In fact, the "racist rationale" affects social mobility confining black people to the condition of invisibility. Yet, even when this logic is subverted and afro descendants occupy higher positions, they have to face racist treatments and feel that their skin color can affect the way their work is perceived.

Institutional racism is a practice that reiterates unbalanced power relations based on false, erroneous, unproven idea that white people and the white system (even if there are no such things as white people and a white system) hold of themselves. Portugual's modern society is not free from its logic. Joacine Katar Moreira reminds that, in Portugal, "racism is related it a series of discursive constructions and productions that have consolidated with time, a result of colonialism and slavery, and based on three fundamental pillars: power, privilege and presumption" (Moreira 2017).[25] Racism's three "Ps" correspond to the power to articulate, decide or transform reality held by white people and guaranteed by denying to Black people the right/power to produce knowledge; the privilege of the white above any non-white, through a hierarchy that separates, discriminates and subordinates Others; and the intrinsic presumption of the idea of a supposed superiority on the basis of phenotypes that can be used in the attempt to legitimize political, economic, cultural, historical and social usurpation.

[24] "Em Portugal, os negros estão no *back office*, nas fábricas, nas cozinhas, nos supermercado [...]. Segundo o Censos 2011, há quatro vezes mais portugueses em lugares de representação do poder, de dirigentes ou gestores, e cinco vezes mais portugueses em atividades intelectuais o científicas do que cidadãos dos PALOP. Ou seja, 3% *versus* 0.8% no primeiro caso, e 6.1% *versus* 1.3% no segundo."

[25] Original: "O racismo tem a ver com uma sequência de construções e produções discursivas que se foram solidificando com o tempo, fruto do colonialismo e da escravatura e baseadas em três pilares fundamentais: poder, privilégio e presunção." The full article, "Os três "P" ou a trilogia do racismo" is available at: https://www.publico.pt/2017/06/07/sociedade/opiniao/os-tres-p-ou-a-trilogia-do-racismo-1774619.

By denying its racist nature, Portugal perpetuates its historical and structural laces with a discriminatory reason and disrupts changes. Whether we want to acknowledge it or not, works as Joana Gorjão Henriques, Eduardo Lourenço, Miguel Vale de Almeida, Joacine Katar Moreira, and activists such as Mamadu Ba, Carla Fernandes, José Falcão, among many others prove that people of African descent – but not only them, Roma people too, for instance – still suffer of a marginalized condition:

> In Portugal, the communities of African descendants are economically, socially and politically marginalized. Their condition of socio-economic and political subalternity is engraved in an historic continuity that dates back to the age of slavery and colonialism, whose consequences in the access to equality continue to mark their lives. The communities of African descendants contributed and continue to contribute to the building of the country, but are among the most excluded from society (Mamadu Ba 2017).[26]

Finally, I would like to stress that racism is a practice that takes place in the most varied contexts, among the most varied people. In Portugal, talking about racism is disturbing and deeply challenging. Activist Mamadu Ba clearly explains this after having suffered of a racist episode, with Ana Tica, Beatriz Gomes Dias e Raquel Rodrigues, during the launch of Joana Gorjão Henriques's most recent book (this is, in May 2018):

> What happened to us in the Book Fair, and the unacceptably late reaction of APEL, raises the question about our place within the Portuguese society. The question about space is among the most centrals within the debate about racism in society such as ours, were colonialism – an anchor for the banalization of racism – has such cultural relevance. The invisibility of the Black body in the public space is linked, in large measure, to the locus of enunciation that is acknowledged and/or attributed to it. Because to talk is to have power. The power to fight, to confront reality, the power of being able to recommend and the potential to alter power relations. […] What happened at the Book Fair is inscribed in the logic of what has been happening in this country lately, where Black voices that dare to talk about racism and about its connection with the colonial legacy are force to silence (Mamadu Ba, 2018). [27]

[26] Original: "Em Portugal, as comunidades afrodescendentes estão económica, social e politicamente marginalizadas. A sua condição de subalternidade socioecónomica e política inscreve-se numa continuidade histórica que remonta à época da Escravatura e do Colonialismo, cujas consequências no acesso à igualdade continuam hoje bem marcadas nas suas vidas. As comunidades afrodescendentes contribuíram e continuam a contribuir para a construção do país, mas são das mais excluídas da sociedade." The article "Década dos Afrodescendentes: outra tutela, o mesmo compromisso?" is available at: https://www.publico.pt/2017/10/26/sociedade/opiniao/decada-dos-afrodescendentes-outra-tutela-o-mesmo-compromisso-1790216.

[27] "O que aconteceu connosco na Feira do Livro, e a inaceitavelmente tardia reação da própria APEL, levantam a questão sobre qual o nosso lugar na sociedade portuguesa. Pois a questão do lugar é das mais centrais no debate sobre o racismo nas sociedades como a nossa, onde a colonialidade, âncora da banalização do racismo, assume relevância cultural. A invisibilidade do corpo negro no espaço público prende-se, em larga medida, com o lugar de fala que lhe é reconhecido e/ou atribuído. Porque falar é poder. Poder de luta, de confronto com a realidade, de capacidade de propostas e de potencial transformador das relações de força. [...] O que aconteceu na Feira do Livro inscreve-se

2.4 Youth, urban tribes and music scenes: a brief introduction

According to António Barreto, the process of democratization and integration that took place in Portugal after 1976 (year of approval of the Constitution) not only involved the working population, and in particular women, but affected also the younger generations and ended up creating a new social category, youth: "with the development of 'youth culture' and of 'youth' as an age and social category, a new, active, voting, consuming and producing generational segment was born: youth." [Com o desenvolvimento da "cultura jovem" e da categoria etária e social "jovem", nasceu um novo segmento geracional ativo, eleitor, consumidor e produtor: os jovens; Barreto 2015, 123]. Dispensed from military service and with the right to vote at the age of 18 (since March, 1978), young citizens became objects of special attention for political parties, also being increasingly addressed by advertising. By creating their own gathering places in public spaces and in the nightlife, youth became an indelible mark of the cities, with its own "culture" and its own logic. Yet, before turning into a social category, the concept of youth defined a stage in life, mostly linked to social problems. With José Machado Pais' words:

> the notion of youth started to gain some social consistency when, the transition period between childhood and adult life – with the consequent "social problems" that derive from it –, that today still characterizes adolescence, started to last longer and when it starts to be referred to as a "phase of life" (Pais 1996, 31).[28]

In this regard, according to Pais, youth starts being taken into account around the second half of the XIX century, when the issues and tensions related to it start being addressed mainly due to their affinity with delinquency. The full acknowledgement of youth as a social agent, moved by its own social consciousness, is more recent, yet still related to its "problems". Pais, again, explains that the postwar period and the consequences in terms of job crisis is particularly relevant to the current idea of youth:

basicamente na lógica do que tem acontecido ultimamente no país, em que vozes negras que ousam falar do racismo e da sua ligação com o legado colonial sofrem uma injunção ao silêncio." The article "Falar de racismo em Portugal incomoda e é por isso também que importa" published in *Público* on June 4, 2018. Full text is available at: https://www.publico.pt/2018/06/04/sociedade/opiniao/falar-de-racismo-em-portugal-incomoda-e-e-por-isso-tambem-que-importa-1833148.

[28] Original: "A noção de juventude somente adquiriu uma certa consistência social a partir do momento em que, entre a infância e a idade adulta, se começou a verificar o prolongamento – com os consequentes "problemas sociais" daí derivados – dos tempos de passagem que hoje em dia continuam a caracterizar a juventude, quando aparece referida a uma *fase de vida*."

> Historically and socially speaking, youth has been seen as a life phase marked by some instability and associated with certain "social problems". […] The problems that […] affect "youth" – making it, for this reason, a *social problem* – at the moment come as consequence of the difficulties that young people have to the entrance in the job market. In fact, the crisis of employability, that is extended to all Western Europe and that is due, among other reasons, to the *baby boom* that followed the Second World War, has affected mainly the youngsters. […] The struggles in accessing employment are reflected in the difficulties to access housing (24).[29]

The crisis of employability of the second half of the Twentieth century dramatically affected youth's emancipation, traditionally linked to having a job and being able to leave home and build a new one. Also, this inevitably produced a shift in terms of refusing the models and structures that traditionally worked as a reference in the definition of the different stages of life or social status, and to the need for renegotiate one's place in society.

Yet, it is precisely in the second half of the 20th century's postwar baby boom when the numbers of young people increase particularly and as sizable social group characterized by comparatively low responsibilities and some spending power, they began being targeted by expanding culture industries. Paul Hodkinson explains that:

> Whether in the form of the development of night-time entertainment, of youth music and fashion or youth oriented magazines and television programs, the increasing relationship between young people and particular kinds of consumption has been a key theme of recent scholarship on youth cultures. […] Many contemporary youth theorists believe that, alongside the decline of traditional elements of belonging such as class and community, this expansion in the role of consumption has rendered young people's already uncertain transitions increasingly characterized by ephemeral and individualized tastes, practices and identities (Furlong and Cartmel 1997). (Hodskinson 2007, 3).

As I have mentioned, youth achieved more consideration as an active element within society when it began openly manifesting its need for independence and started building up its own "rebel" and disruptive "culture(s)". In fact

[29] "Historicamente e socialmente, a juventude tem sido encarada como uma fase de vida marcada por uma certa instabilidade e associada a certos "problemas sociais". [...] Os problemas que [...] afectam a "juventude" – fazendo dela, por isso mesmo, um *problema social* – são correntemente derivados da dificuldade de entrada dos jovens no mundo do trabalho. De facto, a crise de emprego, que é extensiva à toda a Europa Ocidental e que, entre outras razões, se deve ao *baby boom* posterior à Segunda Guerra Mundial, tem afectado principalmente os jovens. [...] As dificuldade de acesso ao emprego reflectem-se nas dificuldades de acesso à habitação."

> There is some level of consensus among theorists that, particularly since the mid-1950s, young people have occupied a period of the life course characterized by a degree of instability and transition. More specifically, adolescence is deemed to have constituted a liminal period of time, during which individuals break free from many of features of childhood without yet fully adopting all of the characteristics associated with being an adult (Hodkinson 2007, 1).

While psychologists frequently relate this transition to physical change and its consequences in terms of personality and needs, sociologist generally understand it as one defined by socio-economic and cultural factors, and as a response to the uncertainty and insecurity of entering adult life, also marked by legal transitions (being able to vote, to drive, to dink, etc.). Youth cultures, then, come as a response to the negotiations that follow this transition. Youth as a whole should be examined as an influential actor within society, mainly since it questions identity and promotes change, encouraging the renewal of traditional social structures and challenging the dominant discourse with new narratives. The participation of young people in society has grown in terms of action and visibility, and they have become essential elements in the chain of social and cultural production at a global level.

From a generational perspective, youth cultures - or subcultures - can be seen as opposed to a dominant culture, namely that of the older generations, representing a form of resistance to the dominant class' power; however, youth cultures also represent the system of values which is socially attributed to a certain age or a stage of life, becoming symbolic spaces where young people having different social statuses converge and meet through style, music, interests, experience and practices of sociability.

Starting from the University of Chicago and its attempts to explains deviant behavior and activities among youth as a collective normative behavior associated with specific urban social regions and their deviant moral codes, subcultural theory in the Unites States has developed a tradition of studies that focus on anomalous behavior and the rejection of dominant means as a consequence of a disadvantaged background, offering understandings of youth cultures in terms of deviancy amplification and labelling.

The notion of adolescence as a form of collective subcultural rebellion also permeates the tradition of theory and research on youth cultures associated with the Centre of Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) at Birmingham University. The distinct focus in most of the studies upon subcultures was based around the analysis of music and style, around groups such as teds, mods, skinheads and punks. Despite offering varied interpretations, the prevailing view among the CCCS theorists was that such subcultures represented a portrayal of stylistic resistance, or in other words,

they presented style as young people's subversive reaction and symbolic resistance to a contradictory situation in respect of both age and class.

Style subcultures couldn't have emerged without the development of a youth consumer market. In fact, in addition to the general uncertainties of youth, subcultural participants are caught between the traditional working-class culture of their parents and the hegemonic values of capitalism and consumption. In this perspective, subcultural styles are a product of working-class youth and its creative recombination and symbolical transformation of consumer objects, and aren't considered a countermeasure against marginalization or an attempt to challenge fundamental relations of power. In fact, they display imaginary solutions to their class experience, without actually offering a true resolution to problems at a concrete material level, also turning out be devices through which power relations are fortified. Ultimately, as I have mentioned in the first chapter, for Dicke Hebdige, the symbolic creativity and subversion represented by youth subcultures would fail even to transform power relations within the culture industry itself: being initially generated by active practices of fundamental appropriation, subcultural styles subsequently are recognized for their profit-making potential, being mass marketed to the general public and losing their political significance.

As Paul Hodkinson reminds us, "the CCCS' analysis of the relationship between young people's active consumption practices and the youth consumer industries, and their emphasis on the importance of class position has had an extensive and lasting impact within and beyond the field of youth subcultural studies" (Hodkinson 2007, 6). However, the subcultural theory tended to present a fixed impression of groups of young people, placing emphasis on untypical, deviant or spectacular minorities. Both the Chicago and CCCS traditions tended to focus just on collective systems of norms and boundaries, rather than delineating the complex positioning of different individuals in response to them. Youth groups and youth cultures are heterogeneous systems and frequently incorporate people coming from very different social situations. In fact, youth can't be observed as a mere stage in life between childhood and adult, nor it can be considered a uniform style that identifies everybody in the same way. As a consequence of this , differential and changing levels of individual commitment were underplayed and perhaps the most significant group who were excluded from subcultural analysis were young women, as well as ethnic minorities.

Until the 1980s, studies on subcultures were essentially concerned with socio-economic marginalization and spontaneous defiance, while in more recent years the field has shifted towards an idea of youth as fragmented, fluid and consumeristic. The general expansion of the culture

industries, the impact of globalization and the loss of the traditional social structures created an indisputable sense of instability and precariousness:

> Whether under the guise of the condition of postmodernity (Harvey 1989), 'risk society' (Bauman 2001; Beck 1992) or individualization (Beck and Beck- Gernsheim 2000; Bauman 2001), leading theorists repeatedly have emphasized the breakdown, especially in Western societies, of previous forms of certainty, stability and community alongside the simultaneous expansion and diversification of media and consumer culture (Hodkinson 2007, 8).

Among these theorists, some have preferred to substitute the term subculture with the notion of "neo-tribalism" in order to explain postmodern youth's increasing tendency of creating transitory cultural formations, characterized by partial commitment and porous boundaries (Bauman 1992) and to capture the shifting nature of youth's preferences and its essential fluidity (Bennett 1999). Another term used as a more effective tool than subculture of young people is 'scene', yet it mainly associated to music related activities in order to explain the gathering of musicians and fans around focal points related to local identity or musical genre.

In an effort "to show, to describe and to analyze the social configurations that seem to go beyond individualism, in other words, the undefined mass, the faceless crowd and the tribalism consisting of a patchwork of small local entities" (Maffesoli 1996, 9), Michel Maffesoli differentiates "social" – the individual's function within society – from "sociality". The latter concept's characteristics are identified as "the person *(persona)* plays *roles,* both within his or her professional activities as well as within the various tribes in which the person participates. The costume changes as the person, according to personal tastes (sexual, cultural, religious, friendship), takes his or her place each day in the various games of the *theatrum mundi*" (Maffesoli 1996, 76).

Theatricality, in fact, characterizes sociality and corresponds to a form of "religiosity", this is, a bond that is created as a response to the saturation of great systems and the consequent alienation from institutions: "in going beyond the category of individualism, sociality permits us to be aware of (and to be present at the birth of) its emerging forms" (78). Basing his views on a wide-range of theoretical postulates, or with his words, always maintaining a "holistic perspective", Maffesoli develops the concept of *neo-tribalism* bearing in mind that tribes are the central feature and the key fact to the experience of everyday life, and underground element that persists despite the efforts in abstractedly categorizing life as a practice.

Indeed, neo-tribalism in its various forms "refuses to identify with any political project whatsoever, to subscribe to any sort of finality" and its "sole *raison d'être* is a preoccupation with

the collective present" (75) and in Maffesoli's view "solidarity or the religion of humanity can serve as the backcloth to the group phenomena we are witnessing today, especially in so far as the logic of identity is concerned" (74).

Examples of neo-tribes are not only youth subcultures but also fashion victims, for example, and the term could actually be extended to numerous interest-based collectives which manifest their bond by using a particular dress-code, have a specific style of adornment and defend the shared values and ideals of the collectivity. The masses analyzed by Maffesoli are small, heterogeneous portions of society, distinguished by their lifestyle and tastes: far from being the traditional anthropological tribes, these groups are the manifestation of a postmodern, mass consumption society where membership is displayed through a multiplicity of roles played in a variety of groups and social status achieves an ambiguous edge, relativism being the only possible way to understand it. With Maffesoli's words

> This 'affectual' nebula leads us to understand the precise form which sociality takes today: the wandering mass-tribes. Indeed, in contrast to the 1970s - with its strengths such as the Californian counterculture and the European student communes - it is less a question of belonging to a gang, a family or a community than of switching from one group to another. This can give the impression of atomization or wrongly give rise to talk of narcissism. In fact, in contrast to the stability induced by classical tribalism, neo-tribalism is characterized by fluidity, occasional gatherings and dispersal (Maffesoli 1996, 76).

Neo-tribalism, then, is a form of "elective sociality", the development of a logic of network where the bond itself is more important that the elements that are joined together or the goal to be reached. According to Maffesoli, if modernity had partly drained social relationships by multiplying their possibilities, postmodernity "has tended to favor within megalopolises both the withdrawal into the group as well as a deepening of relationships within these groups, given that this deepening is in no way synonymous with unanimism, since conflict also has a role to play in them" (89). Neo-tribalism, then, corresponds to the urge to create new community forms that are kept together through rituals, or in other words "specific signs of recognition which have no other goal than to strengthen the small group against the large" (93), and where the bond "refers more to a certain ambience, a state of mind, and is preferably to be expressed through lifestyles that favor appearance and 'form'" (98).

Furthermore, these contemporary mass rituals are the manifestation of micro-groups "that are both highly distinctive at the same time as forming an indistinct muddled whole" (98). In fact, "there is a constant movement back and forth between tribes and the mass" (99) in a postmodern

world where “clans” appear to be the distinctive form of aggregation: if on the one hand, clans come as a result of the mechanical solidarity that predominates between individuals, and between them as a group and the state, on the other hand they are a phenomenon that affect the relationship with the Other and the stranger. Being a theorist of the breaking of mass culture, Maffesoli contributions help understanding contemporary human aggregations as a distinctive form of sociality in a postmodern world where humanity is still moved by empathy, manifesting the timeless need of creating communities. His postulates do not focus specifically on youth, but are very useful to understand the dynamic within contemporary youth cultures, mainly because of the attention given to fluidity and causality.

Despite these contributions, we can argue that to society youth still represents a symbolic “Other” in social and cultural terms and the many definitions and interpretations that have been built through time and space categorize it as something cryptic and in some sense “exotic”. Mainly through mass-media, youths are labeled worldwide as problematic, socially misfit, insolent and incapable to integrate to the dominant cultural code, being also worthy of censure. In other words, youth as a social group generates moral panics that the media heightens through condemnation and admiration. It also

As I mentioned before, the decade of 1980s also shows the emergence of one of the most serious social problems that affected modernity: long-term unemployment, which particularly affected youth, and has serious consequences in terms of social exclusion (Lourenço 2005). Social exclusion corresponds to a process of disintegration that takes place at different levels: economic, social, cultural, environmental and political; it manifests through the weakening of family and social ties, as well as the neglection of community life, entailing distrust towards society and non-apperception of one’s place in it. In this sense, social exclusion can be seen as a drought of different forms of power, or in other words, of the ability to fully exercise citizenship rights.

The massive growth of unemployment, as well as globalization, lead to labor market exclusion and new forms of poverty arise. In this sense, with globalization, poverty isn’t only identified by a lack of material resources, but also by the lack of participation to the dominant pattern of life due to forces such as education, age, race and gender, among others.

In this new landscape, locality has become a significant reference in the definition of otherwise individualized, volatile and mutable youth cultures. In fact, locality continues to offer a relatively stable base of otherwise very unstable youth identities: personal and social identity and group affiliations are constructed, maintained and negotiated in ordinary, everyday language translating its local context. Youth, urban tribes and music scenes have been some of the central

concepts I came in contact with when approaching this study, hence the decision to offer a general overview on them. The following section is then dedicated to the emergence of the hip hop scene in Portugal, as mentioned in the beginning of this chapter.

2.5 The emergence of the hip hop scene in Portugal (1985-1995)

In Portugal, the first contact with hip hop culture dates around the mid-1980s, more precisely between 1984 and 1986 (Simões 2017). The global success of films such as *Breakin' I* (1983) and *Breakin' II* (1984), and *Beat Street* (1984; in Portugal also known as *A locura do ritmo*) - which focused mainly on the visual aspects of hip hop such as breakdance and graffiti, yet also featuring the elements of rap and DJing - proved that hip hop was appealing not only to the culture industry but also to a broader public that empathized with its values and practices.[30] Moreover, the years between 1983 and 1984 also saw the release of films such as *Footloose* and *Flashdance*, emblematic marks of that era, as well as the worldwide success of Michael Jackson's signature "moonwalk" move.

In Portugal, the media backlash of breakdance was quick: young aspiring dancers started instinctively emulating its moves in the streets of Lisbon's districts and the practice is soon assimilated by the media: "ten years after [1970], by listening to tracks such as *Buffalo Gals* by

[30] Inspired by *Wild Style* (1983), Beat Street is an American drama dance film that played upon New York city's hip hop culture of the early 1980s: set in the South Bronx, the film follows the lives of a group of friends who are all devoted to the various elements of hip hop (Djing, breakdancing, MCing and graffiti writing). Kenny, the protagonist of the film, has big dreams of becoming a famous DJ playing in Manhattan's top clubs and more precisely at The Roxy. The film portrays the struggle of a young performer who wants to become an artist despite coming from the ghetto. Having to face a series of obstacles - among these the death of the friend and graffiti artist Ramon while fighting against another writer – Kenny finally manages to book a performance at New Year's Eve at the Roxy. The film's grand finale is exactly the show at the Roxy where Ramon's life is celebrated with a rap and dace performance. Interestingly, the film features the participation of a long series of legendary groups and artists of that time such as Afrika Bambaataa & the Soulsonic Four, Kool Herc, Grandmaster Melle Mel & the Furious Five, Jazzy Jay, among others, who perform in it. Also, three female MCs appear in it: Debbie D, Sha-Rock and Lisa Lee. The film offers e romanticized, depiction of a young artist's struggle, while showing how social classes encounter in a big city and the difficulties of living in a poor neighborhood with high rates of criminality, early pregnancies and high mortality rates.

Also known as *Breakdance: the movie*, the film *Breakin'* is an American breakdance-themed comedy-drama set in Los Angeles. The film focuses on social and cultural division between normative dancing and street performance: the protagonist Kelly is a young dancer trained by a traditionalist choreographer who meets two street dancers performing on the boardwalk in Venice Beach. After leaving her choreographer due to his unethical behavior and his disrespect towards breakdance, the three form a group and manage to participate to an audition although breakdance wasn't permitted nor recognized as a style. However, after the initial shock and disapproval of the judges, the group manages to convince them and ends up being chosen. The film was followed by a sequel, *Electic Bogaloo*, released in 1984.
From its setting, up to its theme and purpose, the film is very different from *Beat Street*: it focuses mainly on breakdance without showing hip hop culture as a whole, and raises the (eternal) debate between canonical and non-canonical art by questioning the latter's acceptance as part of a discipline. Yet, despite its fabricated imaginary, it is still representative of the mediatic success of hip hop and its appeal to the public all around the world.

Malcolm McLaren, and to the small extent of the national scale, the aspiring dances dream to make an appearance in Julio Isidro's program *O Passeio dos Alegres* and in *Zig-Zag*, with Luis Pereira de Sousa" (Vilela e Fernandes 2016).[31] Despite its prompt success, breakdance ended up being considered more as a (passing) trend, rather than an element of a specific cultural practice. At that early stage, it didn't present the complexity and solidity of a proper culture and its mediatic success hindered the underlying values that it carried.

Unfortunately the original purpose of breakdance got "lost in translation", or better, through its commodification and most of its meanings were dispersed. Yet, in the New York City of the late 1970s, dancing to the sound of the "breaks" played a fundamental role in the fight against violence: through symbolic fights, the different crews (or tribes) met in the parties and battled against each other using acrobatic moves in order to "win" the crowd and increase their consideration in the neighborhood. Breakdance took place in the streets as a competitive practice and as a response to a specific context and social condition; it worked as a metaphor and as a statement to those who were not included in the so-called "system" (or the dance floors) and that claimed a space for themselves, through peaceful interaction.

According to António Concorda Contador and Emanuel Lemos Ferreira, in the mid-1980s breakdance was going through a phase of "creative decline" (47), reaching Portugal as a mere trend that didn't carry any specific political message nor had the power or impact that allowed it to be considered a founding element of the Portuguese hip hop movement: "breakdance, in fact, has not been see as one of the pillars of the movement because it was transmitted through the media as quick and ephemeral" [o breakdance não foi, de facto, visto como um dos pilares do movimento, porque mediaticamente veiculado como fugaz e efémero; Contador e Ferreira, 1997, 162]. Yet, for the majority of the participants during the early years of hip hop, it still represents the first contact with the culture: most rappers openly declare that they have met their peers precisely through breakdance meetings.

I agree with Contador and Ferreira, who, after analysing hip hop's early years, consider rap "one of the main expressive forms of hip hop culture" [uma das formas expressivas ponderantes da cultura hip hop; 160]. The two researcher were the first to attempt at building its genesis in Portugal. In fact, the final part of their book *Ritmo & Poesia. Os caminhos do Rap* (1997) is specifically dedicated to rap's Portuguese expression and represents probably the first documented material about this practice in its local manifestation.

[31] Original text: "Dez anos depois [de 1970], a ouvir temas como *Buffalo Gals*, de Malcolm McLaren, e à modesta escala nacional, os aspirantes a bailarinos sonham aparecer no programa *O Passeio dos Alegres* de Júlio Isidro e no *Zig-Zag* com Luís Pereira de Sousa."

Published in 1997, the book offers a general overview on hip hop culture and its elements, and a detailed investigation on rap in order to detect its origins, its cultural heritage and its meanings as a "politically incorrect" (9) music genre. Although on a global scale this wasn't unprecedent (see Chapter 1 for a brief insight on the field of hip hop studies), Contador and Ferreira's publication is noteworthy since it is the first book documenting rap edited in Portugal and attempting at rebuilding its itinerary from being an initial trend, to an underground practice and finally becoming a proper cultural manifestation and musical genre.

The authors, in fact, manage to sketch a general framework of rap's early age, covering a period of time from 1985 up to approximately 1996 and offering a panoramic view on its participants and its fundamental features, as well as the sociopolitical context that favored its reception. Furthermore, in the final part of the book the authors give account of the various conversations had with hip hop's first participants and fundamental figures, which allows us to have direct access to that specific moment of rap's history through the voice of its makers. The interviews date back to 1996.

As *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music* points out that "[North American] rap music in the mid- to late 1980s experienced […] an economic shift as its distributions means moved from local […] labels to international conglomerates with much larger audience-reaching potential" (696). Yet Contador and Ferreira pinpoint that the first North American artists that reached the Portuguese public through audiotapes were coming from France and Holland. When asked how they managed to have access to rap in terms of CDs and other material, Double V (member of the group Family) recalls that "most of the scene was made by our friends who had emigrated and came here to spend the holidays, or guys who had managed to go live abroad and then came back, bringing lots of stuff, because here people didn't buy much, because we had no access [to it]" (Contador & Ferreira 1997, 179).[32] Yet, the lack of access wasn't merely in terms of money (young people couldn't buy CDs), but also in geographical terms. Most people who lived abroad came from "France. Some managed to go to the States, but it was very expensive. Going to Spain was enough to have access to things. Here you did not." [França. Alguns conseguiam ir à América, mas era muito raro. Bastava ir a Espanha ou assim e já tinham acesso. Aqui é que não.; 179]: this, to some extent, highlights Portugal's semi peripheral condition, in a world where goods were already circulating at a global level through media and other largely diffused channels.

[32] Original text: "Muita da cena eram gajos nossos amigos que estavam fora e vinham passer férias, ou gajos que conseguiam ir para fora e depois voltavam e traziam montes de cenas, porque mesmo cá a malta não comprava muita cena, porque não tínhamos acesso."

Interviewed for the documentary *Raizes do Rap Tuga* (2016), General D also acknowledges the crucial part played by friends living abroad in the emergence and spreading of hip hop, confirming Contador and Ferreira's position. Precisely, thanks to Nelson and the tapes he brought from France, the Portuguese youth could be aware of the latest news in terms of music production:

> Already back then, Nelson came [back] with audiotapes, because he lived in France. He came with audiotapes, which for us was something new, and the sounds we had access to were very limited. Since he came from France, he Always came with the new stuff (*Raizes do Rap Tuga*, 2016).[33]

Therefore, more that the mass media itself, the migratory movements from and to Portugal (immigration from the PALOP, emigration to France) played a crucial part in the cultural reterritorialization (Lull 1995) of rap and its development in the Portuguese space.

Indeed, in terms of media exposure, in the early 1980s rap was almost absent from the Portuguese scene. Yet, television programs were constantly oriented towards North American series and films, presenting "the white, New Yorkers low and middle class reality or that of the *golden boys & girls* seeking the *El Dorado*, so in vogue in the 1980s" (163). The authors then underline that "what stood out from these series is also the stereotyped of the other side of the golden face of the *American way of life*, which is undoubtedly Black and irremediably poor" [Dessas series e outros telefilmes destaca-se também a fisionomia estereotipada do outro lado da face dourada do êxito próprio do *american way of life*, que é incontornavelmente negra e irremediavelmente pobre; 183]. Hence, the media can be considered responsible of "importing" the North American imaginary of wealth and consumerism, the middle-class' dreams and aspirations. However, it also showed its counter face, its conflicts in terms of racial inequality, social exclusion, poverty as a whole. Lince, member of the Group New Tribe, interviewed by Soraia Simões in March of 2016 also refers to the broadcasting, around 1986, of programs dedicated to black music on TV channels such as MTV and recalls the process of cultural identification that he experienced when accessing those musical products, so different from the ones circulating in Portugal at that time (Duran Duran, Kajagoogoo, Samantha Fox, among others).

As a consequence of the drastic, capitalistic shift in the national economy and of the political shift towards the European Union, Lisbon's urban reality of the mid-1980s resembled America's

[33] "O Nelson, já naquela altura, ele veio com cassetes, porque ele viviam em França. Ele vinha com cassetes, que para nós era uma coisa, assim, nova e os sons que nós tínhamos eram muito limitados. Como ele vinha de França, trazia sempre as novidades."

face and counter face: dynamics of racial, social and cultural marginalization deeply affected the urban fabric and its limitations in terms of job accessibility, sociability and cultural miscegenation. Nevertheless, as for any other local manifestations around the world, rap's first expression was underground, this is, spontaneous and still poorly documented. In fact, everybody agrees that rap arrived firstly in Lisbon's commuter districts of the Margem Sul, yet the debate on the precise place where rap started being practiced is still ongoing and probably it will never come to an end. For instance, when interviewed for the documentary metioned above, rapper General D explains that when he started rapping in 1989, in Almada you could already find some "hotspots" of hip hop music: "there were people already exchanging audiotapes and, unlike what most people think, [rap] made its first appearance in Almada and not in Miratejo" (General D 2016). Still, Contador and Ferreira pinpoint the Miratejo as its nuclear space, and so do many other artists. Others, look at the Sintra line (Cova da Moura, Queluz, etc.) as another central space for rap's emergence.

As per the North American phenomenon, studies and analysis on rap have led to the conceptualization of symbolic places (such as Kool Herc's first party in 1520 Sedgwick Avenue, New York) that work as mere, generic references. Cultural practices take time to establish themselves and they gain shape gradually. Despite the fact that the identified places are real and the information available can be considered truthful, we have to bear in mind that at its early stage rap was listened throughout the city, mainly in its peripheral areas, and its interiorization and practice took place simultaneously in different places.

In Portugal, as Teresa Fradique points out, the logic of legitimation of the practice went through a process of identification and parallelism with the North American phenomenon. Contador and Ferreira, being the first to publish a book on rap, by associating the Margem Sul with the South Bronx [Miratejo está para o rap em Portugal, como o Bronx está para o rap nos Estado Unidos; 165], showcase precisely this mechanism (Fradique 2002, 54). Rap takes the shape of a "mythological narrative" not only through its codes and expressive strategies, but also through the discourse that has been built around it.

In this regard, Rui Cidra's studies explain how rap provided the young citizens of Lisbon's peripheral districts with "a language of resistance and protest against a condition of racial exclusion and social marginalization that was felt in the Portuguese society" (Cidra 2010, 621-622). In his study on rap in Lisbon, Cidra starts his analysis from the idea that popular culture plays a crucial role in the process of identity-building thanks to its ability "to provide a multiplicity of meaningful forms and representation systems that can be borrowed and readapted culturally by individuals or groups" (Cidra 2002, 189). Music, specifically, allows a community to express its fundamental

values (Turino 1999), represents a symbolic space where significance is created and meanings are negotiated (Stokes 1994), and creates "imagined cultural narratives" (Frith 1997). In addition to this, the Portuguese ethnomusicologist adapts Victor Turner's notions (1984) to hip hop, arguing that this represents a reflexive cultural performance that allows individuals to rethink the positions, the roles and the values experienced during their life.

With this in mind, Cidra agrees in placing rap's geographical origins between the city of Almada and the Miratejo neighbourhood, explaining that

> groups of friends moved by a common musical taste, started meeting occasionally, exchanging records, audiotapes, performing the first "rhymes" without instrumental accompaniment, with the accompaniment of *beatboxing* […] or of audiotapes that were played on portable devices (Cidra 2002, 197).[34]

The limited means and resources available at that time didn't stop the youth from finding a way to perform and express themselves and rap became an increasingly central element of social interaction in the streets. Tightly tied to a urban experience of sociability, these youths chose the street as the predominant space for their interactions, and evolved later into a more organized practice with venues, concerts and fixed meeting points.

As a result of the field work conducted mainly in the northern area of Lisbon in 1997, Cidra asserts that hip hop's everyday experience as a vehicle for youth sociability is displayed mostly in those housing districts of poor or medium conditions where the immigrant African populations and their descendants live together with Portuguese families of returnees (ethnically undifferentiated) and families of rural origins who migrated from the rural areas to the metropolitan space, but also in the middle-class residential areas that accommodate parts of the Portuguese population as well as African families of Portuguese nationality. He explains that:

> The heterogeneous composition of the *hip hop* universe, at heart, corresponds to the configuration of Lisbon's suburban fabric itself, where the dissemination of zones does not correspond necessarily to the existence of social spaces clearly defined by criteria such as class or cultural belonging (Machado 1992). (Cidra 2002, 2002).[35]

[34] Original: "Grupos de amigos motivados por um gosto musical comum, passaram a reunir-se ocasionalmente, trocando discos, cassetes, apresentando as primeiras "rimas" sem acompanhamento instrumental, com o acompanhamento do *beatboxing* [...] ou de cassetes tocadas em aparelhos de som portáteis." (Cidra 2002, 197).
[35] Original: "A heterogeneidade na composição do universo *hip-hop*, corresponde, no fundo, à própria configuração do tecido suburbano de Lisboa, onde a distribuição das zonas não corresponde necessariamente à existência de espaços sociais claramente definidos por critérios de classe ou pertenças culturais (Machado 1992)." (Cidra 2002, 202)

Hence, hip hop as a cultural movement represents a code of behavior and expression that allows white and Black youth to organize their experience of life within networks of friendships and neighborliness, where social and cultural differences are partially suspended in order to favor a common belief (hip hop itself).

Indeed, "by the early 1980s [...] a style had grown around hip hop" (Hebdige 1987, 130) in the United States and with the commodification of its products came also the spreading of a specific image: probably due to the need to be comfortable when dancing, young people started combining casual clothes and sportwear, this becoming a signature style for those who identified with the whole cultural movement. When rap expands beyond the Bronx and New York City, reaching Portugal among many other places, its codes had already developed into a conventional format that the media helped disseminating, and that identified with a specific life-style. Phil Cohen reminds that

> subcultures are symbolic structures and must not be confused with the actual kids who are their bearers and supports. Secondly, a given life-style is actually made up of a number of symbolic subsystems, and it is the way in which these are articulated in the total life-style that constitutes its distinctiveness. There are basically four subsystems, which can be divided into two basic types of forms. There are the relatively 'plastic' forms—dress and music—which are not directly produced by the subculture but which are selected and invested with subcultural value in so far as they express its underlying thematic. Then there are the more 'infrastructural' forms—argot and ritual—which are more resistant to innovation but, of course, reflect changes in the more plastic forms. (Cohen 2005, 71)

Music and dress codes are devices charged with subcultural capital that refer to specific symbolic systems. In this regard, music also represents an important element in the process of identity-building due to its structure and the meanings it can carry. Teresa Fradique stresses the idea that rap "has been generally defined as the most recente style integrating the major category of African-American music" [tem sido geralmente definido como o mais recente estilo a integrar a grande categoria da *música negra*; Fradique 2002, 61]. However, Fradique specifies that music's categorization into genres and styles is more closely related to the public it attracts rather that its producers, underlying the ambiguity that lies beneath the circumscription of rap as a merely "Black" product.

As per Franco Fabbri, a musical genre is a set of musical events governed by socially accepted rules: the formal and technical ones, this is, the formal organization of sound into music; the semiotic rules, or in other words, the rules of communication or how music works as a rhetoric; the behavioral rules, which refer to the performance rituals from a wide perspective and involve

gestures and attitudes in general; the social and ideological rules, that cover the social image and to the nature of a music community and its relationship with the world; finally, Fabbri detects the commercial and juridical rules, which regulate music in terms of production and distribution (Fabbri 1996).

Due to their global dissemination, music genres can't be considered static or stable forms of expression nor they can be interpreted as isolated phenomena. Still, rap's African roots are undeniable in terms of heritage, content and public and hip hop culture in general represents an important shift in terms of visibility and exposure of the diasporic African community all around the world. It also mirrors the new identities built in the post-modern era, which are delocalized, fragmented and plural (Lacau 1989; Hall 2006). As we have mentioned in the first chapter, in its early days the practice of rap was strongly connected to the reuse of musical fragments as a base for improvised rhymes, having very porous and flexible outlines, perfectly translating the postmodern era into creative (re)production.

Portuguese youth living in the urban context experienced the consequences of capitalism and postcolonialism on a daily basis and didn't find their location within the country, in cultural and social terms. Rap's positive and active reception, then, positions these youth consumers and performer as "part of a "new" city, the limits of which go beyond its ordinary geographical borders, that deterritorializes itself in new repossessions of its own structures, of its spaces, its streets, its rafts and walls, its "non-spaces" (Contador 1999, 51).[36]

According to Teresa Fradique, depicting rap made in Portugal as "the expression of the feeling of alenation and frustration of the youth coming from the so-called ethnical minorities" [a expressão dos sentimentos de alienação e frustração dos jovens pertencentes às chamadas minorias étnicas; 72] is too simplistic, and the production and consumption of rap should be observed as a means of escape or, in other words, as "a process of youthful, creative and reflexive growth" [um processo de crescimento juvenil e criativo e reflexive; 72] of Black youths as well as other immigrant youth. Fradique also underlines that rap was adopted by youth who was experiencing a massive gap between their lives and those of the previous generation, and their (sub)urban experiences needed to find new "roots". Meantime, the identity-building process took place on several levels, mainly the racial and age ones, since in Portugal both the ethnical minorities and youth were two relatively recent social categories: rappers worked as important intermediaries and

[36] Original text: "Parte de uma "nova" urbe, cujos limites extravasam os seus simples contornos geográficos, desterritorializando-se em novas reapropriações das suas estruturas, dos seus espaços, das suas ruas, das suas paredes e muros, dos seus "não-lugares"."

as representatives of these new categories in the delicate dialogue during the process of mediation with the Portuguese establishment (the media, the educational system, the urban space, etc.).

Interestingly, the Portuguese anthropologist also points out how this Black Portuguese youth and the variety in terms of their origins came to question the shared meaning of the categories of Afro-Portuguese and Luso-African:

> The absence of reference to a specific origin – that points out to a vast category of *global Portuguese African-ness* […] – its conveyed by different agents that are extrinsic to experiencing negritude, but that somehow are involved in its definition process (Fradique 2002, 74).[37]

The efforts of rappers such as General D in levelling out the ethnical divisions that were so heavily present for their parents' generation aim at creating a transnational and transcultural community (the Hip Hop Nation) where everybody could fit in.

In terms of language use, the adoption of "Black English" characterized an initial "running-in" phase where the North-American lyrics were basically emulated and reproduced, perceived through their expressive strength. However, rap soon started to have its local expression also in terms of language use, incorporating Portuguese slang and a vivid vocabulary inspired by the African heritage and its dialects (mainly Angolan and Cape Verdean) that slowly was paving its way in Lisbon's streets. With regards to the use of an African-inspired slang, we can say that this also can be seen as the manifestation of the African diasporic condition of this youth. According to Derek Pardue, the use of Kriol is to attribute to the need "to be effective, to be 'real': to represent lived experiences of marginalization in an honest and informed manner. […] The main message is one of distinction: to be or to speak kriolu is not to be or to speak tuga, or Portuguese." (Pardue 2012, 42-43). Pardue then argues that "Kriolu rappers use Kriolu [also] as a provocation to Cape Verdeans non-Kriolu-speakers alike to consider categorical alternatives within the social and ideological dynamics of language in Portugal" (43). Furthermore, Rui Cidra explains that creole is used in order to "give sense to the different topics of their reality and personal experience" (Cidra 2010, 672). In fact, MCs such as Boss AC, Chullage, or Family, for example, in the early years chose to relate their stories in creole, sometimes switching to English, but rarely to Portuguese. The use of a minor language that also worked as an argot exemplifies once again the need of these young performers to make a statement of their own, finding their space of belonging and

[37] Original: "A ausência de referência a uma origem específica – que aponta para uma vasta categoria de *africanidade portuguesa global* [...] – é veiculada pelos vários agentes exteriores à experienciação da negritude, mas que de alguma forma estão implicados no processo da sua definição."

identification - in some sense their own nation - searching for references in their cultural heritage and using them in contrast to the main establishment, in this case is identified with the Portuguese language:

> Like hip hoppers in other parts of the world, Portuguese hip hoppers established a national genre in the 1990s. "Hip hop tuga" emerged toward the end of the decade; the term currently, somewhat polemically, refers to hip hop culture made in Portugal. In response, Kriolu rappers employ the "ideology of the word" (Morgan 2009) through a set of territorial claims by means of which they carve out alternative subject positions and linguistic-cultural communities in relation to *tuga* and, thus, dislodge conventional notions of what it is to be Portuguese at phenomenological and narrative levels (Pardue 2012, 49).

As I have underlined before, audio tapes were the center of hip hop music, particularly in Portugal were access to vinyl was limited. Moreover, radio represents another fundamental source of sounds. As a matter of fact, two radio programs were crucial to the spreading of rap: João Vaz's "Mercado Negro", airing on Saturdays around midnight on CMR (Correio da Manhã Radio) and later José Mariño's "Novo Rap Jovem" on Radio Energia.

Considered by the hip hop community a true pioneer in broadcasting black music, João Vaz recalls that his first contact with rap happened when he met the band Spandau Ballet, who were visiting Portugal around 1982/83 and had some rap tapes with them. Vaz, who always had "quite a black vibe" [uma onda muito negra; Contador and Ferreira 1997, 188] then started playing rap music (Grandmaster Flash, Sugar Hill Gang, etc.) during his DJ sets at night. At that time, he was also working in Radio Comercial with Adelino Gonçalves, in a program called "Discoteca" that aired black and dance music but wasn't very keen at passing the rap tapes that he started suggesting.

When remembering that time, Vaz states that "there were no radios able to transmit that kind of music, and later I felt the need to turn that exclusively towards rap" [não havia radios para passarem aquele tipo de música, e mais tarde senti a necessidade mesmo só de virar aquilo para o rap; 190]: initially with the program "Zona Franca" in Radio Renascença, then with "Mercado Negro" in the Correio da Manhã Radio and finally with the program "Alma Radical" at nighttime, João Vaz had the right intuition and venture, and made rap available to a broader public. The broadcast Mercado Negro is repeatedly mentioned by the early participants as being pivotal in the spreading of rap as a musical genre and João Vaz is considered the "guru of rap" in Portugal. Also important to the reinforcement of the practice of rap in its first steps is José Mariño's "Novo Rap Jovem" in Radio Energia which led to the program "Rapto" on the Antena 3. Having previously met João Vaz and Rui Vargas during his professional and personal path, Mariño doesn't

acknowledge the influence of Mercado Negro on the broadcasting of his program, Novo Rap Jovem. When interviewed by Soraia Simões, he states that he started passing hip hop music because, by the end of the 1980s, he noticed that international media were increasingly giving space to hip hop bands. In particular, he recalls two magazines, such as the Melody Maker and the New Musical Express, that had a special section dedicated exclusively to the latest hip hop acts and that were crucial to his contacts with it.

Compared to Vaz's approach with music, Mariño's was more eclectic (according to his own statements): he was more focused on "alternative" music rather than specifically hip hop and the idea of a rap program came later, talking to Miguel Quintão about what was missing in the radio, it took the title of NRJ, reproducing the Radio's name and recalling the French Energie radio. Mariño recalls that as the program gained its audience, rappers started sending samples, and the program soon became a reference for those who wanted to promote their work:

> During the weekend, for two hours, [Mariño] coordinated two CD players (when they worked) and a record player to present RedMan, Sam The Kid, Boss AC, Wu-Tang Clan and many, many others who have shaped the music scene of the last decades. He received hundreds of K7s with freestyles or more professional recordings. He followed the shows of dozens of bands who rhymed their truths. He brought together a community of loyal spectators who, without his leadership and care to contextualize each new track, each new artist, would not know a phenomenon that devolved into something global (http://www.zov.pt/pt/noticias/exclusive/70).[38]

The year of 1992 was when José Mariño arrived at Radio Energia and probably rap was reaching its maturity in terms of production and self-awareness. Rap was shifting from being a neighborhood-based practice to having its own sociability spaces, its own community and more importantly its original productions in Portuguese. In fact, if rap started being broadcasted in the media from people who were living outside the movement, it soon got "hijacked" by its participants. Soraia Simões explains that

> radio undertook such a strong presence in this group of youth's everyday life, that radio itself sensed and suffered from this impact and 'experimented' accordingly. In 1995 through the invitation of the management of Radio Energia (RE)

[38] Original: "Aos fins-de-semana, durante duas horas, coordenava dois leitores de CD's (quando funcionavam) e um gira-discos para apresentar RedMan, Sam The Kid, Boss AC, Wu-Tang Clan e muitos, muitos outros que moldaram o panorama musical das últimas décadas. Recebeu centenas de K7's com *freestyles* ou gravações mais profissionais. Acompanhou os espetáculos de dezenas de grupos que rimavam as suas verdades. Juntou uma comunidade de ouvintes fiéis que, sem a sua liderança e cuidado em contextualizar cada nova faixa, cada novo artista, não conheceria um fenómeno que se tornaria global."

> the protagonists themselves took up that space, *Ataque Verbal* [Verbal Attack] (1995-1996) was launched by KJB and Pacman, members of the groups Black Company and Da Weasel respectively (Simoões 2018).[39]

Simões also illustrates how Radio Energia's headquarters actually became one of the most lively spaces where sociality, music exchange and many encounters took place:

> the Ceuta Avenue, where RE [Radio Energia] was located, resembled the open mic sessions that by that time took place in Johnny Guitar and that hosted dozens of RAP projects, some also broadcasted. At the same time, the program extended the ties of sociability and mutual help that were regular in neighborhood (Simões 2018).[40]

As rap expanded throughout the city's streets, events increasingly started taking place. The will to perform and express their voice through an alternative musical domain, the sense of unity and mutual assistance and a common attitude generating a proper "movement", with its meeting points, its codes, its ideologies and its increasingly known representatives. Unfortunately, this initial phase of unity with common goals and views, will slowly fade, mainly after the notoriety obtained by some – and by rap itself as a genre – after the album Rapública. The conflicts that started taking place within the community deeply affected its structure as a movement and basically led to the disintegration of the sense of community that characterized this early era.

However, between the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, youth in the city of Lisbon met through rap and one was identified as part of the community when he/she embraced its ethics, its style and its ideology. This sense of unity and shared "mission" came with some inflexibility, though. During his conversation with Soraia Simões, Lince shares his experience during concerts: his passion for the guitar as well as his less direct and rough rhymes, frequently caused him some disadvantage in social terms; he recalls being accused of attempting to "intellectualize" the movement as in trying to smooth it by not being so aggressive and not addressing so directly the socio-political issues of that time (Simões 2014).

[39] "A rádio assumia uma presença tão marcante no quotidiano deste grupo de jovens, que a própria rádio pressentiu e ressentiu esse impacto e 'se experimentou' em função disso. Em 1995 a convite da direcção da Rádio Energia (RE) os próprios protagonistas tomaram esse espaço, *Ataque Verbal* (1995 - 1996) arrancava com KJB e Pacman, integrantes dos grupos Black Company e Da Weasel respectivamente." Full text is available at https://www.muralsonoro.com/mural-sonoro-blog/2018/1/26/breves-do-quotidianoeram-os-nossos-melhores-ouvintes-por-soraia-simes.

[40] Original: "A Avenida de Ceuta, onde se situava a RE [Radio Energia], assemelhava-se às sessões de microfone aberto que ocorriam por essa altura no Johnny Guitar e por onde passaram dezenas de projectos de RAP, alguns transmitidos na emissão. Ao mesmo tempo, o programa prolongava os laços de socialização e interajuda que eram frequentes no bairro."

The building of a proper movement started in the streets as an everyday experience. The creation of events and encounters in schools, town squares and, later, night clubs represents a spontaneous step in the evolution of rap as a practice, and of hip hop as a culture. Teresa Fradique characterizes rap's spaces as "temporary and ephemeral, or in other words, discontinuous" (Fradique 2002, 79): this intrinsic aspect of rap's performative space is essential to understand its functioning within the hip hop community and the mobilizing factors that affected the participants' motivation. Strictly dependent on untraditional means of promotion and on the group's legitimation as hip hop events, it is precisely the ephemerality of these encounters what ensures its continuation or at least the participants' preoccupation in ensuring continuity to its existence (Fradique 2002).

With regards to this, Fradique refers to the fundamental role played by rap concerts at the *Trópico* organized by Boss AC's back in the 1990s and, later, by the rap sessions at *Vickings* organized by DJ Yen Sung (Ex-Da Weasel), in the building of a proper "movement" of people who gravitated around rap. The Portuguese anthropologist also mentions the weekly nights dedicated to rap at *Johnny Guitar*'s back n 1994, where DJ KGB (Ex-Black Company) and rapper Mc Pac Mac (from Da Weasel) continued the work started in radio FM Radical with the program *Ataque Verbal*.[41] The program featured an open mic and represents Johnny Guitar's first experience with rap. It was followed by another weekly appointment centered on rap that took place at the bar during November 1996.

Particularly relevant to rap's history, these venues also played a fundamental role in joining people from around the city, and since the culture was spreading around the country (Porto, Algarve), also from around the country. Many refer to the importance of the Trópico Bar (in Santos) as the place where the album *Rápublica* (1994) was metaphorically born. Rui Cidra explains that:

> In 1994, after a festival that took place in the nightclub Trópico Bar (Santos), the show entrepreneur Hernani Miguel proposed to record label Sony to publish a phonogram that revealed the new music production area of the country. He gathered a good part of the bands and rappers who were regularly active in the "movement"'s events [and] comprised a moment of transition for *rap* made in Portugal (Cidra 2002, 198).[42]

[41] *Johnny Guitar* is a former night club that opened in 1990 in the Calçada Marquês de Abrantes, in Santos – Lisbon. As a rock club, it was considered the legitimate successor of the *Rock Rendez Vouz* (a pioneer rock club in Lisbon). The bas opened in order to promote alternative music and to host live concerts, being strongly linked to rock music since its opening mainly because its managers had been musicians from the band *Xutos & Pontepés* – Portugal's most emblematic rock band. Despite its small dimensions, it soon became one of Lisbon's most important spaces for the presentation and promotion of new musical acts. The bar, a true "mecca" for musicians in Lisbon, managed to stay open until 1996.

[42] Original: "Em 1994, na sequência de um festival que teve lugar na discoteca Trópico Bar (Santos), o empresário de espectáculos Hernani Miguel propôs a editora Sony a edição de um fonograma que revelasse a nova área de produção musical do país. Reunindo uma boa parte dos grupos e *rappers* com actividade regular nos eventos do "movimento" [...] constituiu um momento de transição para o *rap* feito em Portugal."

With regard to this, in the documentary *Raíz do rap* tuga, Hernani Miguel also recalls the encounter with Boss AC - who at that time was the organizer of precisely the rap nights at the Trópico - and their planning of the album. Boss AC role was crucial in bringing together the artists who would have then come integrate the album *Rapública* (Black Company, Zona Dread, Family, Líderes da Nova Mensagem, Funky D, New Tribe, and Boss AC himself). Unfortunately, in term of production, the project ended up being very rushed due to the short amount of time - Hernani Miguel recalls that they all had just two days to get it done - to record and master all the tracks. Moreover, despite the fact that all artists produced their tracks for the parties and the events where they performed, nobody had a proper experience in recording their music in a studio and this probably complicated the situation.

The year of 1994, then, marks a fundamental shift in rap's evolution, and in some sense, the end of an era. The release of the album *Rápublica* was preceded by another decisive event, Gabriel o Pensador's concert in Lisbon: "toda a comunidade do hip hop se reúne […] no Pavilhão Carlos Lopes" (Contador & Ferreira 1997, 169), showing its cohesion and its dimension as a public, a community and a movement. Also, Gabriel's rap proved that Portuguese was a valid language for rap and for depicting social issues, encouraging to fully embrace it as a means of expression.

Then, the music industry in Portugal finally realized that there was actually a market for rap in Portuguese with Gabriel "o Pensador"'s broadcasting in the local radios. The Brazilian rapper, in fact, spoke directly to the Portuguese artists through the rhymes of his first album (*Gabriel o Pensador*; Sony Music, 1993), touching important themes such as racism, social injustice, and inequality, giving "tips" to his colleagues overseas on how to deal with these situations. He captured the public's attention immediately. In this sense, Gabriel's concert in Lisbon in 1994 was probably the biggest hip hop gathering to ever take place in Portugal, where the entire community met and came together. This made it clear to the media that hip hop had found its space in the national cultural landscape (and market), and even if it was still living under the surface of things, it was growing in strength and consciousness, and, in other words, in public.

In line with these events and changes — during what can be seen as a phase of transition of the culture from a marginal position to a more exposed one — Sony music saw a good business opportunity and agreed to produce the collective album *Rapública*, which reached the markets in 1994. Being produced in a short time and in poor conditions, the album doesn't really stand out for its beats (the rhythmical base is linear), but for its remarkable, corrosive rhymes and contents. The political purpose of the musical project was made clear by the title itself, which plays between the

word “rap” and “república” as direct reference to the government, as well as the tracks *Só queremos ser iguais* by Zona Dread and *Verdade* by Boss AC, which respectively refer to the numerous episodes of racisms that took place in Portugal and to a harsh critic against the Portuguese society. Ironically, however, the success of the album lies in the track *Nadar* by Black Company, where some superficial rhymes actually celebrate a careless attitude, the “I don’t care” motto and the right to have fun.

The huge success of the track *Nadar* in some sense “condemned” Portuguese hip hop to being easily associated with a very non-provocative attitude, mainly produced for the public’s superficial entertainment. Another example of the different role that hip hop began playing within the Portuguese society after 1994 is the track *Rap da Campanha* written by Dj Groove for Cavaco Silva’s elections’ run of 1996. Having a rap promoting a political campaign can be interpreted as: on one side, the legitimation of this musical expression as a powerful vehicle appealing to the mainstream public (the voters); on the other hand, as manifestation of the complete loss of the original message and purpose and of its assimilation by the same establishment it initially fought, that Other against whom hip hop had built its identity as a manifestation of a collective act of counterculture.

Therefore, one can start talking about the existence of an actual rap movement in Portugal around the early and mid-1990s, when the number of meeting points for hip hop performers or spaces dedicated to live battles, as well as hip hop acts in night clubs and radio programs, increased exponentially. In this initial phase, the year of 1995 probably represents hip hop’s peak of media exposure, proved by General D’s and Da Waesel’s win of the Blitz musical prizes of, respectively, artist of the year and band of the year.[43]

Yet, as it had happened in the United States, the increasing media attention and the growing of the public caused a deep scission within the Portuguese movement: the separation between underground and commercial (or “sellout”) became increasingly strong and a harsh critic took place against those rappers who had signed contracts with major labels such as Sony or EMI (Mind da Gap, Black Company, Ithaka, among others): they were considered responsible for taking the entire culture way too far from where it belonged, and for letting the public decide what to say and how, instead of speaking their truth, with no ornaments, with no interest in making it perceivable by those who weren’t living in their social environment. As a consequence of this scission, those who considered themselves underground rappers began performing exclusively for small, selected publics, refusing to have any contact with the market and its representatives.

[43] Blitz is a musical magazine founded in 1984 that between 1994 and 2001 awarded national and international artists and bands.

Hence, if on one side this approach can be considered as in line with the original ideology of hip hop culture and its ambitions, on the other hand it ended up favoring the progress of the commercial side of the movement by endorsing a closed attitude instead of thinking of a proper plan in order to spread a different message through alternative channels. However, the Portuguese case represents another example of what can be considered the general path of hip hop culture, and this is, a path that led to its commodification.

In any case, rap's ability to translate and give voice to a portion of Portuguese youth living in the margin of the "cultural capital" (Bourdieu 1996) is undeniable. It translated a specific political, social and cultural moment of the Portuguese history where capitalism, neoliberalism and postcolonialism merged and transformed a recently democratized country. With the commodification of hip hop, as a music genre, a style and a youth culture, rap inevitably changed and moved towards a more heterogeneous, yes contradictory, practice. Also, new styles and contents began to gain space within the lyrics, the ideology loosened and the initial "movement" slowly ended up being dismantled. Teresa Fradique explains that, despite the changes in terms of production and market, rap was still able to adapt to time and its needs:

> In Portugal, rap was able to speak about racism at the right time and make calls to non-violence. Also, it "sub-styled" at the right time, becoming more marginal (*underground*) and aggressive (*gangsta*) – disappointing some, providing to others the needed material to materialize the urban enemy – but, above all, ensuring the survival of the *movement* (Fradique 2002, 70).[44]

However, many artist who were performing during rap's early age and who actually built the movement and the practice in its Portuguese, local, manifestation, addressing Portugal's issues thorough a language and a code that translated the youth's *zeitgeist*, didn't continue their career throughout the 1990s and up to today, this is, after rap's media boom took place consolidating the practice as a mass-oriented one. Performers such as General D, Black Company, New Tribe and many others today do not work as rappers. However, their contributions to hip hop culture is undeniable and a closer look to some emblematic works of rap's early age highlights the importance of these early works and their ground-breaking contents.

[44] Original: "Em Portugal, o rap soube falar na altura certa do racismo e apelar à não-violência. Também na altura certa, "subestilizou-se" e tornou-se mais marginal (*underground*) e agressivo (*gangsta*) – desiludindo alguns, fornecendo a outros o material necessário à materialização do inimigo urbano – mas, sobretudo, assegurando a sobrevivência do *movimento*."

Rap today is a multidimensional, highly divergent and complex practice. Things have deeply changed since its first steps and today rappers are as profitable as any other artists. Yet, as a cultural strategy, rap still represents a crucial shift in the acknowledgment of the heterogeneity of cultural production within the Portuguese society: in fact, it transformed the urban margin into a vital, tireless cultural laboratory where youth all over the country merged and joined into the creation of expressive forms that were totally new to the Portuguese market and media.

2.6. Revolution and Poetry: Portuguese Rap as a Contemporary Practice of Protest Songs

Considering that in the 20th century Portugal saw some of the most vibrant and metamorphic phases of its political, social and cultural development, and that these set the basis for the country as we know it today, this section focuses on the 1970s protest songs [*Sons de Abril/April Sounds*] and the 1990s rap movement [*movimento rap*], two distinct, and powerful, antiestablishment musical expressions that have marked and accompanied some fundamental socio-political shifts. I believe that these very different musical experiences are connected to each other by the role each one played to convey social and political discontent. Moreover, in recent times a stronger relationship between protest songs and rap can be observed during the period of austerity and the post-2008 crisis, when popular music once again became a vibrant medium of demonstration for social justice. Much like the 1970s protest songs used as anthems for demonstrations and as slogans against the government, rap lyrics are strongly critical of the post-1974 Portuguese democracy and its neoliberal model. Examples of these are Valete's 'Sente Medo' [Feel fear, 2012], Chullage's "Já não dá [Saíamos para a rua]" [It no longer works [We left to the street], 2012], and Capicua's "Medo do Medo" [Fear of Fear, 2012].[45] Rap and protest songs show a common characteristic: that of being vibrant and symbolic tools to reject established patterns of behavior and ideology, encouraging the population to take action against social and political injustice. My argument is that the emergence, and later the success of rap as a musical platform for social and political denunciation, shows that April 25th did not solve some of the country's deepest issues, of which social inequality, police violence and racial segregation are just some examples.

[45] As Paula Guerra (2017) shows, in terms of production within the field of popular music there was a strong reaction to the financial crisis that deeply affected Portugal between 2008 and 2010. Particularly after 2011, lyrics went back to being socially engaged and highly interventive, and popular music distinguished itself as a clear space for the open expression of feelings of revolt and protest against the reality of that time. See Guerra, P. (2017). '*A canção ainda é uma arma*: ensaio sobre as identidades na sociedade portuguesa em tempos de crise.' In Nascimento, Francisco de Assis de Sousa; Silva, Jaison Castro; Ferriera da Silva, Ronyere (orgs.) – *História e arte: teatro, cinema, literatura*. Teresina: EDUFPI. pp. 149-172.

Thus, the limitations experienced today by specific groups within Portuguese society suggests that the democratic turn that followed the Carnation Revolution did not fully achieve the anticipated objectives, and dynamics of power and exploitation still affect the country. With rap, new and active voices appeared; by revitalizing the old practice of protesting through music, and renewing its vocabulary, it re-emerged as a contemporary means of resistance against the injustices experienced in a postcolonial country.

Music is a complex phenomenon that not only involves those who produce it, but impacts those who listen to it, being simultaneously an object, a practice, an institutionalized system and a commodity. Moreover, as a cultural form, popular music has often been linked to political ideologies and social change. As Andy Bennet notes, "for much of the twentieth century folk music played a central role in left-wing politics in the US, while the 'folk' revival of the early 1960s created a more global awareness […] between folk music and political issues" (Bennett 2001, 24).

Another valuable concept for my analysis, that of 'affordance', was introduced by Tia DeNora (DeNora 2000, 2003). It refers to music's specific properties and how these encourage action and mediate social participation. Music encourages ways of "being and doing" (DeNora 2003, 170) and impels action at a social as well as at an individual level. Moreover, music's 'affordances' can be observed when one analyses the relationship between music and action in specific contexts and when these are considered real by social agents (DeNora 2003).

From another perspective, a subcultural approach sees music as part of youth's cultural expression, and more specifically as part of their style (Jefferson 1976; Hebdige 1979). Scholars stress the idea that youth cultures use leisure as a form of resistance or a means through which they can take control over their time and territory. Andy Bennett argues that the subcultural concept of resistance is somehow forced into an interpretation of cultural practices as merely class-oriented. According to him, in so doing, subcultural theory does not consider how the post-war context enabled youth to build new identities (Bennett 1999).

Sociologist Simon Frith also criticizes the subcultural approach for its lack of recognition of youth's agency. In fact, he argues that one of the central issues of this theory relies on its overly romantic idea of resistance, that confines style to a form of symbolic refusal and doesn't consider it a form of symbolic creation (Firth 1983). In his perspective, music is created by people in order to respond to social and individual matters. As a result of 'a continuous process of negotiation, dispute and agreement' (ix) between individual actors, music is a discourse with social meaning and values. Frith argues that, due to its emotional intensity and abstract nature, popular music offers new answers to the questions of identity through a direct experience, both at an individual and social

level. Yet identity-creation, as a process, carries not only a definition of one's self but also an opportunity for the creation of a non-identity: in other words, music 'is a process of inclusion and exclusion' (264) that defines not only what one likes but also what one rejects. According to Frith's analysis, people's identification with specific musical practices and their appraisal of them as authentic products, mostly depends on music's ability to provide an experience of transcendence that takes one beyond day-to-day life and encourages individuals to step outside of themselves. It is precisely this transcendence what gives music its "specialness" (268). Music offers a fundamental source of recognition to people, not only by helping them build an individual self, but also by allowing them to go beyond their everyday life experiences, constituting a form of "liberation." Various narrative structures (or genres), then, set up patterns of identity that help articulate and decode emotions, thus having an impact on people's lives and allowing them to build their own idea of themselves as independent entities and, simultaneously, as part of a wider group. Firth claims that music "is a source of strong feelings that because they are also socially coded can come up against 'common sense'." (273) These processes of recognition can therefore lead to strong disagreement with a dominant mentality. As contended here, in Portugal, both the protest songs of the 1960s and 1970s [Sons the Abril/April Sounds] and the 1990s, and later, post-2008 rap productions are powerful demonstrations of the revolutionary and reactionary feelings articulated by music and directed against institutional authorities.

The practice of using music as a weapon for political and social protest, however, is not an exclusively Portuguese phenomenon. According to Andy Bennett, *'popular music became inextricably linked to the dissemination and appropriation of socio-political ideas during the mid to late 1960s'* (Bennett 2001, 25). In fact, during the mid-1960s and early 1970s, counter-cultural movements of white middle class youth politicized music in different areas of the world in order to fight hegemonic powers and the dominant ideological apparatus. To some extent, the opposition and disillusion of the younger generations was a response to their parents' culture and control of society. Additionally, Theodore Roszak argues that youth's antagonism in countercultures was mainly directed towards the Western, capitalistic technocracy and its lack of regard for human emotion and creativity. Technocracy operated as an unquestionable cultural imperative, or in other words, as a totalistic system (Roszak 1969, 9). Roszak's technocracy reflects Herbert Marcuse's idea of "new authoritarianism," with its "absorbent powers" and "repressive desublimation" (Marcuse 1964), that weaken and disable any form of discontent and generate submission by providing satisfaction.

Protest through music was not an unprecedented phenomenon in the Portuguese cultural landscape.[46] However, the radical voices that found their expression through music in the early 1960s, and into the mid-1970s, had an unprecedented impact in terms of the country's transformation.

The so-called *canção de intervenção* [protest songs] – a form of popular music that merged poetry and music to incite the population to take action in the years before and after the Carnation Revolution (Corte-Real, 1996) - is considered to have its more recent origin in the students' movements of Coimbra in the early 1960s.[47] Here, a strong feeling of revolt was gathering momentum due to the intensification of the Colonial War (also known as the Liberation War) and an escalating feeling of dissatisfaction with the political situation of the country (Sardo 2014, 68).

Music had always been part of the academic life in Coimbra, both on a daily and a ceremonial level. Focus on renewing the traditional fado led to the creation of a less academic-oriented form of music, and to the arrangement of several groundbreaking ballads. In 1963, Zeca Afonso released his songs "Os Vampiros" [The Vampires] and "Menino do Bairro Negro" [Boy of the Black District], his first truly political work, marking a crucial turning point for music production in Portugal. The two works chosen clearly show Afonso's ability to subtly transmit his message of protest against the abuses of the fascist regime, camouflaged under highly metaphorical lyrics that appealed to people's consciousness. His depiction of vampires as "those who eat everything and leave nothing" [Eles comem tudo e não deixam nada] is nothing more than an allegorical expression of his harsh criticism of an exploitative and abusive regime. Zeca Afonso's works are a landmark in music production of the 1960s in Portugal. By setting an example of how ideals could be transmitted through music and poetry, Afonso also showed the urgency of a

[46] During the first three decades of the 20th century proletarian or libertarian fado [fado proletário ou libertário] was used as a way to convey social discontent and to denounce poverty, hunger, misery, the workers' struggle and the desire for a better future. However, the Estado Novo increasingly censored and banned it, eventually transforming fado into a more commercially and entertainment-oriented, and most importantly depoliticized, practice. Another articulation of protest through music prior to the 1960s and 1970s was the Alentejo singing [Cante Alentejano], with its interventional strands and its persistent exposure of injustice and its strong resistance to any form of power (Raposo 2005). Finally, Fernando Lopes-Graça's works (the *Canções Heroicas*/*Canções Regionais Portuguesas* (1945-46) and more importantly his 'Canto de Intervenção') found inspiration in the traditional Portuguese popular song and aimed at recovering its authenticity as the true expression of rurality and collectivity, rejecting the Estado Novo's simplistic attempts at folklorizing music into a demagogic tool for propaganda. Lopes-Graça's works were censured by the Estado Novo.

[47] Also referred to as *'*canção de protesto*'* [protest song], *'*canção dos homens livres*'* [free men's song], *'*canção de partidários*'* [partisans' song], *'*canção de resistência*'* [songs of resistance], and, later, *'*canto livre*'* [free chant], *'*canção de esquerda*'* [left-wing song], *'*canto coletivo*'* [collective song] and *'*canção pupular*'* [popular song]. (Corte-Real 1996, 142). According to Corte-Real, the actual origin of the practice of protest songs dates earlier than the years of the students' movements. In fact, the trajectory of the *'*Sounds of April*'* [Sons de Abril] went through three main phases: the first phase, from 1945 and 1974, was characterized by songs of opposition to the regime, which underwent the strict controls of censorship; the second phase spanned the years of 1974 and 1975 and consisted of two years of great unity in terms of cultural production; the third phase took place from 1976 to 1980, when musicians organized their work in cooperatives as well as in intervention groups. (Corte-Real 1996, 144)

problematic situation and the need to wisely use music as a political tool: manipulating poetry's allegorical element as a means to speak directly to and for the population, giving people new references for their identification as a collective against an oppressive regime.

As a reaction to the intense climate of political and social turmoil that saw Salazar's regime banning any public signs of opposition, reinforcing censorship and, more importantly, engaging in the Colonial War (1961-1974) in Africa, in the thirteen years leading up to the Carnation Revolution of 1974 popular songs merged poetry and tradition to express a deep dissatisfaction with the status quo. The outbreak of the Colonial War and relentless persecution of opposition parties also led to massive migration flows to France of young Portuguese who were escaping military service and refusing to collaborate with the regime. Thus, in the 1960s, Paris – where other movements of protest were already taking place – became the other hub for the production of interventive songs by Portuguese exiled singer-songwriters. Among others, José Mário Branco, Luís Cília, Francisco Fanhais and Sérgio Godinho all played a crucial role in the development and growth of the protest song movement, partly due to their exposure to foreign practices of protest through music such as the French chanson, Anglo-American folk and rock, and the new popular music of Brazilian singer-songwriters (Trindade 2016).

The songs produced in the late 1960s and early 1970s, in Portugal and abroad, were very different from those that emerged from the academic environment in the early 1960s. Politically committed and musically more complex, they translated stronger awareness of an urge for intervention and change. Among these, some of the most emblematic and unique songs are: "Eles" [Them] by Manuel Freire (1968), "Que força é essa" [What Strength is that] by Sérgio Godinho (1971), "Grândola, Vila Morena" [Grândola, Swarthy Town] by Zeca Afonso (1971), Fernando Touro's "Tourada" [Bullfight] (1973) and Paulo de Carvalho's "E depois do Adeus" [And after the Farewell] (1974).[48]

The contents of the songs produced in this very specific period of Portuguese history, intended to build strong opposition to the dominant narrative, went through a variety of exhortations, such as encouraging listeners to take action and fight power, praising the right to criticism and the right to individualism, opposing tyranny and exploitation, protecting the vulnerable, defying the war and mocking repressive powers and financial greed (Corte Real 1996, 169). The deconstruction and condemnation of the social reality was frequently done through the use of irony as a stylistic device in references to everyday life. Also, the lyrics' simplicity – where

[48] "E depois do adeus" [And after the Farewell] was actually the first song to be broadcasted by Radio Renascença on the night of April 24, 1974, at approximately 10.35 p.m: it had been chosen as the first call by the MFA [Movement of the Armed Forces] in order to reveal the imminent arrival of the military coming from Santarém to Lisbon.

singers tried to reproduce a language that people could understand – increased the incisiveness of the message, and allowed for easy memorization of the songs, many of which became true anthems for the population.

Musical and cultural production in Portugal before and right after the Carnation Revolution clearly aimed at encouraging the population to support any form of opposition against the repressive dictatorship and its policies. The term *canção de intervenção* to identify protest songs dates after the Revolution: the singers, in fact, carried out their protest after the fall of the fascist regime and the end of the Liberation War, up to approximately the beginning of the 1980s (Corte Real 1996).[49] Yet, this musical practice became the true expression of a collectivity and of the ideals of freedom, equality and change - or, as Sérgio Godinho would say: 'paz, pão, habitação, saúde, educação' ['Peace, bread, housing, health, education'].[50]

The 1970s Portuguese protest songs showcase music's ability to become a powerful mass medium for the dissemination of socio-political issues: through sound and poetry, the population, which was mostly rural and illiterate, could easily understand the content of the lyrics, identify with their message and take a stand. Through identification with the singers' words the population was able to see itself as a collective, to the extent that "the key to music's role in counter-cultural ideology was its power to convey a sense of 'community' among those who listened to it and understood its message" (Bennett 2001, 30). The community that slowly began growing around protest singers did not correspond to the anonymous, folkloristic population that the Estado Novo imagined, but to one that took action based on awareness and the will to participate in the building of a new society. Collective ideals were experienced through music, again showing that citizens were far from the passive, undefined mass that state institutions tried to maintain under control. This was probably the protest songs' true revolution: giving a voice to the people, stimulating a new consciousness, and offering an alternative narrative to a dominant, authoritarian and discriminatory ideology.

The socio-political shifts that took place after April 25, 1974 can be considered the foundation of modern Portuguese society. As the scenario slowly changed into a democratic, more developed system, the musical practice known as *canção de intervenção* [protest song], or *Sons de*

[49] "A canção de intervenção encontra-se intimamente ligada à Revolução de 1974, não apenas ao golpe de estado militar em si, no qual desempenhou um papel muito específico, mas a todo o processo de preparação para a Revolução, iniciado já nos anos 40, de crítica ao poder vigente pelas precárias condições de vida do povo, e especialmente desenvolvido a partir de 1960 pelo agravamento da situação nacional devido principalmente à guerra nas províncias ultramarinas, e ainda ligada a um processo de militarização revolucionária desenvolvido imediatamente após a Revolução, que se estendeu por alguns anos, até ao início da década de oitenta." (Corte Real 1996, 143).

[50] This is the first spoken verse of Godinho's 'Liberdade' ['Freedom', 1974] where the singer lists the necessary elements to guarantee a democratic system in the country.

Abril [April's Sounds], slowly lost its key role in terms of exposure and centrality. However, even after April 25, protest songs continued to serve as symbols of resistance, revolution and social consciousness (Guerra 2017); in other words, as a practice, protest song 'has built its own history and survives as a reified image of the revolution and the fight against dictatorship' (Sardo 2014, 74).[51] The legacy of protest songs has lived on in the form of new subversive practices that still rely on music as a medium for the transmission of social and political concerns, and on the role of performers and singers as spokespeople for the more vulnerable sectors of the population.

It is in this perspective that rap can be recognized as one of the most effective successors of the tradition of protesting through music, especially in Portugal.[52] Despite having a different socio-cultural connotation, and being the result of a distinct socio-political context, its recurrent posture of revolt, its political implications and the reactionary attitude it translates and advocates are just some of the fundamental components that place rap within a tradition that merges music with militancy. Particularly in its first phase, that is, between 1986 and 1994, rap showed clear similarities with the protest songs' practice. As Chullage explains at the beginning of the documentary *Nu Bai. O rap negro de Lisboa* (2006, Beta SP):

> We are making protest songs, because April 25th has to happen again, you know. […] So now we are continuing to talk about discontent exactly as comrade Zeca [Afonso], and comrade José Mário Branco did. As comrades Amílcar [Cabral], or Agostinho Neto did in their poems or speeches, today we do in music […] (Chullage 2006).[53]

Thanks to the spread of hip hop culture, the first manifestations of rap in Portugal date back to mid-1980s (Simões 2017; Fradique 2001; Contador & Ferreira 1996), and can be seen as a response to the deep changes that were shaping the post-April 25 society. Among these was Portugal's entrance into the European Economic Community, increased immigration flows from African countries and the neoliberal policies implemented by Prime Minister Cavaco Silva (Simões 2017). Sociologists Contador and Ferreira pinpoint that North American hip hop/rap groups reached

51 "Para alguns, a canção depois de Abril perdeu muito do seu valor como 'caixa de ressonância da voz dos poetas' (Letria, 1999), algo que tinha marcado todo o seu percurso desde 1962, inspirada nos modelos da canção política espanhola, francesa e de alguns países da América latina como o Chile ou Cuba. Mas esse repertório, do qual me permito destacar aqui duas canções, construiu uma história própria e sobrevive até hoje como imagem reificada da revolução e da luta contra a ditadura." (Sardo 2014, 74)

52 As many people know, protest songs aren't an exclusively Portuguese phenomenon, and neither is rap. The countercultural practice of the 1960s and 1970s, in fact, had several different local manifestations: the *nueva canción* and the *nueva trova* in Latin America, the *tropicalismo* in Brazil, the *nouvelle chançon* in France and the *voces libres* in Spain, are just some examples of the global spreading of the use of music in order to accompany political resistance between the 1960s and 1970s. Similarly, after its emergence in the United States, rap underwent global dissemination, being readapted locally all around the world as the expression of discontent of minorities and oppressed youths.

53 "Nós estamos a fazer música de intervenção, porque o 25 de Abril tem que dar outra vez, tás a ver. [...] Mas então nós estamos a continuar a falar de descontentamento tal e qual com falavam camaradas como o Zeca [Afonso], como o José Mário Branco. Como falavam camaradas como Amílcar [Cabral], como Agostinho Neto, nos seus poemas ou nos seus discursos, hoje na música [...]." Full documentary is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pOAUbcVMs4w.

the Portuguese public through cassette tapes from France and Holland. The lack of direct access to audiotapes and other material had to do with Portugal's geopolitical position, that is, its semi-peripheral location in Europe (Santos 1993, 2006). Therefore, as previously shown in this chapter, migratory movements to and from Portugal (immigration from the Portuguese-Speaking African Countries, emigration to France) played a crucial part in the cultural re-territorialization (Lull 1995) of music, particularly rap, and its development as a proper musical practice in Portuguese.

As far as media exposure is concerned, rap was almost absent from the Portuguese scenario between the mid-1980s and the mid-1990s. However, as Contador and Ferreira claim, the media was actually responsible for 'importing' the North American imaginary of wealth and consumerism and middle class' aspirations and dreams. But there was another side of the coin: uneven distribution of wealth, racial inequality, social exclusion, and poverty (Contador and Ferreira 1996). In fact, despite the hopes and assumptions of the Revolution, by the mid-1980s the overall unemployment rate in Portugal went from 4% in 1975, to 9.6% in 1985 (Valério 2001), reaching 13.2% in 2001 (INE 2014). As a consequence of a drastic, capitalistic shift in the national economy and the political move towards the European Union, Portugal's urban reality of the mid-1980s increasingly resembled America's façade and, more importantly, its interior tensions: dynamics of racial, social and cultural marginalization deeply affected the urban fabric, and the (dis)integration of immigrants and sons of immigrants from former African territories ended up reinforcing what Salam Sayyid calls the *'*immigrant imaginary' (Sayyid 2006; see section 2.1 of this chapter).[54]

Rap's first expression was underground, spontaneous and undocumented. Scholars (Contador 1996; Cidra 2002; Fradique 2002; Simões 2017) agree that rap first reached Lisbon's commuter districts of the south bank of the Tagus [Margem sul] and subsequently spread to the rest of the country (Porto, Viseu, the Algarve, etc.). Yet the debate on the exact place where rap made its first appearance is still ongoing and there may never be a unanimous agreement. What is clear,

[54] In his studies on Asian immigrants in Britain, Salaman Sayyid detects the unfulfilled goals of the postcolonial rationale and the issues that it brings to the surface, mainly in the definition of new identities and the relationship between spaces, both cultural and geographical. According to Sayyid, postcolonialism doesn't really mark something intrinsic in itself, that is, a new world order, but instead continues to refer to the colonial past despite the ongoing efforts beyond it: *'*in other words, the 'post' in the postcolonial reminds us that we have not arrived at something that can have its own name*'* (Sayyid 2006, 5). In fact, the relentless framing of the settlement of communities of ex-colonial populations shows how colonial reasoning persists as an epistemological, political and cultural reference and reveals that efforts are still needed to bring closure: *'*The continued reliance on colonial framing in the context of the postcolonial condition has been largely responsible for the inability of 'race relations' paradigms to cope with ethnic minorities' attempts to rewrite the history of the nation. (Sayyid 2004, 3). Through their conceptualization of the immigrant, former colonizing countries, unfortunately, reproduce and attempt to reinforce their old spatial dimensions. Immigrants are never truly integrated in society. Immigrants exist as a result of laws and are ethnically marked as a minority in order to separate them from the national majority: *'*This process of mass migration would be the device used to represent the conjoining of two distinct spaces and temporalities, through the elaboration of the 'race-relations' paradigm or what I prefer to call the 'immigrant imaginary' (Sayyid, 2004). The immigrant imaginary is a product of the spatialisation of the ex-colonial ethnically marked settlers.*'* (Sayyid 2006, 3)

though, is that, all available information points at rap as having appeal for the young inhabitants of the urban peripheries: it gradually became their form of cultural resistance and the expression of their experience in a Western, postcolonial country.

As shown in section 2.5, rap provided the youth of Lisbon's peripheral districts with a language of resistance and protest against a condition of exclusion and social marginalization (Cidra 2010). As mentioned above, popular culture plays a crucial role in the process of identity-building thanks to its variety of forms and systems of representation that can easily be readapted culturally. Music, more specifically, allows a community to express its fundamental values; it is a symbolic space where significance is created, meanings are negotiated and imagined cultural narratives are formed (Frith 1996). In addition to this, rap represents a reflexive cultural performance that allows individuals to rethink the positions, roles and values experienced during their lives. Tightly tied to an urban experience of sociability, these young people chose the street as the predominant space for their interactions (Cidra 2010).

In the 1990s, the everyday experience of hip hop as an opportunity for youngsters to socialize was seen mostly in housing districts with poor or working-class conditions, where second generations of immigrant African families lived together with Portuguese families of returnees and families of rural origins who had migrated to the metropolitan space. The heterogeneity of the hip hop universe, in fact, perfectly translated Lisbon's suburban tissue of that time. Rap - and hip hop as a wider cultural movement - represented a code of behavior and expression that allowed an ethnically heterogeneous youth to organize their life experiences in networks of friendships and neighborliness, where social and cultural differences were partially suspended in order to favor a common belief. With General D's words:

> hip hop back then was a way of living, a presence, and it was a culture that encompassed various aspects of life such as dress, way of living. […] When we walked down the street we were immediately identified as people who liked a certain type of music […]. Hence, fashion helped bring people together. Beside the hairstyles, there were shoes, which shoes one had to use, the bags, the trousers, everything was a way of living, a way of dressing. […] We gradually gravitated together like this, we gradually recognized each other (General D 2016).[55]

[55] Original: "O hip hop naquela altura era uma forma de estar, uma presença, e era uma cultura que englobava vários aspetos da vida como o vestir, a forma de estar. [...] Quando passávamos na rua éramos identificados imediatamente como pessoas que gostavam dum determinado tipo de música. [...] Então a moda ajudava muito, e a moda ajudava a congregar as pessoas. Para além dos penteados, havia os ténis, que ténis usar, as malas, as calças, era tudo uma forma de estar, uma forma de vestir. [...] Nós fomo-nos agrupando desta forma, fomo-nos identificando uns aos outros." (General D in *Raíz do Rap Tuga,* 2016). Full documentary is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0weMhlYQpHU .

Music and dress codes are charged with subcultural capital that refers to specific symbolic systems (Cohen 2005). Music is an important element in the process of identity-building due to its structure and the meanings it can carry. And given the specific time when it made its appearance and the feelings it transmitted, as a cultural practice rap can be linked to postmodernity and postmodern art.

The youth living in the urban context of a postcolonial, democratic Portugal experienced the consequences of capitalism and neoliberalism on a daily basis, unable to find a place in the country, its culture and its newborn society. As a result, rap was received positively and the periphery - the city's non-space (Contador 2001) - became a permanent cultural laboratory (Francavilla 2012). Teresa Fradique (2002) also underlines that rap was adopted by youth who were experiencing a massive gap between their lives and those of the previous generation: from their (sub)urban experiences they sought new 'roots'. Meanwhile, the identity-building process took place on several levels, mainly those of race and age, since in Portugal both ethnic minorities and youth were two relatively recent social categories (see section 2.4 of this chapter). MCs worked as important intermediaries and as representatives of these new categories in a delicate dialogue with the Portuguese establishment (the media, the educational system, the urban space, etc.). These Portuguese youth also came to question the shared meaning the vast category of *global Portuguese African-ness* (Fradique 2002).

The efforts of MCs such as General D to level out ethnic divisions that were so heavily present in their parents' generation aimed at creating a transnational and transcultural community (the Hip Hop Nation) where everybody could fit in: rap worked as a "lingua franca" (Hall 2006, 75-76), able to translate the complexity of the different identities that converged within it. Moreover, as a cultural manifestation, rap made in Portugal can also be linked to the space that Miguel Vale de Almeida pinpoints as the "brown Atlantic" [Atlântico pardo; Almeida 2002]. Finding his inspiration in Paul Gilroy's *Black Atlantic* (1993), Vale de Almeida coins this "ironic and provocative expression" [uma expressão irónica e provocatória; 29] to refer to the hegemonic, broader narrative of the Portuguese imperial project of miscegenation, to its completion in the building of Brazil and its failure in the African territories. The experience of the African people living in the diaspora in the Portuguese-speaking world is undeniably and irremediably connected to slavery. According to Almeida, the emergence of democracy and globalization aided the appearance of a new Black ethnicity, with its own historical heritage, its own values and its own community. This also endorsed the creation of transnational ties based on the idea of global African-ness. What I mean to argue here is that rap can be considered one of these ties. In Portugal, rap music also appeared in

the wake of the process of negotiation of the "doubleness" experience (Girloy 1993) resulting in the building of a new space of expression, recognition and participation.

From this perspective, Sergio Matsinhe aka General D's first EP *Portukkkal (é um erro*) [*'*Portukkkal (it's a mistake); 1994] was a real breakthrough in the music scene in Portugal, and represented a true step towards the acknowledgement and visibility of those outside mainstream culture. General D's work, in fact, was provocative and accusatory: in the three-track album whose title bore a clear reference to the three *'*Ks*'* of the Ku Klux Klan, the Mozambican MC fiercely accused the Portuguese State of being racist, violent and built upon 'mistakes'. By singing *'*New PIDE in Portugal / GNR and so/They treat my brother as if he were an animal' [Nova PIDE em Portukkkal/GNR e tal /Trata meu irmão come fosse um animal] he denounced police violence against Black citizens, referring to the existence of a new PIDE (the International State Defense Police, that existed during the New State), and to persecutions by the GNR (National Republican Guard): 'I learned how to run/to escape the GNR' [A correr aprendi / Da GNR fugi]. As an MC, General D used his rhymes to describe and document life in a country that is still anchored in a colonial legacy and racial divisions. As a matter of fact, in modern Portugal, ideologies in line with the Estado Novo's narrative and the colonial past - Lusotropicalism and racial prejudice - persist relentlessly: on one hand the country is often depicted as a tolerant and welcoming space, prone to racial conviviality, while on the other hand its non-white citizens still experience discrimination and daily struggles.[56] Moreover, unjustified police violence against Black citizens is still a very urgent matter in this country.[57]

To General D, brotherhood, rap and unity were the key to fight the injustice of an evil system and a common state of poverty. In 'Portukkkal (É um erro)', rap's struggle is clear, along with conscious intentions to eradicate the old ideological legacy: *'*Rappers and warriors / Who arouse outspokenly / fight and come together to ward off old fears […]*'* [Rappers e guerreiros/Que se agitam sem rodeios/Lutam e se juntam para afastar velhos receios]. Finally, the song closes with General D's rejection of Portugal as a nation, as a political system and as a reference: '[…] Evils have united/And they built this nation/Fuck June, 10th, Cavaco and Salazar /I say: no!' [Males se juntaram / E criaram esta nação / Fuck 10 de junho, Cavaco, Salazar / Eu digo: não!]. Through his

[56] As previously shown in this chapter, Joana Gorjão Henriques's *Racismo no país dos brancos costumes* [Racism in a country with white habits] (Tinta da China, 2018) undoes the persisting myth of the 'Pais dos Brandos Costumes' [the country of gentle habits], invented during the Estado Novo. Henrique plays with the words *branco/brando* [white/mild], and depicts true cases of racial discrimination, complementing them by statistical data and more than 80 interviews, covering justice, housing, education and employment.

[57] For more information on the ongoing trial of twelve police agents who assaulted six people from Bairro Alto da Cova da Moura, including the MC and activist Flávio Almada, aka LBC Souldjah, see https://www.publico.pt/2018/02/28/sociedade/noticia/julgamento-de-policias-de-esquadra-de-alfragide-comeca-a-22-de-maio-1804849

bold lyrics, this MC made direct accusations to Portugal and its representatives and exposed how racism affected the everyday life of those living in the margins. He spoke for his community: his peers, the Black population, other MCs. His firm, assertive tones invited the listener to reject oppression and take action against injustice. His charisma, but mainly his work, have made General D one of the central figures of old-school rap in Portugal, and his work is an inspiration and a reference. His whole production focused on the value of African heritage and on its sounds and rhythms: later records such as *Pé na Tchon, Karapinha da Céu* [Foot on the ground, the Afro in the Sky] (1995) and *Kanimambo* [Thank you] (1997), showcased his efforts to merge this specific cultural background with rap, creating his unique *'*afro-pop-rap*'* style (Contador and Ferreira 1996, 173).

When it made its appearance in Portugal, rap responded to, and resisted the rapid merging of capitalism, neoliberalism and post-colonialism, and their impact on a recently democratized country. It exposed how these forces affected working-class citizens, especially those who were part of a minority, and a diaspora. However, if General D's African roots come through in his sound and his lyrics, for others they are located in the language. In more recent times, a vivid vocabulary inspired by the African heritage and its creoles (mainly Angolan and Cape Verdean), have slowly made its way to Lisbon's streets. The adoption of creole for building of the rhymes can be seen as the acknowledgment of the African diasporic condition, as well as a statement of cultural resistance. As mentioned before in this chapter, to Derek Pardue the use of creole is attributed to the need 'to be effective and to be 'real'. […] The main message is one of distinction: to be, or to speak *kriolu* is not to be, or to speak *tuga*, or Portuguese.' (Pardue 2012, E42-43). This is also a provocation against the social and ideological dynamics of language in Portugal (E43). The use of a minor language exemplifies once again the need of these young performers to make a statement of their own, to find their space of belonging and identification - in some sense their own nation -, to search for references in their own cultural heritage and to use them in contrast to the main establishment, represented by the Portuguese language. 'Kriolu rappers', then, stand for a specific category of performers, as Pardue explains:

> Like hip hoppers in other parts of the world, Portuguese hip hoppers established a national genre in the 1990s. *'*Hip hop tuga*'* emerged toward the end of the decade; the term currently, somewhat polemically, refers to hip hop culture made in Portugal. In response, Kriolu rappers employ the *'*ideology of the word*'* (Morgan 2009) through a set of territorial claims by means of which they carve out alternative subject positions and linguistic-cultural communities in relation to *tuga* and, thus, dislodge conventional notions of what it is to be Portuguese at phenomenological and narrative levels (Pardue 2012, E49).

Within this growing community of performers, one can today find artists such as LBC Souldjah, Loreta KBA, Mynda Guevara, among many others mostly from the Alto da Cova da Moura district.[58] However, among the first to have adopted cape Verdean creole in his lyrichs was MC Chullage: both his 2001 album *Rapresálias... Sangue, Lágrimas, Suor* [Raprisals… Blood, Tears, Sweat] and his 2004 album *Rapensar* [Rap-thinking] alternate tracks in Portuguese and creole. Moreover, Chullage's works were filled with direct references to the lyrics of protest songs. In rap, words imply criticism of power. As Morgan explains, "the hip hop speech community is not necessarily linguistically and physically located but rather bound by this shared language ideology as parts of politics, culture, social conditions and norms, values and attitude" (Morgan 2009, 62). Language, as an ideology, then, becomes central to the preservation of the integrity of the hip hop culture. The use of Cape Verdean creole can be seen as another way of making both a political and countercultural statement, as important as the actual content of the rhymes. Rap's ability to legitimize and encourage a part of the Portuguese population who is still living in the margin of the cultural establishment, and who has limited access to cultural capital (Bourdieu 1996) to gain a voice and conquer its space in its physical and metaphorical dimension, is undoubtedly its major contribution as a form of protest through music.

In conclusion I would like to highlight that present-day rap is indeed a multidimensional, highly divergent and complex practice that incorporates the most varied products and beliefs. However, as a cultural strategy, its appearance marked a crucial shift in the acknowledgment of the heterogeneity of cultural production within Portugal's music scene and market: it transformed the urban margin into a vital, tireless cultural fabric where youth joined forces in the creation of expressive forms that were totally new to the Portuguese, revolutionizing the space occupied by the underrepresented citizens' productions in the market and media. More importantly, through rap, the subaltern youth found the courage to take action, raise their voices to tell their own stories, and join the fight against an oppressive rhetoric that still conceals the unbalanced distribution of wealth, legal rights and access to society as a whole.

Considerations on early rap and protest songs from the second half of the 20th century show that they were two very different practices: the first being a response of a socially marginalized youth living in a postcolonial country that was (and is) unable to keep pace with change, while the latter represents the cultural and political strategy used by a middle-class youth in order to fight the New State's Colonial War, censorship and its exploitation of the population. They are the result of

[58] Bairro Alto da Cova da Moura, or Kova M, as its residents call it, is located in the Amadora municipality, in the periphery of Lisbon. It was built in the 1970s by immigrants, mainly from Cape Verde.

distant historical contexts and a response to very specific political, social and cultural needs that can't be compared. However, despite adversities, both practices translate a similar need to take part in society, and the use of music to manifest the urge to actively implement change. This allows us to place them in the same perspective, that is, as powerful devices of social, political and cultural intervention and revolt. Both practices are inextricably connected to the urban environment, being syncretic and porous. Social critique and the encouragement of any form of rebellion are predominant themes, as well as feelings of frustration and discontent, and an attitude of contrast towards reality. Words – in the form of message or language ideology – prevail over sound.

Most importantly, this common language of protest through music allows us to observe the issues that April 25 wasn't able to solve and that still pend on the population's shoulders. Rap, in fact, exposes the ongoing oppression experienced by minorities in Portugal, and how the (neo)colonial order finds in the urban fabric a renewed stage for racial segregation; it exposes police persecution, the punitive actions against ethnical minorities by the "new PIDE" - borrowing the term from General D - , proving that violent censorship actually found its way into the 'new' political order; by revealing the limited access to wealth and power experienced by certain sections of the population, it questions democracy and its accomplishments, unmasking its utopian nature. It discloses the country's inability to rebuild its fundamental pillars, and shows that it continues anchored in a controversial, undiscussed past. Through rap, music reclaims its function as a platform for social and political denunciation, through a new vocabulary, but more importantly, through new voices that take over the protest songs' tradition, readjusted to their own, contemporary means of resistance.

2.7 Between Portugal and Brazil: rap as a *Língua Franca*

For historical reasons that are both controversial and unfortunate, Portugal and Brazil have maintained relations for over four centuries. It is well known that the main *mis-en-scene* of this contact was a prolonged colonization which left deep historical and cultural wounds. A common language and various forms of miscegenation (ethnic, cultural), together with an ideological position that is tendentially binding, are just some examples of a heritage that was narrated and experienced in an ambiguous way.

However, a "common" past is not synonymous with shared or directly related identities. In the west, the process of building a cultural identity involved long mechanisms of violent conquest which in most cases sought to suppress cultural differences and unify (social) classes and ethnic and

groups. This also esulted in a forcedly homogeneous and strongly *gendered* type of nation – whose identity was almost always presented as being male (Hall 2006).

Again, I reiterate the idea that nations are symbolic and imagined communities (Anderson 1983) and are constructed as narratives (Bhabha 1990). That is, rather than seeing national cultures as being unified (as was intended in modernity), "we should perceive them as a «discursive device» which represents difference as unity and entity. They are fraught with deep divisions and internal differences, «unified» merely by different forms of cultural power" (Hall 2006, 62). It is known today that no nation is made up of a single people, culture or ethnicity. Despite the imposition of a homogenizing narrative, modern nations are all cultural hybrids: the representation of a national identity as a uniform entity will never correspond with its nature, which is, in truth, heterogeneous.

Among the various perspectives and studies carried out on this subject, the reflections of Homi Bhabha and his renowned collection of essays *Nation and Narration* (1990) are a good starting point for the kind of argumentation I intend to use here. In his introduction Bhabha states that it is impossible to deny that there is a constant attempt in nationalist discourses to produce an image of nations as narratives of national progress; such a denial would generate a strong ambivalence in the actual concept of nation, in the language used by those who write about it, and even in the lives of those who experience it. Bhabha concludes that "nationalism in itself is ambivalent by nature" (Bhabha 1990, 2).

A nation is strictly and structurally dependent on the language in which it is narrated, and is the product of a discourse about power, of an ambiguous rhetoric, because the actual language that produces it is ambiguous. Therefore, the discourses with which national identities are constructed are fundamental as they shape profoundly the perception that individuals develop of their place of origin. Furthermore, national identity cannot be permanent, unchanging and pre-determined, but rather involves practices, experiences, stereotypes, and reiterated and often conflicting discourses that depend on a particular historical, ideological and cultural context. In other words, the narratives through which identities are constructed imply continuous processes of change which enables them to adapt to different historical and cultural needs.

The Portuguese case is interesting; a protracted dictatorship, the outbreak of the Colonial War, the revolutionary process of 1974-75 and the integration of Portugal in the European Union had historical, social and ideological significance. The historical context, in particular, shaped the ideologies that characterized the national identity as well as a subsequent critical relationship with alterity. Portugal's "intrinsic fragility" (Lourenço 2010: 25) started to become apparent in early times. Often the myths and memories through which this identity was (gradually) forged contrasted with an element of *Other,* exterior and even menacing. It is possible that the construction of the

discourse about Portuguese identity was characterized from the beginning by a need to manifest itself through mechanisms of opposition and conflict. As Stuart Hall remarks, the identity of many modern western nations was built through processes of comparison between their virtues and the negative aspects of other cultures, namely those that were formerly under their rule (Hall 2006).

The fusion between nationalism and colonialism in Portuguese culture and politics was especially consolidated during the Estado Novo: once again, national identity was supported by the existence of an element of *Other* that was used to assert and consolidate its power. As shown in section 2.2., at that time official texts began to construct a discourse about the "specificity" of Portuguese colonialism to legitimize it in response to international pressure to dismantle the empire with the Luso-tropicalist theory of Gilberto Freyre: the Estado increasingly justified Portuguese presence in the world on the basis of "spontaneous miscegenation" and the existence of a so-called "Luso-tropical" entity (Castelo 2013).

Racial mixing, however, was not exactly in line with one of the oldest founding myths of Portuguese identity - the heroic "Christian reconquest", which does not conform at all with Freyre's theory about Arab and African roots of the Portuguese (Castelo 2013). Nonetheless, with the end of the Second World War and the failure of the Nazis to implement their program of racial purity, Portugal was faced with international pressure to grant independence to the African countries still under European rule. Freyre's theories were adapted to the circumstances of the period and re-used in a simplified and nationalist version in official discourse, in propaganda and as a strategy in foreign policy. In the meantime, the Luso-tropicalist ideology penetrated the different forms of cultural production, i.e. academic and scientific, to respond to the urgent need to maintain the *status quo* in the overseas territories. Today, the Luso-tropicalist ideology remains present and continues to condition the country's institutions and their discourse about national identity in Portuga, as well as the perception of its relationship with alterity, the colonial past and cultural difference as a whole.

Perspectives on national cultural identity have been changing over the last decades, mainly due to radical transformations brought out by globalization. In the last 40 years a new, far-reaching, global order was established, economic in origin but with an impact on all spheres of social life, which resulted in the collapse of national borders and the creation of new space-time combinations, as well as a new reality of world interconnectivity and individual experience. Furthermore, the issue of identities, in their multiple dimensions – individual, national, ethnic, regional, local, and of professional groups and families – have, since the 1980s, occupied a central place in the research and reflection that has been developed in the field of social sciences showing that it was necessary to reconsider the premises that had defined people during modernity.

The social and cultural role of national histories, of collective memories and legacies in the legitimization of nations had great relevance in the 19th century. Until WWII the subject of national character, closely tied to organic and essentialist conceptions of societies, was a shared place, capable of captivating a group – a nation- that needed to be represented as a totality, like a community (imagined). Today this vision is no longer consistent with a context that has changed radically, where identities have been redefined on the basis of new premises and are identified with different kinds of communities. The breakdown of the typical social and cultural structures of modernity and the subsequent implantation of more "liquid" systems of reference characterized by constant and rapid changes, led to a profound questioning of identities whose dimension can no longer be considered uniform and whose horizon is no longer merely national. This relentless rhythm of change which characterizes the post-modern period is described in the words of Anthony Giddens: "as different areas of the globe become interconnected, waves of social transformation reach virtually every surface of the earth" (Giddens 1990, 6).

According to Ernest Lacau (1989), with the breakdowns and transformations that occurred in post-modernity, former centers were relocated and a plurality of centers of power emerged. This new complex dimension resulted in the decentering of societies and moving them outside themselves. In this perspective, "the societies of late modernity are characterized by «difference», a variety of different «positions of subject», that is, identities" (Hall 2006, 17). Cultures were fragmented and new possibilities and spaces were created for the development of new strategies, and especially, of new narratives.

From the 1980s onwards there was not only an acceleration of the transformation processes towards global post-modernity, but also a consolidation of cultural and expressive strategies in which the above-mentioned, and formerly subordinate difference, finds a powerful tool for vindication. The more the market of styles, images and references becomes global, the more these differences, or new set of identities, can become divested of times, places and histories, and fluctuate freely. Consumerism, also global by nature, plays a fundamental role in shared identities. In the words of Stuart Hall, this can be summarized as follows:

> Inside the discourse of global consumerism, the differences and cultural distinctions, which until then had defined an *identity*, are reduced to a sort of international *lingua franca* or global currency, by which all specific traditions and all identities can be translated (Hall 2006, 75-56).

Based on these considerations, I contemplate here hip hop culture, and particularly rap, to reveal how they also were consolidated as narrative devices. I also aim at discussing herein how rap

can offer an alternative narrative in the interpretation of cultural identities, and how it is established as a reference for a series of identities (black, young, excluded, marginalized, peripheral, and others) which had formerly been silenced and today find in rap their cultural, social and political expression. In this sense, rap functions as a lingua franca, a supranational discourse and a bridge between different geographical and cultural spaces. Portugal and Brazil also participate in this global and intercultural dialogue through rap. However, the recent release of a record called precisely *Língua Franca* (2017) by Portuguese rappers Capicua and Valete, and Brazilians Rael and Emicida, raises some doubts about the persistence of the Luso-tropicalist ideology in the building of the cultural relations between the two countries: with this project, in fact, the music industry, seems to prefer to promote a narrative that reinforces the existence of common features and a common language rather than fostering works where these are questioned.

As an agent of expression, and because it provides fundamental references for young people in the construction of their identity, rap's role can be related to the one played by any minor literature, a term I am borrowing from Deleuze and Guattari (1986). With their words, this is:

> That which a minority builds in a major language. The first characteristic of minor literature, in any case, is that in it, language is affected by a high coefficient of deterritorialization. The second characteristic of minor literatures is that everything in it is political. The third characteristic of minor literature is that in it everything acquires a collective relevance (Deleuze and Guattari 1986, 16-17).

In rap poetry merges with rhythmic flows, language is displaced and politics are negotiated. It also represents a typically post-modern art form because of its role in social and cultural redemption and the dialectics between the forces and powers of which it is the result. In this perspective, the peripheries are a result of the asymmetries of modernity. Post-modernity, with its dismantling of traditional structures and its opening towards a more fluid circulation of capitals, people and cultural goods, did not manage to balance a real distribution of the later. In other words, if modernity was characterized by relations of power between rulers and ruled, between centers and peripheries, post-modernity is characterized by relations of inclusion and exclusion that find in the social and urban fabric its most obvious manifestation. The periphery is also a cultural laboratory, and a territory of redemption and of affirmation (Francavilla 2012) which brings to life powerful creative strategies. Rap is part of these strategies and its global success shows that there are similar factors of exclusion that affect both local youths and ethnic and cultural minorities in the various parts of the globe. Rap, then, discloses the limits of the world-system and its related global market. Furthermore, it can be considered the voice of the first generation of youths that grew up in direct contact with globalization (Kitwana 2002).

In contemporary post-modern era, then, identities end up being created around new narratives, this time of resistance and revolt, which have nothing to do with those needed to build old nations – that is, myths, legends, epics and heroes. These new narrative norms manage to transcend geographic, ethnic and even cultural borders, and create alternative spaces of expression and identification where new identities, de-territorialized and fluid, can come together.

Despite a certain movement towards the global world-system, in Portugal still showcases ideologies and narratives strongly associated with the glorification of the colonial past and an unpleasant attachment to Luso-tropical theories. Adapting themselves to the new context of the country and the world, these have found alternative forms of manifestation, perhaps more subtle ones, that continue to permeate the national reality and the perception of what is Portuguese and what is not.

Based on these observations, the project *Língua Franca* works as a good example of how rap cooperates in the definitions of today's post-modern identities in the Lusophone word, yet also of how it can also be used in an abigous way. The a record, in fact, comes as a result of the recent collaboration between rappers Capicua and Valete - from Portugal – and the Brazilians Emicida and Rael, and it produced and commercialized by Sony Music in June of 2017.

The record consists of ten tracks in which the four rappers alternate between rhymes and refrains about various themes (friendship, love of music, preoccupation with current issues, among others), whose common denominator is undoubtedly the Portuguese language. As Rute Correia states in the online platform Rimas e Batidas (Rhymes and Beats),

> although the music emerged in a relatively organic way, Lingua Franca began as a challenge (or should I say desire?) of Sony Portugal and Sony Brazil, two large publishers in their respective territories that wanted to release an album of Luso-Brazilian rap (Correia 2017).[59]

The project therefore translates the vision of a *major* – Sony Music – and its intention to celebrate a common language through a common practice, rap. Surprisingly, it is the actual Emicida who declares in an interview during the presentation of the record that this Luso-Brazilian bridge could function as a powerful means of information and example for future collaboration: "with this type of initiative, with this type of fusion […] I think that people create a flow of information that

[59] Original: "Ainda que a música tenha surgido de modo relativamente orgânico, Língua Franca começou como um desafio (ou devia dizer desejo?) da Sony Portugal e da Sony Brasil, duas importantes editoras nos seus respectivos territórios que procuravam lançar um álbum de rap luso-brasileiro". Full text is available at https://www.rimasebatidas.pt/lingua-franca-lingua-franca/

will result in more people, more agents speaking of that" (Capicua, Valete, Emicida, Rael 2017).[60] On one hand, then, the project can be seen as a sign of the maturing of rap on both sides of the ocean over its thirty something years of life and of the heterogeneity it acquired during its evolution. On the other hand, this very specific work looks like an attempt to celebrate the possibility of creating a common space between Portugal and Brazil, very familiar with that Luso-tropical ideology which continues alive inside the Lusophone world.

The title of the project is emblematic and has great impact: "*Língua Franca* is seen as a record of reflection, in which points of view cross beyond the obvious and words serve as bridges between two sides of the Atlantic" (Correia 2017).[61] In rap, words are, in fact, the language of contact and the symbolic space of confluence between individuals from very different places.

In the specific case of this collective, rap can works even more an element of connection and union, either for the use of a common language, or because of its features as a creative and expressive conduit. According to Valete, "it is the right time to take things to another dimension" [agora está na altura de levar as coisas para uma outra dimensão; Capicua, Valete, Emicida, Rael 2017].

During an interview for the promotion of the record, the rappers state that all the lyrics were fruit of mutual collaboration during a ten day interaction – as Emicida explains: "(it is) ten days for ten songs" [são dez dias para dez músicas] – while the production and completion of the record was the result of the collaboration between Fred Ferreira, Nave and Kassin – also well-known producers in the world of hip hop. Nevertheless, not all the themes envisage the vocal contribution of all the rappers: the voices of Capicua and Emicida are more prominent and appear in nine out of the ten themes. The rappers' attitudes throughout the record is open and positive – which is surprising when compared with their performances as solo artists -, and they leave space for reflexivity and some content, quite in line with rap's mission to make intervention (social, political, cultural) its mark of distinction. As Rute Correia explains,

[60] "Com este tipo de iniciativa, com este tipo de fusão [...] acho que a gente cria um fluxo de informação que vai fazer com que mais pessoas, mais veículos falem disso". Full interview is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=38&v=2VEGIAPEz2c.

[61] "*Língua Franca* assume-se como um disco de reflexão, em que os pontos de vista se cruzam para lá do óbvio e a palavra revela-se como ponte entre os dois lados do Atlântico"

without having a particularly disruptive tone both in terms of lyrics and sound, *Língua Franca* immediately has a positive approach, rather than stressing moralist criticism […] Despite bringing an unusual fusion of genders, it remains true to its original mission of exposing social injustice (Correia 2017).[62]

In fact, the record shows a variety of influences that range from Carioca funk to reggae and African rhythms – exhibiting the customary musical hybridism – and a lot of instrumentals, although the lyrics never lose their fundamental protagonism.

The opening and closing songs are also emblematic since they are the only tracks where everyone sings. The theme "Amigos" [Friends] starts off the work and is an ode to those people who are closest: although there are no direct references to the friendship between the rappers, the participation of all of them seems to "open the dance" not only in the actual record but in the relationship that developed among the artists. It ends with the theme "Ela" [She], dedicated to music, and in it each artist declares, in their own particular way and style, their love, dedication and gratitude to music, thus drawing to a close this symbolic journey between Brazil and Portugal with a message of union and communion.

When evaluating the work in its entirety, one cannot help but remark that the contents are approachable and there is a clear predominance of "frivolous" themes and attitudes. Furthermore, if compared with the usual productions of each artist, one realizes that this project doesn't completely conform to the artistic trajectory of each one, especially because of its levity and strong marketing component. Finally, the fact that it was conceived and financed by Sony Music (a major) further reinforces the doubt about how the above-mentioned Luso-tropicalism still conditions – and affects – exchanges inside the Lusophone world and markets.

To conclude, here I aimed at discussing questions associated to identities (national, cultural, global) in order to reveal the complex mechanisms that are involved in their construction and in its renewal in postmodern times. Using rap as an example, I have attempted to show how today it is possible to observe new tendencies and new strategies, or new narratives, whose power lies not only in creating other imagined communities that surpass national borders and old frames of reference, but also function as powerful tools of affirmation and sharing. Albeit, Portugal is a singular case where old ideological mechanisms have, to a degree, endured, especially in defininig its current relations with the former colonial territories. In this perspective, the project *Língua Franca* showcases rap not only as a cultural bridge between Portugal and Brazil that transcends any barrier

[62] Original: "Sem ser um registo particularmente disruptivo tanto a nível lírico como sónico, *Língua Franca* estabelece se desde o início como um registo focado numa abordagem positiva, ao invés de vincar críticas moralistas. [...] Apesar de trazer uma invulgar fusão de géneros, mantém-se fiel à missão primordial de denúncia da injustiça social."

between the two spaces, but also as a subtle tool to propagate the old Luso-tropical ideology, and it's attachment to a common language and a shared identity.

CHAPTER 3

FEMALE VOICES FROM PORTUGAL'S RAP SCENE

After offering an overview on the socio-political elements that have influenced hip hop culture in Portugal and the peculiarities of the phenomenon during its early age, the present chapter focuses exclusively on women rappers. I believe that there is a lack of information with regards to female performers among studies on Portuguese hip hop and more specifically rap. As per many other fields, most of the available material shows less consideration towards women than the one given to men: this passes the idea that women's contributions were and are less relevant. It also reinforces the well-known - yet erroneous, as well as thoroughly questioned - condition of subordination experienced by women within society, through history and space. Through informal interviews with some performers and the analysis of the available studies on rap made in Portugal, women's studies and feminism in Portugal, this chapter aims at presenting the works of female rappers in Portugal from the early steps of the culture up to today, as a proof of their commitment and participation to hip hop, and as a means to discuss which factors are involved in the complex process of the legitimation and acknowledgment of their presence and value.

3.1 Women's studies: general outlines

As an academic field, Women's studies arose in the Western world in the decade of the 1960. In Europe it can be considered to have emerged from the political upheavals of the late 1960 and early 1970s, the student movements, the New Left, the struggles linked to decolonization and, last but not less important, the emergence of feminism. In fact, these movements managed challenge the boundaries of formal academic disciplines and knowledge, as well as to the idea of "truth".

By placing women's lives and experiences at the center of researches frequently bound together by the feminist theory, the aim was to examine the social and cultural constructs of gender and the power relations involved in its perception and in determining women's location within society. Having a clear interdisciplinary approach, the methodologies associated with women's studies have been drawn by various fields such as ethnology, sociology, and cultural studies, among many others. Most of the research produced until today is concerned with issues regarding gender,

ethnicity, class, sexuality and social inequalities in general, and today, women's studies are part of the more comprehensive field of Gender Studies. Yet, the goal is the same: to promote social change in order to guarantee equal opportunities to all genders.

Early studies regarding the social construction of femininity were born after the question "Where are women?": by questioning the common elements of the different approach to research and their results, these early critiques pinpointed the lack of attention given to women as a consequence of male-centric views and as an incorrect way of representing women's participation and positions within cultures and subcultures. According to Ana da Silva and Teresa Cláudia Tavares

> Cultural Studies and Women's Studies arose from the same "cultural cauldron" and evolved simultaneously. It has already been largely related […] how the Left Wing movement provided the theoretical and militant preparation to women who were unsatisfied with what they called the masculine form of social contestation, and they created they own, autonomous agenda (Silva and Tavares 2001, 133). [63]

The publication of *Women take issue* in 1978 – a 6 volume series that focused exclusively on issues related with women's subordination - came as result of the works by researchers from the women's study group of the CCCS in Birmingham, as well as a statement for their autonomy and a step further towards the fight against women's invisibility within the field of Cultural Studies. Since its first steps, Women's Cultural Studies relied on an interdisciplinary approach and on the cooperation between many fields of research such as sociology, literature, history and media studies, as well as feminist psychology and anthropology (McRobbie 1997). Particular relevance has been given to media studies due to the use of the female body in advertising and to studies on consumer culture, since shopping is considered a typically feminine activity. However, the increasing growth of the field has led to broadening the areas of interest of the question of "where are women" and "how are they represented".

As Angela McRobbie recalls about her own experience at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham in the late 1970s, after the publishing of pioneering works such as the ones by Anne Campbell on female delinquency and Carol Smart's on women and crime, as well as Sue Lee's research on sexuality's double standards and schoolgirls and Chris Griffin's study on

63 Original: "Os Estudos Culturais e os Estudos sobre as Mulheres emergiram do mesmo "caldeirão cultural" e desenvolveram-se a par. Foi já amplamente historiado […] como o movimento da Nova Esquerda deu preparação teórica e militante a mulheres que, insatisfeitas com o que chamavam de forma masculina de contestação social, criaram a sua agenda autónoma."

girl's shift from school to work, "suddenly the complete absence of interest in girls in a vast range of academic studies could not be ignored" (McRobbie 1991, xi).

As a matter of fact, McRobbie's interest in female subcultures was meant precisely to offer a new perspective to the subcultural theory arguing that in order to perceive teenage femininity or female youth culture scholars had to draw their attention towards the terrain of domestic life and start from there. As the author explains in her contribution originally written for Hall's and Jefferson's *Resistance through rituals*,

> The absence of girls from the whole of the literature in this area is quite striking, and demands explanation. Very little seems to have been written about the role of girls in youth cultural groupings in general. They are absent from the classic subcultural ethnographic studies, the 'pop' histories (like Nuttall, 1970), personal accounts (like Daniel and McGuire, eds., 1972), or journalistic surveys (like Fyvel, 1963). When they *do* appear, it is either in ways which uncritically reinforce the stereotypical image of women with which we are now so familiar (McRobbie & Garber 2006, 177).

Hence, McRobbie's acknowledgment of girls' invisibility led her to question the impartiality of the research on subcultural manifestations, arguing that the lack of information on female representatives of subcultures may not correspond to their lack of activity or participation. In fact, if on one side, girls seemed to play a marginal role in post-war youth cultural formations, on the other hand this marginality, this is, their position on the periphery of male subcultures, seemed to represent an unfulfilling and unsatisfactory explanation to their participation:

> It may be, however, that the *marginality* of girls is not the best way of representing their position in the subcultures. The position of the girls may be, not marginally, but *structurally* different. They may be marginal to the subcultures, not simply because girls are pushed by the dominance of males to the margin of each social activity, but because they are centrally into a different, necessarily subordinate set or range of activities. Such an analysis would depend, not on their marginality but on their structured *secondariness*. If women are 'marginal' to the male cultures of work (middle and working class), it is because they are central and pivotal to a subordinate area, which mirrors, but in a complementary and subordinate way, the 'dominant' masculine arenas. They are 'marginal' to work *because* they are central to the subordinate, complementary sphere of the *family*. Similarly, 'marginality' of girls in the active, male-focused leisure subcultures of working class youth may tell us less than the strongly present position of girls in the 'complementary' but more passive subcultures of the fan and the fan-club (McRobbie & Garber 2006, 179).

The absence of girls from subcultures, then, seemed to depend from the predominance of academic work by men and from the media's predilection for sensationalist news, often related to violence –

an area of subcultural activity from which women tend to be excluded: "The objective and popular image of a subculture as encoded and defined by the media is likely to be one which emphasises the male membership, male 'focal concerns' and masculine values." (180). The invisibility undergone by women becomes then a "self-fulfilling prophecy, a vicious circle" for many reasons.

First of all, to draw attention exclusively on the male representatives of cultures and subcultures reinforces the idea that these are predominantly masculine or as male-centered and dominated. Then, in post-war subcultures girls indeed didn't always show the same participation as boys, but the reasons that lie underneath these differences have to be observed as a consequence of the distinctive options available to working-class girls, as well as the diverse interests, rather than as their lack of cultural vitality:

> Though girls participated in the general rise in the disposable income available to youth in the 1950's, girls' wages were, relatively, not as high as boys'. More important, patterns of spending would have been powerfully structured in a different direction for girls from that of boys. The working class girl, though temporarily at work, remained more focused on home, Mum and marriage than her brother or his male peers. More time was spent in the home (180).

The space within the home, and more specifically, the bedroom, is mainly where girls interact with their peers and consume culture, such as magazines, makeup, music and carry out their activities, under parental control. This suggests that their involvement just followed a different pattern in subcultural terms and that "it may, then, be a matter, not of the absence or presence of girls in the sub- cultures, but of a whole alternative network of responses and activities through which girls negotiate their relation to the subcultures or even make positive moves away from the subcultural option" (183).

According to McRobbie, then, the dimension of sexuality should be included in the study of youth subcultures in order to understand girls' negotiation of a different space. Girls definitely show a different form of resistance to that of boys, due to their sexual subordination. They negotiate a different leisure and personal space. By offering different responses and alternative strategies to boys' subcultures, girls end up forming distinctive cultures of their own – as, for example, the Teeny Bopper culture – as well as highly excluding groups.

Angela McRobbie's studies on working-class girls were central to the development of a feminist approach to subcultures and to the understanding of feminine cultural responses as complex phenomenon rooted in feminine ideologies. McRobbie's directed her attention to one of the most powerless sectors of society, this is, working-class girls, whose lives have always been

highly structured as well as monitored by school or parents, thus being firmly rooted in the home and the local environment. Gender studies today are concerned not only with issues related to women's subordination to men in society and culture or their *sorority* and *communality*, but also with gender identities and queer studies.

Despite being quite developed in the English-speaking academic world where the field of women's studies has been increasingly gaining legitimation and autonomy since the late 1960s, in Portugal the impetus for the establishment of this field of research as a proper, innovative and new area of interest, only dates the 1980s (Silva 1999). As Maria Regina Tavares da Silva explains, this doesn't mean that nothing had been produced before this decade regarding women. In fact, Portuguese writers and thinkers had been previously concerned with issues related to women and their roles, behaviors and social functions, showing three main lines of thought: the line of praise and exaltation of women, the didactic and critical line that aimed at disciplining them and the line of defense and claim of women's rights (Silva 1999, 18).

In addition to this, classical works from the XVI, XVII and XIX century must be taken into account when observing the emergence of women's study in Portugal. Among these, the "Tratado em louvor das mulheres e da castidade, honestidade, silêncio e justiça" by Cristóvão da Costa (1525) or António da Costa's "A mulher em Portugal" (1892) are just a few examples of men's concerns with regard to women and how they have been finding different explanations to their inquiries through history. Yet, crucial contributions to the building of women's autonomy (as well as for the studies related to them) has been given by the republican movement of the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th: Virgínia de Castro e Almeida, Ana de Castro Osório or Adelaide Cabete are just some of the personalities involved in giving voice to women's concerns, by exposing their experiences with education, politics, society and history in general. They also set the basis for the definition of the major concerns of what will become the feminist movement: the defense and fight for women's education, their access to labor and to financial independence, as well as their right to vote (Silva 1999).

Efforts towards the assertion of women rights are carried out in the following years, also during the long-lasting dictatorship (with the works of Elina Guimarães, for instance). Yet, the first initiatives that can be considered as truly related with what will become the field of Women's Studies happen in the decade of 1960s. In this respect, Maria Regina Tavares da Silva (1999) mentions the 1968 Symposium "On the status of the Portuguese Woman" and the 1969 series of lectures held by the Faculty of Law in Lisbon on "Women in Contemporary Society". As she explains, these events "dealt with issues related with women's education and labor, sexuality, the

myths, the stereotypes associated to them, as well as legal issues linked to their status, moral and social matters, psychological aspects and cultural constraints. […]"(Silva 1999, 19).[64] In fact, these pivotal events introduced the most of the matters and concerns that will become openly and increasingly addressed after April 1974. Mirroring the debates that were taking place in other European countries back then, these pivotal events show the deep contradictions and the state of confusion related to women's complex condition in the Portuguese society of that time.

The debate indeed carries on during the 1970s, when the general impact of the social changes in women's position entailed by May 1968, but more importantly the establishment of a democratic system in Portugal, favored a positive shift with regards to women's social status. The enthusiastic climate of that period expedited the development of women's studies, to the point that Irene Vaquinhas considers that actually "Gender Studies […] began in the late 1970s, in the aftermath of the political breakthrough originated by the "Revolução dos Cravos" of 25 April 1974" (Vaquinhas 2001, 75).

Also, governmental and nongovernmental measures were taken in order to promoted equal opportunities between men and women. As an example of these, in 1977 the Portuguese government established the Commission on the Status of Women (Comissão para a Condição Feminina) – today, Equality Commission for Women's Rights (Comissão para a Igualdade dos Direitos das Mulheres): at the time part of the Ministry of Employment, it contributed substantially to the development of Women's Studies through the publishing of books, as well as the organization of seminars and conferences, all aiming at raising awareness on the urge of equal policies and of a more democratic society.

The advancement of Women's Studies was also fomented by Portugal joining the EEC in 1986. The new political commitment brought changes in terms of the social fabric, and more specifically, in terms of the massive access to higher education by women. This fact, which followed a tendency started in the 1960s (Barreto 1996), represented a major encouragement to those researches concerned with gender equality and the policies related to it. Yet, as Vaquinhas refers

> In Portugal, as opposed to other European countries (ARNESEN, 2000), these studies are not directly linked with feminist groups. The reason lies in the lack of important, socially resonant women's movements, (SANTOS, 1995), which is not to say that many organizations and associations were not created in this area (2001, 75).

[64] Original: "Nelas se discutiram questões relacionadas com a educação e o trabalho das mulheres, a sexualidade, os mitos, os estereótipos a elas relativos, bem como questões jurídicas conexas com o seu estatuto, questões morais e sociais, aspectos psicológicos e condicionalismos culturais.

According to Maria Irene Ramalho de Sousa Santos, the lack of women movements in Portugal may be related to the long-lasting dictatorship (1922-1974) "which was sanctioned by the Catholic Church, and in the course of which a very strict patriarchal ideology, insidiously imposed from above and firmly distinguished male public spaces and female private spheres […]" (Santos 1995, 6). Moreover, through history (this is, the monarchical regime and the republican era), the role of women in Portugal continued to be viewed as that of "companions of the national builders and mothers and raisers of their children" (6). Despite the works by distinguished female intellectuals, the hegemonic view has been hard to replace, up to the radical changes favored by the revolutionary decade of the 1970s. Yet, according to Santos

> traditions, habits and ideologies weight heavily on the minds and practice of people, including women. It would be nice to say that the [Carnation] Revolution did its job so well at a consciousness raising vis-à-vis both sexes, that Portuguese women enjoy now full citizenship alongside men and so have no need of women's movements to promote their rights and equalities. I am afraid this is not true, whether in household place, workplace or citizen place (let alone world place), particularly (though by no means exclusively) among the less privileged classes. (Santos 1995, 7).

Thus, if on one side the decade of the 1970s saw the rising of an increasing consciousness among women, it also represented some sort of utopian burst that did not improve the actual situation within society.

As I have mentioned before, the decade of the 1980s is crucial to the systematization of the studies and activities conducted in the area of Women's Studies and regarding issues linked to women's subordination, such as women's labor, maternity, family, sexuality, and the legal apparatus available on women. In 1983, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation hosts the first seminar on Women's Studies, in conjunction with an exhibition of books that gathered a large number of works on women from the 16th to the 20th century (Silva 1999, 22). Following this event, numerous debates took place during the decade not only by initiative of associations but also as academic meetings, such as the 1985 "The Woman in Portuguese society: historical survey and present prospects" organized by the University of Coimbra's Institute of Economic and Social History. All these events were concerned with the female condition, working as a proof of the growing impact and legitimation of the field of Women's Studies.

By the 1990s, debates on women and their experience within society and culture were increasingly regular, and Women's Studies began being properly institutionalized as a field of knowledge and research in the context of higher education. Academic interest on women (or

gender) is also proven by the establishment of several groups of research, such as the Feminist Studies Group (Grupo de Estudos Feministas) of the Faculty of Art of the University of Coimbra, and the Centre of Feminist Studies (Núcelo de Estudos Feministas) of the Centre of Social Studies (CES) of Coimbra. Furthermore, the Open University (Lisbon) had a pioneering role with the establishment of a master's degree in Women's Studies in 1995 as an interdisciplinary program with an emphasis in history, literature and sociology. As Irene Vaquinhas refers:

> To this day the program, which confers the degree of "mestre", has been offered on a regular basis, its recipients being, for the most part, white graduate women in their thirties or older, usually working as high school teachers. As to the reasons for obtaining this degree, they are twofold: career promotion, and the impact on teaching practices, given its potential to serve as a stimulus and a means of awareness for issues hitherto left unnoticed (Vaquinhas 2001, I76).

The lack of degrees available in terms of higher education shows the rigidity of the Portuguese university system, which makes it very difficult to implement curricular changes or new topics for discussion. However, despite these limitations, research within the field of Women's Studies has found its way in the Portuguese universities through optional courses and seminars, as well as the use of feminist approaches in the teaching of thematic courses to the point that, again Irene Vaquinhas argues that "gender research has made a lot of progress over the last decade. This has been especially true in such areas as research on education, social psychology, literature, linguistics and history […]" (I,76).

The emergence of a number of associations - such as the *Portuguese Association for Women's Studies* (APEM) and *the Portuguese Association for Historical Research on Women* (APIHM), for example – contributed to the expansion of the field of Women's Studies in Portugal through research, as well as specialized periodicals (*ExAequo* and *Faces de Eva*). Furthermore, very relevant to the reinforcement of Women's Studies is the establishment in 2016 of the FEMAFRO Association (Associação das Mulheres Negras, Africanas e Afrodescendentes em Portugal), in defense and promotion of black, African or women of African descent. Also, the current year of 2018 will mark the starting point for the first PhD degree in Gender Studies, thanks to the initiative of the Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Políticas (ISCSP), the Faculty of Law (FD) and the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences (FCSH) of the New University of Lisbon (UNL).[65] Despite not being the first PhD degree on women-related matters – a PhD degree in Feminist Studies was established in 2015 by the University of Coimbra - this is the first course that focuses exclusively

[65] Further information is available at http://fcsh.unl.pt/escola-doutoral/doutoramentos/estudos-de-genero

on gender. Portugal, then, is on its way towards filling the gap in the academic arena with regards to Women and Gender Studies (mainly if compared to the United States) and this latest step is to be considered as a very positive mark of development. Given the impossibility of enumerating every single work that has been pursued in Portugal in the past decades, I opted for offering the general outlines of the field of Women's Studies in the country, since my research inevitably takes inspiration from it.

3.2 Feminism: a general overview

Although in Portugal the field Women's Studies does not have a strong connection to Feminist movements, Feminism as an ideology, as well its theoretical references, were both essential to the establishment of the field of Gender studies as whole. In fact, to Ana da Silva and Teresa Cláudia Tavares the field covered by Women's Studies corresponds with the area of interest of Feminst Theory and the two terms can easily be exchanged (Silva & Tavares 2001, 128). Having its roots in in the 19th and early 20th century's works of women who quietly pushed for reforms and for the opening of new areas for their emancipation, second-wave Feminism emerged after the Second World War in several countries. As Margaret Walters refers

> In 1947, a Commission on the Status of Women was established by the United Nations, and two years later it issued a Declaration of Human Rights, which both acknowledged that men and women had 'equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution', as well as women's entitlement to 'special care and assistance' in their role as mothers. Between 1975 and 1985, the UN called three international conferences on women's issues, in Mexico City, Copenhagen, and Nairobi […] (Walters 2006, 97)

These meetings acknowledged Feminism as the political expression of women's concerns and interests, as well as recognizing its variety as a response to the different needs and preoccupations of different women who don't necessarily share the same interests.

At a global level, it is proven fact that Feminism had a decisive role in determining not only the emergence of the various studies on women (and gender in general), but also in defining the path of the new, postmodern identities in the Western world. According to Stuart Hall (2005), in fact, Feminism is one of the five shifts or disruptions that took place in the discourse of late modern awareness and led to the building of the postmodern subject (displaced, fragmented). Having all

taken place during the second half of the 20th century, they decidedly contributed to the final fragmentation of the Cartesian subject (Hall 2005, 34).

Alongside with the reinterpretation of the Marxist postulates, the Freudian psychanalytical revolution, Ferdinand de Saussure's linguist theories and Michel Foucault's contributions on power dynamics, Feminism appears in Hall's analysis as the fifth, fundamental, displacement as a theoretical critical review as much as a social movement. It shares with the students' movements, the countercultural and antiwar youth movements and the "Third World" revolutionary movements – or in other words, with all those manifestations of discontent liked to the year of 1968 – the definition of "new social movements" (Hall 2005, 44).

Hall underlines that all the above mentioned phenomena utterly translate a very specific historical moment, and they have some common feature such as being opposed both to the Western liberal capitalist policy and the Eastern Stalinist one, they claimed an individual dimension of politics as much as they claimed an impartial one, and they did not trust any form of bureaucracy and promoted the spontaneous political actions. Furthermore, all these social movements can be considered having taken up very strong cultural forms and embracing revolutions and marked the end of the cooperation with the former, mass-oriented political class, as well as its fragmentation since each movement pled for a specific social group, representing each the different social identity of its supporters (44).

Hence, feminism appealed to women as a social group. Yet, its impact was greater since "it had a more direct relationship with conceptually decentering both the Cartesian and the sociological subject" (45): by questioning the traditional distinction between private and public; by bringing to the political arena new areas of social life such as family, sexuality, domestic work and childcare, among others; by pinpointing the social, political and cultural construction of gender (as opposed to natural) and one's identification with it; by challenging the social position of women, as well as (later) also other gender identities; and finally by addressing gender as an element of differentiation within humanity.

Without doubt, the politicization of the personal was one of the feminists' biggest achievement. According to Juliet Mitchell, "Women's Liberation is crucially concerned with that area of politics that is conceived as personal. Women […] find that what they thought was an individual dilemma is a social predicament hence a political problem" (Mitchell 1971, 61). The impact of Feminism has been massive, since "[it] has provided the engagement and motivation since the 1970s for a generation of women […] conscious of the marginalization of 'woman' both as a subject of study and as a political agent" (Nava 1992, 3).

To Ana da Silva and Teresa Cláudia Tavares, the establishment of the academic field of Women's Studies is closely linked to the radical feminist movements and their concerns in terms of social intervention (offering support to women who were victim of domestic violence or creating cultural events exclusively for women, for instance): as these movements grew, they started seeking for theoretical support in order to build a strong rhetoric that was able to incorporate and appeal to large groups of women, as well as fit in a very wide political agenda (Silva & Tavares 2001). In fact:

> In the decade of 1980, the street-based feminist activism was being accompanied by a (politically less expansive) activism within institutions; the 'office activists' came on the scene, who, often being academics, developed research and theoretical production on their different disciplinary areas (129).[66]

In this perspective, the (gradual) institution of Women's Studies, then, indicates how, within the feminist movement, the urge for activism was shifting towards a more internal debate. Moreover, the increased involvement of feminist women within the academic arena was crucial to the opening of the discussion on women and gender to a variety of different, specific matters, that showed the variety of women involved. It also can be considered a sign of the maturity achieved by the feminist movement (as an ideological, social, and political bias). Between the mid-1980s and mid-1990s, the feminist thought started to show some internal scissions that would become the starting point for its different, independent trends: the liberal, the Marxist, the radical, the psychoanalytic, the care-focused, the multicultural/global/colonial, ecofeminism, lesbian, black, and the postmodern or third wave feminism (Whelehan 1995; Tong 2009). Although these labels are never satisfactory, somewhat incomplete and highly contestable, they do show the variety of approaches, perspective and frameworks used to both explain and try to eliminate women's oppression.

Nevertheless, according to Rosemarie Tong (2009) most of the contemporary feminist theories arise from a reaction against traditional liberal feminism – that is rooted in the XIX century's thought on equal education and equal liberty and women's suffrage movement - which was driven by the idea that women's subordination came as a consequence of the legal constraints that obstructed their entrance in the public world, aiming their attention particularly to inequalities within the marketplace. As Tong explains: "[…] Gender justice, insist liberal feminists, requires us, first, to make the rules of the game fair and, second, to make certain that none of the runners in the race for society's goods and services is systematically disadvantaged." (2). After the 1960s revival

[66] Original text: "O activismo feminista de rua fizera-se acompanhar na década de 1980 de um activismo (politicamente menos expansivo) dentro das instituições; apareceram as 'activistas de gabinete', que, frequentemente académicas, desenvolveram pesquisa e produção teórica nas suas diferentes áreas disciplinares" (129).

and the adaptation of its perspective throughout the following decades, liberal feminists today "stress that patriarchal society conflates *sex* and *gender*, deeming appropriate for women only those jobs associated with the traditional feminine personality" (34) and view political and legal rights as particularly important. To Tong, "Women owe to liberal feminists many of the civil, educational, occupational, and reproductive rights they currently enjoy. They also owe to liberal feminists the ability to walk increasingly at ease in the public domain […]" (47).

However, if equal rights for women were the main goal of these reformers, not all 1960s and 1970s feminists strived for a place for women in the "system". To radical feminists, the liberals' approach to discrimination against women didn't explain thoroughly the issue with the unfair treatment experienced by women at a social, political and cultural level. Radical feminism, in fact, claimed that the true enemy to women's emancipation, this is, the patriarchal system - a structure of power, hierarchy, dominance and competition - found its way into social and cultural institutions, as well as the legal and political ones. According to the radical trend, women's true liberation could take place only after patriarchy had been completely displaced, especially from cultural establishments such as the family and religion.

Despite the fact that "all radical feminists focus[ed] on sex, gender, and reproduction as the locus for the development of feminist thought" (2), and agreed on sexism as the first, pervasive cause of oppression, they did not envision the same strategies with regard to the functioning of its nature, as well as the ways to eradicate it. Therefore, "radical feminists split into two basic camps — *radical-libertarian feminists* and *radical-cultural feminists* — and depending on their camp, these feminists voiced very different views about how to fight sexism." (49). Anyway, radical feminists as a whole were responsible for introducing into the feminist thought the practice of consciousness-raising:

> Women came together in small groups and shared their personal experiences *as women* with each other. They discovered that their individual experiences were not unique to them but widely shared by many women. […] Empowered by the realization that women's fates were profoundly linked, radical feminists proclaimed that "the personal is political" and that all women are "sisters." They insisted that men's control of both women's sexual and reproductive lives and women's self-identity, self-respect, and self-esteem is the most fundamental of all the oppressions human beings visit on each other (Tong 2006, 48-49).

Disagreeing with the liberal and radical feminist agendas, Marxist and socialist feminists claimed that a classed-based society made it impossible for anyone to achieve true freedom. In their view, capitalism itself was responsible for women's oppression and only a socialist system would

guarantee the equal distribution of the means of production: women then, no longer economically dependent on men, would be just as free as them, and therefore liberated. Moreover, it is the interaction between capitalism and patriarchy what reinforces the state of oppression experienced by women. According to Iris Marion Young (1981), for instance, patriarchy manifests within capitalism under the form of unequal wages for equal work, unpaid domestic work, sexual harassment on the workplace, among many other forms of oppression experienced by women. Patriarchy, then, should not be considered a separate system from capitalism, not it has to be considered precedent to it: class and gender structures are deeply interweaved and difficult to separate as systems of power relations.

Despite the distinctive perspectives, liberal, radical and Marxist/socialist feminism all share the focus on the macrocosmic dimension of male's domination and "offered explanations and solutions for women's oppression that are rooted either in society's political and economic structures or in human beings' sexual and reproductive relationships, roles, and practices" (Tang 2009, 128). Instead, psychoanalytic feminists claim that the fundamental explanation to women's actions and behavior lies within women's psyche and in the way they perceive themselves as women, also asserting that gender identity and consequently gender inequity is rooted in infantile and early childhood experiences (the Freudian Oedipal stage and Lacan's symbolic order, for instance) which determine individuals' view of themselves in masculine or feminine terms.

Joining these trends, yet focusing on other aspects on femininity and women's experiences, Care-focused Feminism gave special attention to the fact that women are societies primary caregivers worldwide, aiming at explaining why specific values, virtues and traits are labelled as feminine and others as masculine. Accounts within this trend pinpoint biology as a reason of this distinction, the different paths in psychosexual development, as well as society's role in shaping men's and women's identities and behaviors (Tong 2009). Being interested mainly in understanding why women are usually associated with emotions and the body, while men are associated with reason and the mind,

> whatever their explanation for men's and women's contrasting gender identities, care-focused feminists regard women's capacities for care as a human strength rather than a human weakness. Moreover, care-focused feminists expend considerable energy developing a feminist ethics of care as a complement of, or even a substitute for, a traditional ethics of justice (163).

Additionally, care-focused feminists offers interesting explanations on why men as a group do not engage in caring practices. As many other feminist ideologies, multicultural, global and postcolonial feminists focus on the women's subordination to men worldwide. Yet, the distinctive contribution of this trend is to have recognized women's diversity as a challenge (not all women think alike nor have the same goals), also identifying ways through which different women can still work together. As Tong refers,

> multicultural, global, and postcolonial feminists challenge female essentialism, the view that the idea of "woman" exists as some sort of Platonic form each flesh-and-blood woman must some- how embody. In addition, they disavow female chauvinism, the tendency of some women, particularly privileged women, to speak on behalf of all women, including women they regard as "other" than themselves. Multicultural feminists applaud the new emphasis on people's differences, regretting that second-wave feminist theorists largely ignored women's differences (204).

Particularly global and postcolonial thinkers focus on the world's division into nations of the so-called First World (the Northern hemisphere) and Third World nations (the Southern hemisphere) and examine how this disempowers and damages mainly Third World women. Countless Third World feminists highlight the impact of economic and political issues on gender, stressing the idea that being part of the economically developing, ultimately subaltern nations is indeed the heaviest form of oppression. Moreover, many reject the label "feminist" as representative and prefer terms such as "womanist" (Tong 2009) – an inclusive term used by author Alice Walker to define a woman of color committed to the survival of (black) males and females. Anyway, multicultural, global, and postcolonial feminist theorists, in general, have offered women ways to achieve unity in diversity, mainly through sisterhood or friendship.

Similarly to global feminism, ecofeminism underlines the many ways in which human beings oppress each other, yet additionally focusing on humanity's domination of nature. Tong explains that "because women are culturally tied to nature, ecofeminists argue there are conceptual, symbolic, and linguistic connections between feminist and ecological issues" (237), since "patriarchy's hierarchical, dualistic, and oppressive mode of thinking has harmed both women and nature […]. Indeed, because women have been "naturalized" and nature has been "feminized," it is difficult to know where the oppression of one ends and the other begins." (238). In other words, Ecofeminism is a new variant of ecological ethics that focuses specifically on women.

As I have previously said, since second-wave feminism started to pave its way through the second half of 20TH century, feminist thought has increased its diversity, facing a variety of

challenges and concerns. Postmodern and third-wave feminism can be considered the latest expression of how feminism has reached an intellectual maturity, having to face some identity challenges. As Tong explains:

> Because the relationship between postmodernism and feminism is an uneasy one, feminists who classify themselves as postmodern feminists often have difficulty explaining how they can be both postmodern and feminist. Like all postmodernists, postmodern feminists reject phallogocentric thought, that is, ideas ordered around an absolute word (logos) that is "male" in style (hence the reference to the phallus). In addition, postmodern feminists reject any mode of feminist thought that aims to provide a single explanation for why women are oppressed or *the* ten or so steps *all* women must take to achieve liberation. Indeed, some postmodern feminists are so mistrustful of traditional feminist thought that they eschew it altogether (270).

Postmodern feminists reject all-encompassing explanations and solutions to women's oppression and favor a subjective, free approach to feminism. Agreeing with this view that there is no "good" or "right" feminism, third-wave feminists encourage any change and the embracing of diverse approaches to the understanding of gender and human oppression in general. As Tong points out:

> Clearly, being a third-wave feminist in a society where a growing number of young people choose their racial or ethnic classification is different from being a feminist in second-wave feminist days, when racial and ethnic identities were largely imposed and worked against anyone who was nonwhite. Moreover, doing feminism as a third-wave feminist is very challenging in a global context, where women in developing nations interact with women in developed nations (286).

Third-wave feminism stance is mainly nonjudgmental and nonprescriptive with regard to social, economic, political and cultural differences, as well as sexual ones or the enhancement of the body and feminine beauty. With Tong words, "[…] third-wave feminists are shaping a new kind of feminism that is not so much interested in getting women to want what they *should want,* as in responding to what women say they want and not second-guessing or judging whether their wants are authentic or inauthentic" (288).

Despite the undeniable results achieved by Feminism through a variety of ideological and scientific perspectives that allowed women to partially overcome a suffocating condition of subordination as social, political, and cultural agents, being a feminist is still, often seen through a negative filter. I have experienced this myself: during the month I spent in Brazil to carry out the research for the present project, I frequently found myself having to explain that I was a feminist,

yet not a "annoying" one.[67] When I happened to say that I was collecting information on female MCs and that, through their works, I became a feminist myself, most people (read: men) immediately commented that, at least, I didn't seem to be an irritating one – insinuating that most feminist are (and trying to be funny while doing it). Unfortunately, Feminism is still confronted with a general resistance to the correct perception of what it claims and ignorance, as well as prejudice, are still common lens through which women's works are received by societies in general.

In Portugal, however, the end of the Second World War did not correspond to the end of the dictatorial regime that was asphyxiating the country. Between 1933 and 1974, thus, women underwent strong processes of doctrinal and moral building that were directed and controlled by specific state bodies such as the Mothers Work for National Education [Obra das Mães pela Educação Nacional, OMEN], the Female Portuguese Youth [Mocidade Portuguesa Feminina, MPF] and the National Women's Movement [Movimento Nacional Feminino, MNF]. Salazar's slogan, "a woman is for the home" [a mulher é par ao lar] pervaded the State's actions and meant to inhibit women's emancipation; hence, during those years, the field of action designated for women was limited to the home and the family, that is, it was linked exclusively to their role as an housekeepers and educators – perfectly aligned with the patriarchal ideology. However, this questionable motto did not appeal to everyone: especially working-class women could not afford staying at home nor they could stop working, this leading to both spontaneous popular uprisings and organized struggle against the regime that threated its power. Apparently, alongside communism, socialism, anarchy and democracy, feminism was among Salazar's most feared enemies.

Unfortunately, in Portugal, the history of feminism(s) is often barely mentioned (Cova 2007). Especially during the first two decades of the 20th century, in fact, the country had seen the emergence of several feminist associations and groups, such as the Portuguese Group of Feminist Studies [Grupo Português de Estudos Feministas] – founded in 1907 by Ana de Castro Osório –, the Republican League of Portuguese Women [Liga Republicana das Mulheres Portuguesas; 1908-1919] and the National Council of Portuguese Women [Conselho Nacional das Mulheres Portugesas, CNMP] founded by Adelaide Capete in 1914. Also, the decade of the 1920s sees the organization of both the first Feminist Congress of Education [Congresso Feminista da Educação; May 4-9, 1924] and the second Feminist Congress in 1928. Finally, after the long "break" forced by the dictatorial regime, the Portuguese Feminist movement was revived in the 2000s with the founding of feminist associations such as UMAR (1999), Capazes (2014), and Femafro (2016), for instance.

[67] In Portuguese, "uma feminista chata".

Also, in the 1990, conferences such as the United Nations Conference on Women's Rights held in Beijing (1995), among others other, favored the trans nationalization of feminism and the creation of a network between women. According to Maria Manuela Paiva Fernandes Tavares (2008), the Women World March (2000) came as a result of this mutual cooperation. Portugal also joined the new international feminist network through the organization of the March, despite the limited mobilization within the country.

Being at odds with the traditional (read: patriarchal) idea of the family, the integration of women into the job market, the increasing divorce rates and the increasing number of non-marital partnerships, as well as the emergence of new forms of family, objectively helped develop more progressive outlooks (Tavares 2008). A more democratic perception of the relationships within the family also helped to report domestic violence and seek help. In fact, in the 1990s

> The first law – that guaranteed protection to women, victim of domestic violence – was approved in 1991; the first research in this area dates 1995; the First National Plan against Domestic Violence emerges in 1999 and the first shelters [are established] in the end of this decade (Tavares 2008, 572).[68]

Therefore, domestic violence gained visibility in the 1990s, later if compared with other countries where it was being addressed since the 1970s. Tavares explains this delay by pointing at the 1980s feminists' movement weakness, as well as the socio-cultural context of the country, where it took longer to consider private matters as political and social problems.

The increasing rate of activity and participation of women in the country is also a sign of women's emancipation. However, the traditional mechanisms of subordination – that identify a woman's work with the reproductive work – tend to be preserved and despite the increasing feminization of labor, precariousness and lack of right are still a reality. Furthermore, the country continues to show an asymmetrical distribution of the family and household duties to the detriment of women (Tavares 2009) and domestic labor did not undergo any masculinization.

In summary, during the 1990s and the early 2000 the feminist debate on equality, leadership, gender violence and gender rights opened up to new spaces and to a new, international dimension that soon became global. Today feminisms also operate through informal networks supported by the

[68] Original: "A primeira lei que ―garante protecção às mulheres vítimas de violência foi aprovada em 1991; o primeiro estudo nesta área é realizado em 1995; o I Plano Nacional contra a Violência surge em 1999 e as primeiras casas de abrigo nos finais desta década."

internet. Moreover, a greater social acceptance of the term can be observed within the new generations, who though still have a quite simplistic idea of it (Tavares 2009). Yet, the current challenge is about the building, and defending, of the new "political, plural, comprehensive" feminist subject ("político, plural, abrangente"; Tavares 2009, 579), bearing in mind the many differences that define women today: social class, geographical origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and age are just some of the elements that interact in women's position within society and the different form of oppression that they still experience.

3.3 Hip Hop Feminism: a brief introduction

Stemming from a tradition of Black feminism, hip hop feminism can be considered another branch of third-wave feminist posture. The term was coined by Joan Morgan when she published her book *When Chickenheads Come Home to Roost: A Hip Hop Feminist Breaks it Down* (1999). In her pioneer work, Morgan stresses the need of building a feminism that would allow her to "explore who we are as women—not victims. One that claimed the powerful richness and delicious complexities inherent in being black girls now—sistas of the post–Civil Rights, post-feminist, post soul, hip-hop generation (Morgan 1999, 35-36). To her Black women need to emancipate from the common view that depicts them solely as the victims of racism and sexism. Similar to a manifesto, in her book she Morgan claims that

> More than any other generation before us, we need a feminism committed to "keeping it real." We need a voice like our music—one that samples and layers many voices, injects its sensibilities into the old and flips it into something new, provocative, and powerful. And one whose occasional hypocrisy, contradictions, and triteness guarantee us at least a few trips to the terror-dome, forcing us to finally confront what we'd all rather hide from.
>
> We need a feminism that possesses the same fundamental understanding held by any true student of hip hop. Truth can't be found in the voice of any one rapper but in the juxtaposition of many. The keys that unlock the riches of contemporary black female identity lie not in choosing Latifah over Lil' Kim, or even Foxy Brown over Salt-N-Pepa. They lie at the magical intersection where those contrary voices meet—the juncture where "truth" is no longer black and white but subtle, intriguing shades of gray (38-39)

Women, in fact, are also the unacknowledged victims of black-on-black crime, and Morgan's turn towards hip hop as a reference for today's feminist cause may raise some questions. However, her

understanding of the culture is very interesting. To her, in fact "the seemingly impenetrable wall of sexism in rap music is really the complex mask African-Americans often wear both to hide and express the pain. At the close of this millennium, hip-hop is still one of the few forums in which young black men, even surreptitiously, are allowed to express their pain" (45). However, this pain is what prevents young Black men to love their female peers as brothers, as much as these love them as sisters. And this, to Morgan, is where contemporary Black men truly fail.

As a response to this situation, Black women should not turn their back on hip hop culture (a culture that is part of their lives and growth); they should learn their brothers realistically, "that means differentiating between who they are and who we'd like them to be. Black men are engaged in a war where the real enemies—racism and the white power structure—are masters of camouflage" (45). Also, they have to bear in mind that hip hop prevents these young boys from growing into men, enabling them to remain perpetually post-adolescents. With her words:

> For all the machismo and testosterone in the music, it's frighteningly clear that many brothers see themselves as powerless when it comes to facing the evils of the larger society, accepting responsibility for their lives, or the lives of their children (46).

Women, hence, have to keep the necessary emotional distance in order to survive within this scenario. In addition to this, they have to renew the focus of Black feminism by moving it beyond the well-known discussions on sexism in rap, since there is much more to address. Hip hop, in fact, "hip-hop is not only the dominion of the young, black, and male, it is also the world in which young black women live and survive" (46) and it has to be used and seen as a space where they can find healing and redemption too: "hip-hop isn't only instrumental in exposing black men's pain, it brings the healing sistas need right to the surface" (46), where a whole community can articulate its suffering and build its response.

Indeed, Joan Morgan's feminism, the hip hop feminism, is a different kind of feminism. First, because it is strictly related to a generation of Black women born after 1964, that is, women that identify with Kitwana's "hip hop generation"; then, because it questions the feminist consciousness and examines its representations both as empowering and ambiguous. With regards to this, Aisha Durham describes hip hop feminism as a distinct movement that aimed at examining and engaging with the effects that hip hop culture has on forging black female identities, sexuality, and feminisms (Durham 2007). According to Durham, "Hip-hop feminism is not a novelty act surfing atop the third wave of difference in the academy. It is not a pinup for postfeminism put forth

by duped daughters who dig misogynistic rap music and the girl-power pussy politic of empowerment. Hip-hop gains its popularity from its oppositionality and from its complicity in reproducing dominant representations of black womanhood" (306). Hip-hop feminism, then, acknowledges the problematic, misogynist nature of culture and its formative effects on women (especially young black women) and empowers them by enabling participation, response, and owning self-identification.

Today, hip hop feminist has earned its space as a respected area of study, and its body of works has been increasingly growing. Scholars such as the above-mentioned Joan Morgan and Aisha Durham, Gwendalyn Pough, Kimala Price, Reiland Rabaka, Imani Perry, Tricia Rose, among many others, have deeply contributed to the shaping of this very peculiar, feminist perspective where intersectionality, social criticism and Black female empowerment merge in order to offer groundbreaking analysis of the life experiences of Black women. Despite the fact that Portuguese female rappers do not point at hip hop feminism as their specific ideological reference (they identify with the feminist cause and with hip hop culture, but do not link the two together), the postulates offered by these scholars have been fundamental to the understanding of the works and lives of the artist I have come into contact with.

3.4 Introducing women making rap in Portugal

As I have outlined in Chapter 2, in Portugal as much as everywhere else, rap initially manifested as an *underground* movement: it emerged, and was performed in the streets and in those spaces where young people hung out (such as schools, public squares, etc.), and it was improvised and closely associated to the daily life experience of living in the urban periphery. In the process of popularization of the hip hop culture, record production reached its peak in 1994 with the album *Rapública* (Sony Music), "a real boom to the sales charts of 94-95, selling around 15 thousand copies" [um verdadeiro presente oferecido às tabelas de vendas de 94-95, vendendo cerca de 15 mil exemplars; Contador & Ferreira 1997, 171). As I mentioned before, the compilation includes some of the most important rappers of the first generation, as well as the track *Nadar* - the biggest hit in the album and the first rap song to win the charts. Also, after the year of 1994 rap and hip hop underwent increasingly wide media coverage, a controversial element within the culture's history. From that moment onwards rap began to expand its local, geographic horizons, setting the basis for the phenomenon as we know it today (mass mediatic, popular, commercial). In fact, this culture, this lifestyle, that was initially expected to be short-lived and transitory - like most fads among youth - ultimately conquered and defended its place in the country's cultural scene and today there

is no doubt about its relevance to the musical, cultural and social history of the country: "tuga rap" has conquered its space on television, magazines, music festivals, and even in universities - proof that this practice has progressively taken root and left its originally "marginal" place. Teresa Fradique argues that the survival of the *movement* us was ensured by its ability to "under-stylize" itself at the right moment and to became more marginal (*underground)* and aggressive *(gangsta)* – disappointing some people, providing others with the necessary material for the materialization of an urban enemy (Fradique 2002, 70)

With regards to women, though, little has been said about them throughout these years despite their participation. Following the lead of researcher Soraia Simões - who has dedicated a consistent part of her work to the first generation of female rappers, gathering witnesses of artists who were active between the years of 1985 and 1994 - I also aim to understand "the reason for the historical discontinuation that causes that the experience of making RAP or being part of a culture ("hip-hop") […] as women for many people begins with Capicua […]" (Simões 2017, 39).[69] In her 2017 article for *Le Monde Diplomatique*, the Portuguese researcher reminds us that through her fieldwork "has assembled accounts from 1988 onwards of women like MC, rappers, flygirls in secondary schools" [já reunira registos vários a partir de 1988 com mulheres como MC, rappers, flygirls em escolas secundárias; 39] and different testimonies of their presence in the movement's meeting places in Bairro Alto and Cais do Sodré. However, the numerous material evidences of the female presence inside the movement when the first generation irrupted in the national panorama, sucha as the existance of two entirely female groups - Djamal and Divine - who recorded music in studios, or the fact that the group Da Weasal originally included a woman (DJ Yen Sung), continue to not being enough for women who made and make rap to get recognition from the public or from the hip hop community itself.

The same silencing and lack of media coverage is experienced by most women who practice rap coming from the second generation of the movement (approximatively those who were active from the years of 1995/96 to 2005/06), except for Capicua. In fact, during the research I conducted, I noted that the different sources I analyzed (biblioghraphical material; documentaries; online interviews) made no reference to the works by rapper Telma TVon, for instance, whose contributions to female rap in Portugal have been substantial.[70] In fact Telma, a strong charismatic

[69] Original text: "a razão da descontinuidade histórica que faz com que, para muitos(as) a experiência de fazer RAP ou fazer parte duma cultura (o "hip-hop") [...] no feminino se inicia com a Capicua [...]"

[70] Telma Marlise Escórcio da Silva was born in Luanda, Angola, and now lives in Queluz, Lisbon. She was part of the the group Backwordz which was composed of four female MCs (Lady, LG, Zau e Tvon), active between 1996 and 2000. The group intervened in mixtapes and albums like those of MC XEG, SNK (currently Força Suprema), Bad Spirit (Influência Negra), Guardiões do Movimento Sagrado, among others. Afterwards TVon integrated the group Hardcore Click made up of female MCs who were active in the Lisbon area in 2000-2002. With them she made the mixtape

figure, was responsible for the coordination of the mixtape *RAParigas na voz do soul,* recorded in 2001 in collaboration with DJ Cruzfader: a stylistically heterogeneous compilation made of 23 track where numerous female artists present their works from aggressive rap to soul and R'n'B in English. The mixtape, which took a long time to finish, was a real novelty in the country's rap scene of the early 2000s – since women strongly struggled for visibility - and ended up having a modest success. According to what Telma explained to me when I interviewed her for my research work in September 2017, the choice to involve exclusively female performers was never intended as a means to exclude men, but arose from the need to increase the awareness of their presence in the musical environment of hip hop. Moreover, in the decade of 2000-2010, one can also find another pioneer rapper with great charisma: Dama Bete. She was the first female rapper to release a solo album with a major - *De igual para igual* (Universal Music Portugal, 2008), and is notable for her efforts to unite and endorse female rappers under the project *Hip Hop Ladies*. Today Dama Bete lives in Dublin and works in a different professional field, maintaining her contact with rap through occasional collaborations with other artists.

However, the efforts to promote and disseminate their works and the ones made by women in rap, as well as the intention of creating a community around them, weren't enough for the artists of the first and second generation to make a living out of music, and most of them had to turn their attention to other professional areas. Furthermore, the majority of these women is of African descent, that is, they are all bearers of those "hyphenized identities" referred by Inocência Mata (2006). A question arouses spontaneously: are we then facing a struggle that involves not merely gender, but also skin color and cultural biases?

In the postcolonial period, when new migratory flows end up reinforcing the old logic of domination and the perception of alterity, the position of minorities within a society is not only determined by socio-economic factors, but also by ethnic and cultural agents. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Salaman Sayyid argues that the constant attempt of postcolonial countries to accommodate the population that came from their ex-colonies shows the extent to which the colonial logic endures as an epistemological, political and cultural reference: "the continued reliance on colonial frameworks in the context of the postcolonial condition has been largely responsible for the inability of 'race relations' paradigms to cope with ethicised minorities' attempts to re-write the history of the nation" (Sayyid 2004, 3)

In Portugal, the migratory flows of the mid 1980s – early 1990s, displays precisely the postcolonial logic mentioned by Sayyid. On the one hand, with the massive arrival of workers from

RAParigas in the Voz do Soul in 2001. Finally, from 2002 to 2008 she worked with Geny, Soul singer, in the group Lweji. For a deeper analysis of her works see section 3.6 of this chapter.

Cabo Verde and Angola to Lisbon, the social and urban fabric suffered a profound transformation, becoming more ethnically and culturally heterogeneous. On the other hand, this made it necessary for the country to re-elaborate its transatlantic experience and its colonial past, as well as its relationship with alterity (or otherness). This had its biggest impact on the newly arrived people and their families. This context of change that took place mainly in the city of Lisbon was narrated by the first generation of rappers in Portugal. In an interview given to Lina Santos, Soraia Simões explains that:

> Demographic growth, especially the increase of an immigrant population in the city, the transatlantic experience, and relations of power and domination that derived from them, expressed in spoken discourses and in the letters, specifically in racism and xenophobia, the asymmetries from a social and economic view point, were some of the main inspirational themes for these young males. Themes also depicted by young females, who were initiated with them, and to which others were added like violence and gender inequality (Santos 2018).[71]

The status experienced by women in the postcolonial Portuguese society is, therefore, that of a double marginalization, that is, limited both by white supremacy and by male dominance. Observing the evolution of rap made in Portugal one can notice that one of the main factors that affected women's visibility can be found in the lack of media exposure experienced by the first and second generation of artists, while another factor can be identified with a general condition of sub-alternation of women within the hip hop community. The reception and acknowledgment of female artists both in Portuguese and international rap, as well as their subsequent affirmation in the market as independent acts and successful entrepreneurs, appears to be a threat to a male-centered system of values and dominance which is "interiorized" and naturalized instead of being brought into question. In fact, as Pierre Bourdieu argues, for this system to remain intact "women can only appear as objects, or rather symbols in which meaning is constructed outside of them and whose function continues to be the perpetuation and growth of the symbolic capital held by men (Bourdieu 2002, 42). Moreover, after conducting ethnographic research in Portugal, José Alberto Simões reveals that "female participation in *rap* emerges [...] confined to the vocal support of male *rappers*, in a clearly secondary role" demonstrated by the "obvious asymmetry in the distribution of roles of each one (the actual initiative of the collaboration contributes to the explanation of this asymmetry). Invitations made to female MCs are mainly to 'sing', and to a lesser degree to 'rhyme' next to male

[71] Original: "O crescimento demográfico, em especial o aumento de uma população imigrante na cidade, a experiência transatlântica, e as relações de poder e dominação que daí advieram, expressas nos discursos falados e nas letras, especificamente no racismo e na xenofobia, as assimetrias sob os pontos de vista social e económico, foram alguns dos principais temas de inspiração destes jovens do sexo masculino. Temas também retratados por jovens do sexo feminino, que aqui se iniciaram com eles, e aos quais juntaram outros como a violência e a desigualdade com base no género". Full interview is available online: https://www.dn.pt/artes/interior/e-inevitavel-falar-de-cavaquismo-quando-se-fala-de-rap-em-portugal-9266995.html.

MCs" (Simões 2013, 119).[72] Therefore, women experience a third type of subordination, that in terms of roles plays within the music industry and the music production chain.

In addition to this, I believe that the information available information is faulty, and that this comes as a consequences of a series of inaccuracies in terms of dissemination: documentaries such as "Nu Bai - O rap negro de Lisboa" (2006) or "Raízes do Rap Tuga" (2016), for instance, do not show any female aspect of rap, nor they make any reference to the importance and pertinence of the contents conveyed by women. These works, therefore, are incomplete. Furthermore, women's relevance to rap is demonstrated by their phonographic productions, their innovative rhymes and their participation in different male projects. The following section of this chapter focuses precisely on these aspects.

Nowadays, one has to recognize that music is disseminated through more democratic channels (such as You Tube and Instagram, for instance). This allows contemporary artists to worl in a more independent way. The young rapper Mynda Guevara is a perfect example of this: with the promotion she does of her work through Facebook, Youtube, and particularly Instagram, she has reached a wide number of followers and has increasingly spread her visibility – this having positive repercussions in her career and live shows. Despite this, however, the situation has not evolved much in terms of acceptance and acknowledgement of black artists in Portugal, nor of the performance space allotted to women in rap, with the exception of Capicua (who is white): indeed the new platforms have facilitated the public's direct access to the productions of currently active artists (Mynda Guevara, Samantha Muleka, Russa, Lady N, among many others); yet, the scenario that can be observed in Portugal remains unbalanced in terms of ethnicity and gender.

3.6 Looking into a dominant rhetoric: silencing women's voices during rap's early years

Studies on the early phase of rap made in Portugal, this it, documentaries and academic material, reveal a severe lack of recognition of female participation. Women's contributions are not acknowledged either by their male peers or by posthumous productions on rap. In both cases, the act of silencing women's role in rap – who were predominantly of African descent - brings light on how these female MCs actually defied and deconstructed a series of deeper issues such as that of

[72] "A participação feminina no *rap* surge [...] confinada ao apoio vocal aos *rappers* masculinos, representando um papel claramente secundário demonstrado pela evidente assimetria na distribuição dos papéis que cabem a cada um (a própria iniciativa da colaboração contribui para explicar esta assimetria). Os convites feitos a *MCs* femininas são sobretudo para 'cantar' e em menor número para 'rimar' ao lado de *MCs* masculinos."

being women in a male-centered practice, the patriarchal society and that of being Black in a postcolonial space (Portugal).

As I said, critics, scholars and the MCs themselves have often associated rap music with urban, male culture. Despite this not being completely untrue (there is a predominance of male participants in rap, and in popular cultural production in general), a closer look to the birth and evolution of rap made in Portugal shows that women have been involved in the building of this culture since its early years. This section, then, aims at discussing Djamal's contribution to rap made in Portugal as the first female group to release a solo album (*Abram Espaço*, 1997). It also aims at debating the reasons of such a short career: despite the record's success, the group broke up a year later its release. Thus, Djamal's orbit within rap allows us to observe the impact of the transformation of an underground practice (perceived as genuine and meaningful) into a commercial one, that is, a business-oriented system.

In Portugal, women were actively participating in rap music long before they actually took part directly as MCs. Most of them worked as vocalists and sang mainly refrains. With regard to this, Maimuna Jalles and Marta Dias are both worth being mentioned. First, because both performed alongside male MCs during rap's early years, witnessing its first steps towards the becoming of a proper music genre thanks to the release of albums and to its insurgent content. Then, because both singers were featured in the works of one of rap's most relevant artists, General D: Maimuna and Marta took part in different tracks of the album *Pé Na Tchon, Karapinha na Céu* (EMI 1995), also cooperating with other MCs and artists of that time. In those same years, in fact, particularly Marta Dias, was featured in works by North American artist Ithaka and Portuguese band Cool Hipnoise.[73]

Rap music, in fact, was fundamental to Marta Dias's career as a professional singer. As she claims herself during an interview/conversation with Soraia Simões (Mural Sonoro, 2016), the first time she ever stepped inside a recording studio was with rapper General D.[74] Before singing with him, she had no experience as a professional performer. However, her brother Lince, a rapper from the group New Tribe, probably played the most crucial part in defining her musical and professional path, since he was the one who introduced Marta to General D during Urban Species' concert at the

[73] Ithaka is a sculptor, a vocalist, a writer, and a photographer (as well as a surfer) born in Los Angeles in 1966. He moved to Lisbon in the mid-1990s and lived there until the early 2000s. Here, he recorded his first hip hop albums *Flowers and the Color of Paint* (Fábrica de Sons, 1995) and *Stellafly* (1997), as well as having some solo exhibitions as a sculptor and a performer. Marta, in fact, was featured in several tracks of the artist's first work that was recorded in Lisbon. More information on the artist is available on his website: http://ithakaofficial.com/about-ithaka/.
Cool Hipnoise are a Portuguese former band founded in 1994. They became known for their experimental sound that merged different genres such as hip hop/rap, funk, reggae, afrobeat, and soul. Marta Dias is featured in the song "Bairro de Lata" which was part of their first album *Nascer do Soul* (1995). In the early 2000s João Gomes, Francisco Rebelo and Tiago Santos integrated the hip hop band Orelha Negra.

[74] Full interview is available at https://www.muralsonoro.com/mural-sonoro-blog/2018/1/10/raprodues-de-memria-cultura-popular-sociedade-marta-dias-por-soraia-simes

Jardim do Tabaco (August 30, 1994).[75] According to Marta herself, her brother Lince noticed her vocal skills during a birthday party (Dias in Simões 2016). He then decided to introduce her to General D. As she recalls during the interview, after meeting the rapper in Bairro Alto that night of 1994, she auditioned for him and his band, Os Karapinhas, in Pinhal Novo. Thus, Marta ended up recording the vocals for the track "Amigo Prekavido" and "Raiz Desenraizada" for their first album *Pé na Tchon, Karapinha na Céu* and "Ekos do Passado", a track for their second album, *Kanimambo* (1997), that also featured rapper Ithaka. She also joined rapper General D during his live shows, experiencing personally how powerful rap was back then and how compelling its messages were:

> General D attracted many people who were interested in hearing what that sound was, what he had to say. And what he had to say were very important things […], things that concerned people's dignity, the dignity of a group of people who were living here [in Lisbon] and were eager to find their place. Therefore, those were incredible times
>
> (Dias in Simões 2016).[76]

Rap's claiming and rebellious marks, as well as "the chance to be involved in something that was shaking the Portuguese society" (Dias in Simões 2016), were precisely what attracted Marta the most and motivated her to be part of the movement. Born by a Santomean father and Portuguese mother, Marta Dias could identify with the lyrics and purposes of rap's early productions, this showing how the practice appealed to a variety of participants (being these listeners or performers) who all had in common the urge to pinpoint the limits and unfulfilled promises of the Portuguese post-April 1974 democratic society. More importantly, rap played a central role in Marta's evolution into a professional singer: when asked by Soraia Simões, she explains that not only the rap movement was where she gave the first steps as a professional singer, but more importantly rap was her core reference when she started composing her first solo album *Y.U.É* (1997) and particularly its opening song, "Mouraria":

[75] Urban Species are a British hip hop band who gained notoriety in the 1990s. Starting in North London in the late 1980s as a duo (MC Mint and DJ Renegade), they turned into a trio in the 1990s with the addition of Doc Slim, a second rapper. They released their first album *Listen* (Talkin' Loud Records) in May 1994 and started an eighteen-months tour that took them around continental Europe (including Portugal) and to the USA, as well as the Far East and Africa.

[76] Original audio: "O General D atraiu muita gente que estava muito interessada em ouvir o que é que era aquele som, o que é que ele tinha para dizer. E o que ele tinha para dizer eram coisas muito importantes [...], eram coisas que tinham a ver com a dignidade dum povo, com a dignidade dum conjunto de pessoas que vivia cá e queria encontrar o seu lugar. Portanto, foram tempos fantásticos."

> I remember that at the time I had a single called "Mouraria", and I remember thinking of rap, of rappers, and thinking of the way they rapped precisely to create this song. I wrote all the lyrics of the album myself, and when I wrote "Mouraria" I thought it was interesting to take a tiny piece, an excerpt, of Amalia [Rodrigues]'s "Mouraria" – "the rappers' way" – and sing it myself, and then with the lyrics describe a reality that wasn't that good, a reality of some decay. So I remember that, at least in my head, this song was influenced by the rappers' way to compose (Dias in Simões 2016).[77]

What I intend to show by highlighting Marta Dias's trajectory as a professional singer is how rap played a crucial part in forging her as an author, as well as a singer. Also, despite the fact that Marta wasn't an MC, her consistent work as a vocalist, alongside Maimuna Jalles, with several MCs allows me to pinpoint on how women were part of the movement in different ways since its early years, and how rap was fundamental to their evolution into independent performers. Moreover, it leads me to question why vocalists such as Marta and Maimuna are not taken into consideration in most works that aim at rebuilding rap's emergence and evolution in Portugal. And as I will discuss later, female MCs often face the same fate. In fact, Soraia Simões is probably the first researcher to have dedicated part of her work exclusively to women, collecting their direct testimonies, thus recognizing their presence a equally important elements of rap in the early and mid-1990s in Portugal.

As said, Marta and Maimuna are often "bypassed" as potential references with regards to rap's early years despite the fact that their voices can be heard in some of the most emblematic productions of that time. However, both singers occupy a liminal position within rap because they did not rhyme. About this, José Alberto Simões explains that

> female participation in *rap* emerges as confined to [giving] vocal support to male *rappers*, playing a clearly secondary role. […] Consequently, creative collaborations between male and female *rappers* show a clear disparity in the distribution of the roles that each one has (the initiative to cooperate helps to explain this asymmetry itself) (Simões 2013, 119).[78]

77 Original: "Eu lembro-me que na altura fiz um single que era "Mouraria" em que eu criticava, e eu lembro-me de pensar no rap, no rappers, e de pensar na maneira como eles rapavam, precisamente para poder criar essa canção. Porque eu escrevi a letras todas do meu disco, e quando escrevo "Mouraria" achei engraçado pegar num bocadinho, num excerto, do "Mouraria" da Amália [Rodrigues], à maneira dos rappers, cantado por mim no entanto, e depois com a letra descrever uma realidade que era menos boa, que era uma realidade de alguma decadência. E então lembro-me que isso pelo menos, pelo menos na minha cabeça, essa canção foi muito influenciada pela maneira de compor dos rappers."

78 Original: "A participação feminina no *rap* surge, por isso, confinada ao apoio vocal aos *rappers* masculinos, representando um papel claramente secundário. [...] Com efeito, as colaborações artísticas entre *rappers* masculinos e

Hence, if female MCs themselves occupy a subaltern position within this male dominated culture, vocal singers are frequently not even considered part of it and their work is not valued as equally important. Fortunately, the need of recognition is secondary when proofs are tangible; yet, documents fix memories, they give them a shape, and we should all critically observe how the role of women as active cultural producers is represented within rap.

The silencing of female participation within several fields of research is often a consequence of the observation and decodifying of humanity as a whole, where no distinction is made between male and female participants, and the field of Subculture Studies works as a good example (Welles 2005, 108). However, this approach legitimizes and reinforces the idea that male representatives can work as references for everybody. More importantly, it does not offer a correct account of how cultural practices actually function: the fact that women's participation does not necessarily take the same shape as that of men, is nothing more than a clear sign of how varied these practices have always been and how appealing they are to everybody. Diminishing this variety into generalized and generalizing considerations ends up fixing incorrect accounts of the past, affecting inevitable the understanding we have of the present.

Although through the 1990s the number of female participants in rap music was undoubtedly smaller than that of men, what is most concerning is the fact that women are definitely underrepresented in the majority of works conducted on rap's first phase - that is, approximately the years between 1985 and 1996. For the purposes of this section of my work, I took into consideration works such as documentaries *O rap é uma arma* (Kiluanje Liberdade, 1996), *Nu Bai – O rap negro de Lisboa* (Otávio Raposo, 2007) and *Raiz do Rap Tuga* (Márcio Rosa, 2016), as well as Contador & Ferreira's book *Ritmo & Poesia* (1997) and Teresa Fradique's *Fixar o Movimento* (2002). All of these works convey different viewpoints on rap. Particularly the documentaries are quite scandalous, since none of them mention women's participation either as vocalist or MCs nore they show relevant footage on female performers.

As far as the documentary *O rap é uma arma* is concerned, rap is observed as a tool available to second-generation immigrants to express their discontent about discrimination and racial exclusion and to share their experience living the *ghetto*. It also discusses the shifts that took place after 1994 - that is, after the release of the album *Rapública* (Sony) - mainly in terms of the increasing superficiality of its content and the role played by the music industry in this game

femininos revelam uma evidente assimetria na distribuição dos papéis que cabem a cada um (a própria iniciativa da colaboração contribui para explicar esta assimetria)."

towards success: “Rap fails when it becomes commercial”, states an anonymous female interviewee in the only footage showing women being interviewed (Liberdade 1996).[79] Yet, “more than a film on music, [it is] a living document on the dynamic reality of those who have to survive and defend their own dignity on the margins of an affluent society” (Quaresma 2010), offering direct testimonies of young people living in Lisbon’s peripheral areas (Bairro dos Húngaros; Fontainhas).[80] However, as Soraia Simões had already noticed, the documentary does not discuss nor refer the role played by the first women to rap (Djamal and Divine), neither it mentions the topicality of the content of their songs for that time (Simões 2017).[81] On top of that, the second part of the documentary opens with footage of young male interviewees discussing animatedly about the inauthenticity of commercial rap and openly criticizing those who produce it. Among these, the group Divine is indirectly mentioned though the metaphor “cabra”, which literally means “goat”, a term commonly used for its figurative meaning to refer to women as whores: “I criticize those *whores*, those *whores* that sing with Black Company, “I don’t know what” about the ghetto, who go around saying that people are starving, “I don’t know what” in the ghetto” states a young male figure to the camera claiming that “they have never been in the ghetto, how can they know that people are starving here?” (Liberdade 1996; italics are mine).[82]

The interviewee is referring to the track “Ghetto” from the 1995 album *Geração Rasca* by Black Company, the only track from that feature a collaboration with the female group Divine.[83] At minute 3’14’’ of the song, in fact, the rap continues and closes with the female group mentioned above, and a first voice states that

[79] Part two of four of the documentary is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gOAaOJVnAhA .
[80] Original: “Mais do que um filme sobre música, um documento vivo sobre a realidade dinâmica dos que têm que sobreviver e marcar a sua dignidade à margem da sociedade da abundância.” Brief review and full documentary are available at http://nacao-hiphop.blogspot.com/2010/05/documentario-o-rap-e-uma-arma-1996-de.html.
[81] “Em O *Rap é uma Arma* (Kiluanje Liberdade, documentário de 1996) revê-se, através da fala de gerações do RAP sucedâneas à primeira a gravar em Portugal, uma censura relativamente ao contínuo descomprometimento com as realidades sociais por parte dos que iniciaram a gravação (*RAPública,* Sony Music, 1994) e se aproximariam da indústria cultural nos anos seguintes, «perdendo um discurso actuante» ou «vendendo-se», segundo alguns dos intervenientes no filme. Porém, não há em momento algum nesse documentário uma referência acerca dos papéis assumidos pelas primeiras mulheres a fazer RAP em Portugal e acerca da importância e actualidade dos assuntos que as mesmas levantaram num palco, o da cidade de Lisboa, em profunda transformação, sob o ponto de vista cultural (ideias, comportamentos, rituais) e social (económico, identitário, territorial).” Full text is available at https://www.muralsonoro.com/mural-sonoro-blog/2017/11/12/raprodues-de-memria-1990-1997-percursos-da-invisibilidade.
[82] “Eu critico aquelas *cabras*, aquelas *cabras* que cantaram com os Black COmpany, não sei quê do gueto, que andam aí dizer que no gueto se passa fome, no gueto não sei quê. Elas nunca tiveram no gueto, como podem saber que no gueto se passa fome?”
[83] Black Company was a rap group formed by rappers Bantú, Bambino and Makkas in the 1980s. They recorded what is considered to be the first hit song of rap music made in Portugal, the track “Nadar”, the biggest success from the album *Rapública* (1994). The album *Geração Rasca* was released in 1995. The expression means “lost generation” and was first used in Portugal in 1994 by journalist Vincente Jorge Silva in newspaper *Público* to descibe the students demonstrating against the then Minister of Education Manuela Ferreira Leite. The expression was revitalized by the March 12 Movement (Movimento 12 de Março), and turned into “geração à rasca” (“struggling generation”) during the protests over austerity, economic crisis and labor rights that took place around the country in 2011.

In the ghetto, with no money, you suffer from hunger, you live badly
And, as if that were not enough, they call you "marginal"
There, you rule, you are the boss of the power
You protect those who can't defend themselves
(Divine in "Ghetto", 1995).[84]

The rhymes, where each element of the group alternates in singing, goes on describing the tough life conditions of Black people who are left in the margin of society: the so-called "ghetto", or in their words "the place where the poor lives, hungry, afraid, but he always survives" ["O guetto é o sítio onde pobre vive, com fome, com medo, mas sempre sobrevive"]. Divine openly criticize those people who consider themselves "cool" and hence don't acknowledge the existence of a social ladder ["pessoas que se acham muito boas por dizer que não ligam a escalas sociais"] that separates people and complicates their lives. If, on the one hand, their rough descriptions of the life in the margins can be perceived as a bit stigmatizing and stereotyping due to their simplicity and assertiveness, on the other hand they indeed manifest a deep preoccupation with the social discrepancies that were affecting a specific category of citizens, Black people. Yet, as I stated previously, the documentary not only fails to take this into consideration, but – and this is more serious – choses to refer offensive and hostile assertions on Divine's work, without giving them a chance to "answer" to those assertion. This, to me, clearly translates the director's chauvinist approach to his research and the building of his work and legitimizes the existence of partial views on rap's productions of those years.

As for *Nu Bai – O rap negro de Lisboa* (2007), the documentary's footage does not transmit a hostile view on women nor it depicts them as morally or sexually inadequate. However, it still silences their participation within rap and shows no concern in collecting their direct testimony. Despite working on a different time span, this documentary focuses on how young Black inhabitants of the Lisbon Metropolitan Area appropriated rap music (Raposo 2010). Moreover, the film aimed at "giving the "power of speech" to young people who, usually, do not have the right to speak, and who are marginalized in schools, in the employment centers, from the police and other ofical institutions" (Raposo 2010, 5).[85]

As filmmaker and ethnographer Octávio Raposo explains, the film was recorded between the years of 2003 and 2007 in the districts of Arrentela, Cova da Moura and Porto Salvo (Raposo

[84] Original: "No gueto sem dinheiro passas fome vives mal / E com se não bastasse dizem que és marginal / Lá, tu mandas, és boss do poder / Proteges p'ras que não se podem defender"

[85] Original: "Este filme quis, acima de tudo, dar o "poder da palavra" a jovens que, habitualmente, não têm direito à voz, e que são marginalizados na escola, nos centros de emprego, pela polícia e outras instituições oficiais."

2010, 4-5) with the initial intention of offering a "general overview on hip hop culture'" (5). However, the persistence of certain themes and preoccupation during the filming of the interviews led him and his team to understand that there was

> a strong heterogeneity within hip hop, not only with regard to the multiple aspects of its style, but also with regard to the ways rap was appropriated. To some of them, rap had a strong ideological component of non-identification with the dominant society, where style is appropriated in order to question the dominant notions on their social space […]. In this perspective, rap music has to be imbued with messages that encourage young people to become more aware and that work as medium to expose the problems and contradictions ongoing in the society they live in (5).[86]

Thanks to the cooperation of rapper Chullange and his association Khapaz, Raposo's final focus was narrowed down to "Black young people who sing rap and who use style as a means to protest and reformulate their ethnical symbols, with the intention of developing a positive perception of their negritude" (Raposo 2010, 6).

Despite being a more recent document and therefore not concerned with the first generation of MCs that emerged in Portugal, it still represents a source of important information, mainly on the political and social concerns connected to rap. However, it does not report any direct female account and ends up – again – promoting the idea that rap was an exclusively male practice. Women are randomly shown, in very few scenes. The first footage to show female figures is during the recording of a rappers daily life: at minute 4'55'', we can see women being at the center of domestic life as mothers and sisters of the MC mentioned above. Then, at minute 15'47'' we actually see a woman rapping among her male peers and this is the only image we have of a female participating to rap *freestyles* in the whole documentary. Finally, at minute 44'40'' images show women playing and dancing to the sound of traditional African instruments. I do not intend to criticize Raposo's work as unreliable or "wrong", but I do question why it does not offer any space to debating women's perception to rap made in those districts.

The third, and last, documentary I took into analysis for this section is one of the most recent productions released on rap made in Portugal, *Raíz do Rap Tuga* (2016). According to Rimas e

[86] "Fomos nos apercebendo da forte heterogeneidade existente no movimento hip hop, não só a nível das múltiplas vertentes do estilo, mas também das várias formas de apropriação do rap. Para alguns deles, o rap possui um forte componente ideológico de desidentificação com a sociedade dominante, em que o estilo é apropriado de forma a pôr em causa as noções dominantes sobre o seu lugar social [...]. Nesta perspectiva, a música rap tem de estar imbuída de mensagens que incentivem a consciencialização dos jovens e sirva de meio para denunciar os problemas e as contradições existentes na sociedade em que vivem."

Batidas, Márcio Rosa's work explores Portugese hip hop culture's "big bag" (Rimas e Batidas 2016) in the Miratejo district. As far as director Márcio Rosa is concerned, "Hip hop culture expresses topics such as politics, violence, sex and drugs […] and this documentary depicts how the Portuguese and immigrants in Portugal dealt with these topics" (Rosa in Rimas e Batidas 2016); yet, over the almost 90 minutes of footage that Rosa put together with this purpose, none of it portrays women nor it discusses their role in the building of the culture's foundations alongside male rappers.[87] I do not want to repeat myself, but again women are ignored and underestimated, being basically inexistent during the whole footage. I believe that the persistence of this absence corresponds, on the one hand, to the accepted and internalized idea that male witnesses and masculine experiences are "universal" examples equally satisfying to a heterogeneous cohort of participants, among whom there are also women; on the other hand, it says a lot about how women's contributions are evaluated and perceived, obviously without openly speaking about them: the fact that Divine, for instance, are never directly present among all these documentaries is nothing more than the manifestation of the dynamics of power and legitimation that still define the perception and relation between genders and put women in a subordinate position, transmitting the message that their projects were less valuable than the ones carried out by men.

The situation is slightly different when observing two different documents: the book *Fixar o movimento* (2002) by Portuguese anthropologist Teresa Fradique and António Contador and Emmanuel Ferreira's *Ritmo & Poesia* (1997). As far as the first, yet more recent, work is concerned, Fradique mentiones both Divine and Djamal at page 130, when listing those rap groups "that crossed, in different ways, the space and time of the research", considered a "tribute" rather than "an attempt at surveying" (Fradique 2002, 130).[88] Fradique, in fact, conducted her field work between November 1996 and July 1998 (Costa 2003, 161) as a project for her Master's degree. Among the various performers, Fradique mentions both Djamal and Divine, and the group Djamal is frequently taken into consideration when analyzing rap as a cultural phenomenon in Portugal: for example, Djamal are again mentioned at page 189 and 197, but more importantly at page 199 where the Portuguese anthropologist actually explains how the short trajectory of the group was to be considered strongly linked to the specific phase that Portuguese rap was in during the year of 1997. In fact, according to Fradique's research, the media's enthusiasm with regard to rap was visibly decreasing and Djamal's carreer after their first album *Abram Espaço*, which was released precisely that year, was definitely defined by this. As Fradique explains:

[87] Original: "A cultura do Hip-Hop expressa assuntos como a politica, violência, sexo e drogas [...] . Este documentário retrata como os portugueses e os imigrantes em Portugal lidaram com estes mesmos assuntos."
[88] "A lista que se segue é uma enumeração dos grupos de rap que cruzaram, de diferentes formas, o espaço e o tempo em que se situou a pesquisa. [...] Mais do que uma tentativa de levantamento que se tornaria, sempre, demasiado efêmera, esta referência constitui um tributo.

> The case of the group Djamal works as an example of the consequences of the new context that arose in 1997. The entrance of the group, created in 1995, in the editorial market was much faster than the one of the majority of the other rap groups. […] Initially, the emergence of a female group was well received by the press. Presented as part of the "second generation of local rap" (*Público/Pop Rock* 9.4.97, p.12), they represented a project that seemed to be an important step towards the consolidation of the national rap scene since the female (or feminist) tradition of North American rap had gained a mandatory status in hip hop culture. For its part, BMG, who began to produce rap in Portugal this way, seemed to benefit from some unique added value by exploring an innovative product in a sector that was giving the first signs of depletion. […] However, things did not go that well as expected and, a few months later, the group was over (Fradique 2002, 199-200).[89]

Despite mentioning the group's limited career and considering it a consequence of the commodification of rap music, Teresa Fradique doesn't not examine Djamal's contribution to rap in a more specific way. This, to me, ends up offering a biased perception of the actual scenario of Portuguese rap since Djamal represented a unique product and, as I will show later, they were actually quite successful during their years of activity. Moreover, their trajectory in particular could have been very useful to discuss rap's shift from an underground practice towards a commodified one, since the group did not bear the consequences of having to sacrifice the contect of their songs in favor of their mediatic success. Djamal's contributions could have given an interesting perspective to what Fradique claims to be the objective of her research, that is the analysis of "a number of points that define the changes through which the Portuguese society is going since the last two decades" (209).[90] Also, they would have offered their testimonies as women and young entrepreneurs.

A very similar situation can be observed in the the book *Ritmo & Poesia* (1997). In fact, the authors mention the group Djamal as "representing the female voice" only at page 174. Contador and Ferreira do not contain on details about the group, dedicating very few words to them:

[89] Original: "De facto, o caso do grupo Djamal é um exemplo das consequência deste novo contexto surgido em 1997. A ascensão do grupo, criado em 1995, ao mercado editorial foi bem mais rápida do que a da maior parte dos outros grupos de rap. [...] À partida, o surgimento de um grupo feminino foi bem aceite pela imprensa. Apresentadas como fazendo parte da "segunda geração de rap local" (*Público/Pop Rock* 9.4.97, p.12), constituíam um projeto que parecia um passo importante na consolidação da cena rap nacional já que a tradição feminina (ou feminista) no rap americano havia adquirido desde há muito tempo um estatuto obrigatório na cultura hip hop. Por seu turno, a BMG, que se iniciava desta forma na área do rap produzido em Portugal, parecia gozar de uma mais valia única ao explorar um produto inovador num panorama que começava a dar os primeiros sinais de esgotamento. [...] Mas as coisas não correram tão bem como seria de esperar e, passados alguns meses, o grupo tinha acabado."

[90] Original: "A escolha da música rap como objeto de estudo de um projeto de investigação antropológico esteve relacionada com uma motivação mais vasta para analisar um conjunto de questões que marcam alguns traços das mudanças que a sociedade portuguesa vem sofrendo nas últimas duas décadas."

> Representing the female voice, "to fight women's discrimination in rap", Jamal, later rebaptized Djamal, rise in the realm of national hip hop. Taking the form of a quartet - X-Sista, Sweetalk, Jumping and Jeremy - currently their attacks are seen as threatening to men's, potentially misogynist, hegemony. Their influences cover Cypress Hill, PJ Harvey, Senser, or even De La Soul, without leaving out the fist-raised legacy of queen Latifah, claiming greater recognition for women in society (Contador & Ferriera 1997, 174).[91]

On the one hand, the authors do not commit to Djamal's struggle of being women in a male dominated world (being this hip hop or society) in the main text of the book, offering a very brief overview of Djamal's activity, without reinforcing how unique their contributions were back then to a practice that was still building its space and a society that was still understanding its shape. On the other hand, in the final part of their work dedicated to the various testimonies collected, they transcribe their interview with X-Sista and Yen Sun (ex-member of the group Da Weasel). Here, the two performers directly share their experience as a rapper and a DJ respectively, touching fundamental issues connected to being women a masculine environment. Also, both performers share their personal stories about coming in contact with rap and choosing it as a means of expression, breaking stereotypes about femininity and female power (230-242).

However, both Fradique's and Contador & Ferriera's works present quite superficial approaches to women's participation in rap. Even though women are mentioned by referring to the existence of the group Djamal, their inputs are not taken into account nor debated as meaningful contributions to the building rap as a heterogeneous, comprehensive practice, inspiring not only for young men but also for women.

Things seem to have changed in recent times, with researcher Soraia Simões. In her recent work *RAPublicar – A microhistória que fez história numa Lisboa adiada* (2017), the author organizes, in the form of an audiobook, a series of interviews she conducted among rap's early participants in order to register the memories, preoccupations, dreams and frustrations that accompanied not only the building of RAP (as she writes in capital letters) but also a specific moment of the country's history and evolution (the mid-1980s and early 1990s). Here, the Portuguese researcher and founder of the online platform Mural Sonoro (www.muralsonoro.com) dedicates a chapter exclusively to women's participation in the 1990s where she claims that rap

[91] "Representando a voz feminina, "para combater a discriminação das mulheres no rap", irrompem no universo hip hop nacional, as Jamal, posteriormente re-baptizadas Djamal. Actualmente, apresentando-se sob a forma de quarteto – X-Sista, Sweetalk, Jumping e Jeremy – as suas investidas são vistas como ameaçadoras para a hegemonia masculina, potencialmente misógina. As suas influências repartem-se pelos Cypress Hill, PJ Harvey, Senser, ou ainda De La Soul, não deixando de lado a herança de punho erguido da rainha Latifah, e reclamando um maior protagonismo das mulheres na sociedade."

played a pioneering role in the opening of a space for the debate on gender-related issues, thanks to the efforts of the first female MCs:

> It is during this period, and for the first time in a very explicit way, when the main thematic streams that today are discussed in the field of arts and culture about gender equality, gain ground here: first, stemming from Djamal's presence in the national music industry and then from the performance of the band Divine, who would highlight this issue again (Simões 2017, 29).[92]

Simões considers women fundamental elements, as well as leading figures, not only for being rappers but also for being pioneers in raising questions about gender and the inequalities that come as consequence of its social and cultural perception. Moreover, the format of the book allows the reader to have access to a series of recorded interviews where rappers, producers and other protagonists of rap's first decade share their stories about that time.

Among these, two recordings provide unique testimonies by three out of four of Djamal's former components (X-Sista and Jumping in one, and Sweetalk in another) where the former MCs disclose frustrations and disappointments, while offering their personal account on their experience with rap. Here, the former MCs have the chance to tell their story, their struggles, but more importantly their resentment towards the music market and the way things ended. In fact, what sticks out from their words is precisely a sense of bitterness and discontent, mixed with nostalgia, when recalling their involvement in rap back in the 1990s. Both X-Sista and Jumping – or Xana and Tânia – still defend their music and how important it was for them to convey a strong message, or in other words their concerns with racism, inequalities, the urban life, all matter that are still very urgent and present in today's reality. With their words: "if you were to hear Djamal's album, it could have been done today" (Djamal in Simões 2017).

What the former MCs argue during the interview is that their album had a very strong message, it raised questions and it aimed at transmitting a critical vision of the reality they were living. As they mention themselves, "even the track about football […] had a message" explaining that "it was against corruption" (Simões 2017); here, both Sonia and Tânia are claiming that they managed to stay true to themselves and their idea of rap even when producing more commercial songs: in fact, the track that they are referring to, "Fora de Jogo", is known for being one of the biggest successes of their album *Abram Espaço*. Moreover, as they point out themselves, this track

92 Original: "É neste período, e pela primeira vez de um modo explícito que as principais linhas temáticas que hoje se discutem no campo das artes e da cultura a respeito da igualdade de género ganham aqui território: primeiro a partir da presença do grupo Djamal no panorama discográfico nacional e depois pela actuação do grupo Divine que voltaria a dar destaque a este assunto."

was somehow groundbreaking: the fact that a group of female singers was talking about football was definitely unconventional to the eyes of a world (Portugal) where sports were (and are) considered a mainly masculine activity. As Simões recons during their conversation, Djamal back then were definitely "against any cliché."

Unfortunately, a series of changes, most of them linked to the shift from the underground world to the music market, led the group to take the (difficult) decision to split, and eventually take completely different directions, driving them apart from music. When asked by Simões about what led them to "abandon the battleground" (Simões 2017), Xana and Tânia have different opinions. According to the latter, in fact, Djamal were pretty influential back then, and thing became more complicated after releasing the record. In fact, to her analysis, the external environment is to be considered responsible for their debacle:

> […] We had a lot [to say] and we could have matured in a different way, and drag other people because we were very influential. […] Maybe those people who were with us were necessary up to a certain point, and then we should have… Because [music] involves many things, right? It involves managers, it involves many things behind it. The more we progressed, more people followed us. Then we recorded [an album], we signed to a record company, we had to establish some [boundaries]… I think it's because of this… (Tânia aka Jumping in Simões 2017).[93]

To Xana (X-Sista), the decision to quit rapping was their own and it was related to their inability to adapt their music to the demands of the market:

> I can still recall that conversation we had… We wanted to do different things with music, more underground and with another message, with a different musicality, and possibly for the record company we worked with things didn't work exactly this way since there was a need for a more commercial sound… and we wouldn't do that (Xana aka X-Sista in Simões 2017)

In this sense, X-Sista and Jumping explain how deeply their album, and consequent success, changed their perception of singing: the fact that they were encouraged to sing tracks they did not identify with, standing to the rules of the industry, "where someone tells you what you can say and what you can't", this new setting deeply challenged their ethics, eventually leading to a separation. Their love for music as an art form, their need to communicate a proper message and to be

[93] Original: "Tínhamos muitas coisas e poderíamos ter amadurecido de outra forma, e puxar outras pessoas porque nós éramos muito influentes. [...] Mas, se calhar, as pessoas que estavam connosco foram necessárias e precisas até um certo ponto e depois tínhamos que… porque engloba muita coisa, né! Engloba managers, engloba outras coisas que estão por trás, quanto mais nós vamos avançando, mais pessoas veem connosco para nos tentar, né.. Depois gravámos, tínhamos editora, tínhamos que estabelecer algumas… e eu penso que seja derivado a isso…"

spontaneous, their need to be free as performers and composers, all these elements played a crucial part in what would become their short career in the music industry. As Xana explains:

> […] Honestly, the only thing we were interested in was music. We got together with the intention of making music, to make lyrics gave us happiness […]. And having to endorse the idea of a business, this didn't make much sense to us. Today, after all these years, looking back [I understand]: OK, music is a product, it's a business. It's art, but people live out what they do, they are craftsmen, they sell what they produce, so they have to publicize themselves and somehow go out there and talk about it. And [we didn't like] the idea of having people [saying] "Why don't you do things this way" or "you could sell more if you talked more about this or less about that"… So at one point I thought: I'll be happier if I did songs just for myself (Xana aka X-Sista in Simões 2017).[94]

Therefore, to Xana, probably the four young components of Djamal were unable to cope with the rules and needs of the music business. In this perspective, she also pinpoints a certain lack of maturity as one of the possible factors to interfere with their career:

> Maybe we didn't have the strength to hold up to what we were, and [say]: no, we'll take this where we want and not where you want it to go. Maybe we didn't have this. We didn't have the voice to say: look, we don't want to work with this producer. And maybe [this way] we could have given a chance to other producers that were with us since the beginning. If I were to go back, maybe I'd do this (Simões 2017).[95]

From Xana's words we can understand that, probably due to their young age, the band was unable to make the right choices and move towards a direction that was more suited for them, finding the right balance in compromising with their producers. Also, performing in that very particular time - the mid-1990s – also played a crucial part. In fact, the growth of a strong public around rap caught the attention of a series of record companies that started going after the majority of those who were performing back then. With the success of the album *Rapública*, then, rap officially proved itself to

[94] "[...] Honestamente, era só a música que nos interessava. Nós juntávamos com o intuito de fazer música, a felicidade era fazer letras […], e quando tu tens que promover a ideia do negócio, essa era uma coisa que para nós isso não fazia muito sentido. Agora estes anos todos depois, olhando para trás: ok, a música é um produto, é um negócio. É arte, mas as pessoas vivem do que fazem, são artesãos, é o que eles produzem o que eles vendem, têm que se promover e de alguma maneira têm que ir lá fora e falar sobre isso. E aquela ideia de teres pessoas "Ahi porque é que não fazes assim" e "tu até vendias mais se falasses mais sobre isso, ou menos sobre aquilo", e houve uma altura em que pensei: eu sou mais feliz se fizer músicas para a gaveta."

[95] Original: "[...] Se calhar não tivemos a força necessária para agarrar naquilo que nós éramos e: não, nós vamos levar isto para o sitio onde nós queremos e não para onde vocês querem que isto vá. E se calhar não tivemos isso. Não tivemos se calhar voz para dizer: olha, não queremos trabalhar só com este produtor, não queremos trabalhar com este produtor, e tínhamos dado se calhar oportunidade a outros produtores que tiveram conosco desde o início. Isto, se voltasse atrás, se calhar faria isso..."

be a very profitable product within the music industry. Djamal's fast notoriety, thus, came as a consequence of this. With Xana aka X-Sista's words:

> When the movement gets to a point where it generates money, it's absolute madness from the record companies who are looking for new products and new things to present. And when we appeared we were something new: What? Girls? You could see their eyes glow with so much gold. But we weren't the product they expected (Simões 2017).[96]

If on the one hand Xana seems to have processed the sorrow and disappointment of her attempt at building a career as a professional rapper and somehow distances herself from the unhappy events that led to its failure, on the other hand Tânia's words still reveal some nervousness and sadness when remembering those years and how united the group was.

A very different feeling about what happened comes from another former element, Ângela aka Sweetalk. Also interviewed by Simões, Ângela discloses how traumatic the experience was to her, to the point that she "completely cut off" that moment of her life: "There are still thing that I can't remember, because it ended so badly that I completely shut down" (Ângela aka Sweetalk in Simões 2017, 1'34'').[97] Offering a more detailed account, Sweetalk explains that their inexperience was probably the cause of their failure. In fact, the group found itself in a legally very intricate situation, and splitting was the only solution:

> The decision was: we wanted to take care of things ourselves, because there was a time when we realized that either we are being hijacked, either things are not clear. This isn't working the way we want, we don't want sponsorships. We don't want Cláudio Santos as our producer […]. There was plenty of room for maneuvers there, but no. They imposed Cláudio Santos on us as our producer. [It was imposed] by our manager. This is a time when we decide: OK, let's shut this down, but let's continue [to work] with BMG, but let's do things another way. We signed a contract without , reading anything we all signed it. I think that, at the time we signed the contract, Jeremy or Tânia, one of them said: "We should have read the contract." But, you know, we were young girls, and all was very peaceful. When we took the decision to shut all that thing down, the manager told us: "If you want to terminate [the contract] with me, you have to pay me ten thousand condos or ten thousand euros, I can't remember. I panicked. […] We all panicked […]. She wanted the money, obviously. The only solution was to put an end to the band. And that was what we did. I mean, we

[96] "Porque quando o movimento começa a chegar a um ponto em que gera dinheiro, é a loucura total por parte das editoras em conseguir arranjar, ter produtos e ter novidades e coisas para apresentar. E quando nós surgimos foi uma novidade: O quê? Raparigas? Quase que os olhos reluziam com tanto ouro. Só que nós realmente não estávamos bem viradas, não éramos bem o produto que eles estavam à espera."

[97] Original: "Ainda há coisas que eu já não me recordo, porque acabou tão mal que eu fechei mesmo."

didn't want to. Now the situation was bad between us. Everything was ruined. I was really bad, you know (Simões 2017).[98]

However, one can easily perceive Sweetalk's resentment with the situation and not being able to build a career out of music. Mostly because, she recons, Djamal had very big potential that was mismanaged:

We were right there at the top. BMG did an amazing job with us, we had an incredible marketing. We went from the North to the South [of Portugal], we performed from North to South. Everybody liked us, everywhere we went we had all the doors open. Not only because we were something new, but also because we were cool girls. Cool as in: oh, these girls are only 18 and they talk this way, they are so at ease. We had a lot of potential.[99]

In fact, with their album *Abram Espaço* (BMG 1997) Djamal still managed to leave an imprint, definitely making a statement about who they were as singer-songwriters and as young women. The album opens with the song "Abram espaço" [Make space], where the rappers announce their "entrance" and present themselves as unconventional, powerful girls. The following track, "Droga da vida", is about drug abuse and HIV: with a slower beat, the refrain plays around the rhyme "SIDA/vida" [HIV/life] and "Exclusão/solidão/cão" [exclusion/loneliness/dog] stating that "a felicidade é uma pura ilusão" [happiness is pure illusion] and criticizing the 20th century for its hypocrisy and its close-mindedness. In "Fora de jogo" the four rappers denounce the violent side of football games and its lack of sportsmanship. "Tu Fraquejas", then, is built around the idea that men are weak and women are in power, while "Assim é o amor" is about love being made of strong passion. The seventh track, "Revolução (Agora!)" is an open accusation to society and the way it treats (Black) women: "Chega de abuso, temos direito/É a hora de tratar a mulher com respeito!" It

98 Original: "A decisão foi: nós queríamos tratar das coisas nós, porque há uma altura em que percebemos que ou estamos a ser roubadas, ou as coisas não são claras, isto não tá a funcionar como nós queremos, patrocínios não é aquilo que nós queremos. Não queremos os Cláudio Souto como nosso produtor […] tínhamos ali muito espaço de manobra para, mas não. Foi-nos impingido o Cláudio Souto. [Quem impingiu] foi a manager na altura. É uma altura em que nós decidimos: ok, vamos cortar com isto tudo, mas continuar com as BMG, mas vamos fazer as coisas à nossa maneira. Assinamos um contrato sem ler nada, assinamos todas. Eu acho que a Jeremy ou a Tânia, na altura que assinámos as coisas, uma delas disse: "Devíamos ter lido o contrato". Mas sabes, somos miúdas e.. tudo pacífico. Quando decidimos, vamos acabar com isto tudo, a manager diz-nos: "se vocês quiseres rescindir comigo, têm que me pagar dez mil contos ou dez mil euros, já não me recordo. Eu fiquei em pânico. […] Entramos em pânico. […] Ela queria o dinheiro, obviamente. A única saída era nós acabarmos com o grupo. E foi isso que nós fizermos. Quer dizer, nós não queríamos. Já o ambiente tava mau entre nós também, estava já tudo minado. E foi uma decisão… foi muito mau, sabes."

99 "Nós estávamos mesmo lá em cima, a BMG fez um excelente trabalho conosco, nós tivemos uma promoção incrível. Fomos de norte a sul, fizemos concertos de norte a sul. Toda a gente gostava de nós, nós a todo lado que íamos tínhamos as portas todas abertas. Não só porque era novidade, mas também éramos umas miúdas muito giras. Giras no sentido de: "Poxa, estas miúdas com 18 anos a falar nesta maneira," e o à vontade. Tínhamos muito potencial."

is probably the most interesting and compelling music of the album where the rappers defend their position against gender and racial discrimination. In "Fake MC", Djamal make a statement about their work and about it being "real hip hop", while "A vida é puta" is, again, a darker song about life and it's struggles, and how challenging it is to survive. Finally, the last track, "Djamal", is in the line of the first one where the four rappers claim their space and announce that they are here to "screw your mind" [lixar o juízo].

I believe that silencing Djamal's work, as well as all contributions by other women from the early stage of rap in Portugal, is damaging not only to the history of the practice itself – which is wrongly perceived as merely masculine – but also to Portugal's cultural richness as a country. As I tried to highlight here through the analysis of a series of documents, women were socially and culturally part of rap and accompanied its evolution into a commodified practice. Despite the efforts (may these be conscious or unconscious ones) made in bypassing them, this remains an undeniable fact. The proof stands not only in their testimonies, but also in their works, which are still perfectly up-to-date in terms of quality and content, to the point that they inspired the future generations and represent a starting point in the history of rap made by women in Portugal. Silencing their voice exposes the weakness of a - still highly - patriarchal and chauvinist society.

3.6 From rap to literature: creativity as a strategy of resistance in Portugal through the works by Telma TVon.

Following the considerations made in section 3.4, here I aim at reflecting on the crucial role played by creativity in the hands of Black women. The idea came after meeting former rapper Telma TVon and getting to know her experience in the music world and, today, as a writer.[100] Our conversation took place in Lisbon on September 28, 2017. During our informal chat, Telma mentioned her deep love of writing since an early age. As she told me herself: "I have always loved writing. Since I was a child, I enjoyed writing, creating poems and a lot of letters […]. Writing has always been everything to me (TVon, personal communication, September 2017)."[101]

Together with her urge and passion for writing, Telma always revealed great awareness of the social, cultural and political struggle of living in Portugal as a Black woman. This manifests in

[100] I had the opportunity to meet Telma in 2017 on the occasion of an event I co-organised in Coimbra, with CES – Centro de Estudos Sociais (RAPensar as Ciências Sociais e a Política – Teatro da Cerca de São Bernardo, July 5-6, 2017. Telma was invited to the event and was part of the panel I coordinated, "Não vou cumprir com a p*ta da expectativa: o Feminismo e o Rap", representing the second-wave of female voices who were taking part in the practice of rap made in Portugal.

[101] The conversation took place in Portuguese.

her work as a rapper, which often are built around themes such as racism, gender inequalities and women's empowerment, as well as people coming together against power's exploitation. It is unmistakable in her first work as writer: a few months after our conversation, on February 10, 2018, Telma's *Um preto muito português* [A very Portuguese nigger] was released by Chiado Editora.[102] The novel, which was born from what initially was meant to be a lyric for a rap song, refers to the life experiences of João, best known as Budjurra, the son of Cape Verdeans living in Lisbon. The numerous episodes of injustice experienced by the protagonist for being a "pretoguês", a "preto" and the word "português" meaning a Black Portuguese, triggered what the author refers to as the "need to get these things off my chest" (TVon 2018, 182) – "desabafo", in Portuguese – resulting in the book in question.

Taking into consideration studies by Hall (1975), Hebdige (1979), Forman & Neal (2004), Contador (2001), Simões (2017), among others, in the present work I aim at discussing both rap and literature as creative strategies of resistance and emancipation for Black voices living in a post-colonial country. In order to do that, in the first part of this section I take a closer look into TVon's contributions as a rapper, with special attention to the album *Finalmente* (Dreamflow 2005). In the second part I focus on Telma's novel: being closely connected to rap in terms of narrative strategies and content, I consider that it exposes racism as an endemic, yet painful, component of today's Portuguese society from the point of view of a young, Black citizen.

Telma's need to creatively communicate showed up at quite a young age. Despite what one might think, what led her to join her first rap group – a group of four young MCs called Backwordz – was not her "flow" but her writing skills.[103] Having joined the group around 1996 when still in high school, during our conversation Telma explained how the four MCs created their songs by cooperating in the writing process while sharing a deep love for rap. However, despite showcasing precocious creative skills, there was quite an "absence of a collective message" (TVon, personal communication, 2017), probably due to their young age and inexperience. However, this did not prevent them sharing the same concerns and needs, managing to stay united despite the tensions experienced for performing in a male-dominated context: that of rap. In this perspective, I consider the choice of rap itself not only a response to a creative urge, that of writing, but also a strategy of emancipation and resistance: emancipation against the stigmatisation of women as subordinate actors and resistance to the oppression experienced by Black citizens during their everyday life in

[102] The English version of the title is my translation. I chose to use the word "nigger" in order to offer a better perception to non-Portuguese speakers of the term "preto" [black] when referred to negro people. In Portuguese, "preto" is considered offensive and politically incorrect, as well as openly racist, while "negro" is commonly accepted as a less harmful term.

[103] Backwordz consisted of four female MCs – Lady, LG, Zau and Tvon – who performed together between 1996 and 2000. They recorded in several mixtapes (by Dj Cruzfader and Bomberjack, for instance) and albums (Mc Xeg, Força Suprema, Bad Spirit, and Guardiões do Moviemnto Sagrado, among others).

Portugal. In Portugal, ideologies in line with the colonial narrative - in other words, those of Lusotropicalism and racial prejudice - persist relentlessly: on one hand the country is often depicted as "a non-racist – and in fact anti-racist – society that overwhelmingly accepts diversity and hybridity" (Buettner 2016, 404), while on the other hand its non-white citizens still experience discrimination and daily struggles.[104]

As many scholars have already pointed out (Rose 1994; Bennett 2001; Kitwana 2002; Price 2006) despite its first appearance as a party-oriented practice, rap soon evolved into a strategy of resistance against a condition of oppression and segregation experienced by young African-Americans and Latinos living in the margins of the cultural, economic and political capital, terms I am borrowing from Pierre Bourdieu. Thus, what can be considered young subalterns (Gramsci 1978; Said 1978; Spivak 1993) found their means of expression and protest through the creative process of combining rhythm and poetry. Rap continues to allow young people to express the dissatisfaction they feel, and its longevity and global spread expose the extent to which the social condition of marginalisation is experienced word wide (Bennett 2001, 189). In fact, "as a distinct element of hip-hop culture, it is the aesthetic bridge to a reaffirmed free speech. The form and its adherents engender conversation of resistance, spoken in the vernacular of young urban people" (Chang 2006, 16).

As Telma recalled, she was already a fan of North-American rap when she lived in Angola in the 1990s - Run DMC, Public Enemy, NWA, Queen Latifah, and MC Lyte being among the artists she mentioned to me. Once in Lisbon, she soon came in contact with Portuguese rap, finding herself surrounded by friends who were either MCs or soul singers. In the late 1990s, the rap movement in Portugal was still about "union, unity, and community, about cultural issues and friends" (TVon, personal communication, 2017), sharing the need of creating new forms of identity in the diaspora (Buettner 2016):

> United by socio-economic exclusion, limited prospects, spatial segregation, and the experience of racial discrimination in Portugal, African-descended youth born or brought up in Portugal converged across ethnic lines far more habitually than their parents, whose primary identification was more likely to be Cape Verdean, Mozambican, Angolan, or another country of origin (Buttner 2016, 408).

[104] As described in detail in Chapter 2, with regards to this Joana Gorjão Henriques's book, *Racismo no país dos brancos costumes* (Tinta da China 2018), undoes the persisting myth of the 'Pais dos Brandos Costumes' [the country of gentle habits], invented during the Estado Novo. Henrique plays with the words *branco/brando* [white/mild], and depicts true cases of racial discrimination, complementing them by statistical data and more than 80 interviews, covering justice, housing, education and employment.

Hence, rap offered the Portuguese youth a language they could identify with, as a means to protest against stigmas, racism and social rejection while claiming pride in their ethnic heritage and cultural choices (409-410). However, while the one against racial discrimination and social inequality was a common fight to male and female MCs, the latter also had to face another struggle: that of gender prejudice and machismo, inside and outside the hip hop community. Isoke explains that "the exercise of power and dominance over Black people does not end with racist, sexist white institutions, ideologies, and practices. It also extends to sexist, misogynist, homophobic, and colonial practices internal to the black community" (Isoke 2013, 22). About this, during our conversation Telma mentioned that, during various live performances, the group Backwordz was often targeted with sexist and detrimental remarks such as "you should be at home washing the dishes" or "you're not good at this," and that she happened to witness various conversations where her male peers commented that female MCs wanted to be part of rap only because they were "looking for a boyfriend." After acknowledging that female MCs tended to focus on attacking men rather than building a scene of their own, TVon began seeing rap as a potential channel of communication with and for other women, a means to empower them and encourage them to join the fight against power abuse in its various forms.

It is precisely with this intention that the project Lweji was born with MC and soul singer Geny. Their first and only album, *Finalmente* (Dreamflow Records, 2005) was created to "educate men on women's issues", while being "a voice for women" (TVon, personal communication, 2017). Indeed, the record is creatively built around delicate matters such as the right to self-determination, the weight of patriarchy and domestic violence, with the intention of destigmatising women from different forms of prejudice: "we sought to make a purely feminine album that women could hear and identify with, especially those women who were stigmatised" (TVon 2017). Perfectly in line with these intentions, in the album's "Intro" (the first, short track) we can hear an excerpt of a conversation between two women where one clearly states "honestly, I don't want children" [sinceramente, eu não queria filhos]. As Meyers reminds us, "women who prefer not to have any children […] are commonly reproached for selfishness or pitied for immaturity" (Meyers 2002: 30). Hence, the choice of opening the album with such strong statement is at once provocative and an act of emancipation: indeed motherhood is a very personal choice and the right to choose not to procreate should be respected as any other right of self-determination. While some listeners can relate to such statement, others may feel uncomfortable; yet, the choice to open their work with such excerpt tells us a lot about where the two MCs are coming from, and where they are going with their work.

Issues related to motherhood are again evoked in the song "A dúvida" [The Doubt], where

abortion is discussed by alternating different voices, each representing a different point of view: starting with the pregnant girl's doubts, fears and sorrows, the song then switches giving voice to a moralist and judgmental view about abortion, while closing with the boy's invitation to "get rid of it". The chorus, moreover, evokes the deep sense of loneliness and abandonment that accompanies the difficult decision of ending an unwanted pregnancy. By mentioning the Bible, condemning free sexual intercourse, and frequently stating that "abortion is a mistake", the two MCs seem to be subtly exposing the patriarchal, moral and cultural grid that still limits women's freedom of choice, mainly when it comes to their body. In this sense, I agree with Durham, Cooper & Morris and

> see hip-hop feminism as a generationally specific articulation of feminist consciousness, epistemology, and politics rooted in the pioneering work of multiple generations of black feminists based in the United States and elsewhere in the diaspora but focused on questions and issues that grow out of the aesthetic and political prerogatives of hip-hop culture (Durham, Cooper & Morris 2013, 722).

Lweji's album fits this profile: it touches women's issues while also being about compassion, unity, freedom in general. But most importantly, it is a about revolt and resistance through the art of poetry, in the shape of music, with a very clear purpose: "to not be dominated without wishing to dominate others" ("Rebeldes Com Causa", *Finalmente*, 2005). Thus, the album *Finalmente* can be seen as an attempt to create a space of engagement, "in which the impetus for radical and transformative political thought and action is sparked" (Isoke 2013, 19), in line with urban Black women's traditions. Moreover, its content and narrative features correspond to what Williams points out about female poets, since "the female voice is often aligned with revolt […]" (Williams 2007: 176).

Using narrative strategies that are often autobiographical and highly non-metaphorical, rap embodies a unique union between aesthetics and praxis (Shusterman 1995). Lweji's album, then, showcases rap not only as a means to express a sense of revolt against the establishment (Rebeldes com Causa; Traficantes de Ódio; Essas Facetas dos Nossos Dias), but also as a means of resistance to male hegemony (Entre Elas e Eles; As Invejosas; A Dúvida). In this case, then, "resistance entails more than just arguing, 'talking back,' or even overtly aggressive acts to subvert power structures" (Isoke 2013, 21), it entails using creativity to convey social consciousness, a message of unity and empowerment against power abuse, while exposing the limits today's postcolonial world.

Some time has passed since Lweji's album was released and since the band left the stage (2008). Lweji was Telma's last 'official' project as a rapper, but not her last contribution as an artist, a thinker and a cultural activist. After completing a Bachelor's course in African Studies,

TVon graduated with a Master's degree in Social Sciences. As she explained herself during our event in Coimbra, she is today more oriented towards social working rather than rapping; she continues to write, but quit recording: "today, I prefer to continue more underground than any metro you ever knew" (TVon 2017).[105] Yet, as far as Telma is concerned, the fact that today, she works better out of the spotlight does not mean that she has stopped believing in the power of words as weapons of resistance, nor that she has changed focus as a social and cultural activist. In other words, she is still anchored in rap's mentality in terms of themes, thinking and creative strategies, even if choosing a different channel to deliver them.

Through her first book as a writer - *Um preto muito português* (Chiado Editora, 2018) – Telma switches between prose and poetry in the building of a novel that is at once a diary, a monologue, careful critique and an emotional outburst. Written in first person, the narration is conducted by Budjurra, a young Black Portuguese, son of Cape Verdeans, who "was indeed born in Lisbon yet considered a foreigner. And not as my choice" (TVon 2018, 5). As a matter of fact, what we become aware of throughout the reading are the numerous, hostile situations experienced by Budjurra for being a non-white Portuguese, and how this led him to question his identity as a mestizo born in the diaspora, as well as distrust "the land that had impartially given birth to me" (6). Throughout the 47 short chapters that compose the book, and thanks to a sophisticated use of irony and a hint of humor, the author unravels and criticises the racial, social and cultural biases that affect Black lives in today's Portugal.

Telma's themes as a rapper seemed to have merged into this novel and into Budjurra's paradigmatic life: the fight against capitalism ("Call center licenciado, Budjurra"), the media's manipulation of information ("Tu agora chamaste arrastão, Budjurra"), the need for more awareness and unity, as well as the call for more empathy and greater humanity, stronger moralities, and the peaceful coexistence of diversities ("Boa pessoa, Budjurra… Boa pessoa, Budjurra"). In addition to this, the book discusses a wide range of matters, going from politics in Africa ("Xê Budjurra, não fala política"), Black Power movements ("Desmistificar o Black Power") and rage against injustice ("Tanta raiva, Budjurra"), to love, compassion and disillusion ("Não sabes nada sobre nada"). The attempt is to redeem those lives that share with Budjurra the fact that "books tell all stories but mine, the story of a Black Portuguese who fights with himself and with a large part of the Lusitanian society in order to feel just like a Human Being" (115). Telma TVon, hence, uses her novel as a platform to question both the human condition and the new post-colonial era, by giving a literary body to the thoughts, fears and frustrations of an individual whose life is, in fact, its

[105] The full video of our panel during the event in Coimbra, RAPensando as Ciências Sociais e a Política, with Telma's intervention, is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-VZtrAIam_0&fbclid=IwAR2ynkwxItY1CpoMZlYh4wexcB5yTOKwVxBU6DI6-Bs4klSNMKLTBUjJ6t8.

product: one of those many "hyphenated identities" (Mata 2006). As Kahn explains, these postcolonial subjects are

> human, cultural and identity cartographies who carry the roots and the legacy of a long-lasting, crossbreeding relationship, of the sharing of symbolic territories, which are reproduced in language (Padilha 2005), food, music, art, and in literature itself (Padilha & Calafante 2008; Calafante & Meneses 2008) […] (Kahn 2017: 98).

Hence, I consider Telma's choice of Budjurra – a young individual who firmly believes "in equality among diversity" (9) – as the leading voice of the novel, an example of how literature, in the hands of Black authors, becomes a space of resistance against their assimilation and silencing. As we can read, *Um preto muito português* gives voice to the hybrid identity (Hall 2006) of the Afro-Portuguese postcolonial subject:

> Of course I am also Cape Verdean, my education, my values and principles say so, but of course I am also Portuguese, I was born here, I learned a lot here and I also gained new values and principles, therefore, this duality to me is a treasure (TVon 2018: 10).[106]

Telma's literary work, then, can be observed as a step forward towards both the institutionalisation of diversity and the negotiation of its cultural symbols, as well as a contribution to the broadening (and enriching) of the scope of the Portuguese cultural identity (Mata 2014). Moreover, in the line of her works as a rapper, the novel is punctuated with a number of considerations of a feminist nature. In "Uma Budjurra, ou não, para o Budjurra", for instance, the narrator describes himself as a very sensitive man who's deepest desire is to experience love as "described in books, in soap operas, with butterflies in the stomach" (35). Budjurra is definitely a non-stereotyped man who is not afraid of expressing his feelings since these do not harm his masculinity and his nature finds full expression throughout the novel. Furthermore, the novel also discusses toxic relationships and women's subordination to men. In "Ela, ele e eu, o Budjurra… No nosso silêncio", the narrator unfolds the story between his friend Fernanda and Rui, the father of her son, a young man who had vanished after deluding her with all his promises. Since then, Fernanda had sunk into sadness, her face always covered by a veil of silence. Budjurra's position is very clear with regards to the father's narcissistic behavior: "He is that kind man I will never endorse" and "this is not being a Man" (71). Through a surprising final, the chapter closes with Fernanda telling Budjurra that Rui

106 Original: "Claro que eu sou também cabo-verdiano, minha educação, os meus valores e princípios assim o ditam mas claro que sou também português, aqui nasci, aqui muito aprendi e também ganhei valores e princípios, portanto essa dualidade para mim é riqueza"

had HIV, and both her and her sun have contracted the virus, leaving the reader with a sense of revolt that inevitably leads to the questioning the legitimation of masculinity as hegemonic and subordinating.

Feminism is then broadly debated in "Budjurra, Carlos, Sandra e algumas mulheres". The chapter, in fact, focuses on women's empowerment as individuals and as a collectivity. In order to do this, Budjurra present two interesting cases: that of his brother Carlos – a "womaniser" (75) – and that of his sister Sandra – "the most chauvinist woman I have ever known" (77). Both are examples of how macho behavior affects both men and women indiscriminately. In the first case, male chauvinist culture translates into being promiscuous regardless women's feelings; in the latter, it takes the shape of hatred of women, by other women. The narrator uses both figures to discuss women's tendency to act against each other, instead of working together as a powerful collectivity. In fact, for Budjurra, feminism is the only solution:

> In some sense, I really like the feminists. I think that feminism is truly the right way to fight not only men's unproven beliefs but women's too. Nothing exaggerated, but a feminism strong enough to instill in some women that they won't lose a leg or a hand if they praise other women in a heartful way or if they see in each woman a friend and not an enemy […] (79).[107]

As I said, these are just a few examples of the feminist imprinting of the whole novel. Bearing this in mind I consider that *Um preto muito português* showcases a creative use of literature as a platform where hegemonic narratives are disclosed and undone, these being racisms, capitalism, patriarchy or power relations in general. By exposing how deeply discriminating they are, the novel contributes to the building of new, alternative narratives as strategies of resistance, as spaces of creation where blackness and femininity are presented as strong identity pillars. Budjurra's words as exemplary, as follows:

> I am Carlos do Carmos remixed with Cesária Évora, that became a track by Boss AC. I am about Portugal's existence as much as I am about the search for Cape Verde. […] I am a man, a man that doesn't feel it is necessary for him to stand up for his masculinity and I am this same man who feels necessary to claim his blackness (182).[108]

As I have previously stated here, I believe that the works of Telma TVon showcase a similar use of

[107] Original text: "Em certo sentido, gosto muito das feministas. Acho que o feminismo é realmente a melhor maneira de lutar contra as crenças infundadas dos homens mas também das mulheres. Nada de exagerado, mas um feminismo que seja forte o suficiente para inculcar nas mulheres a ideia de que não vão perder uma perna ou uma mão se elogiam outras mulheres de forma sincera ou se veem em cada mulher uma amiga e não uma inimiga."

[108] Original: "Eu sou Carlos do Carmo remixado com Cesária Évora, que deu uma música do Boss AC. Eu sou tanto da existência de Portugal quanto da procura de Cabo Verde. [...] Sou um homem, um homem que não sente a necessidade de se erguer para a sua masculinidade e sou o mesmo homem que sente necessário reivindicar a sua negritude"

rap and literature as means of cultural resistance against hegemonic narratives. What I would like to add as a final consideration, is that by creating a space for those subjects that history tends to silence, TVon's contributions provide new cultural references to an heterogeneous cohort of voices who are fighting for their expression. More importantly, they stir the debate on the need to renew the (static) categories that define what (and who) is Portuguese and what (and who) isn't. I agree with Fernando Arenas when he explains that today:

> Cinema, literary fiction, and popular music, […] are providing a key platform for the symbolic representation and socio-political empowerment of marginalized African and Afro-Portuguese communities, as well as a prism through which to posit a multiplicity of shifting, and at times, overlapping identity formations ranging from static binary categories such as foreign/national, black/white, African/European as well as localized, situational, and/or hyphenated identities (Arenas 2012: 167).

From rap to literature, Telma TVon's works prove that, in Portugal, creativity can be deployed as a strategic way to discuss and undo cultural, social, and racial categories that delegitimize heterogeneity and equality as necessary elements for the building of a free world.

3.7 Restoring the musical tradition of protest songs: Capicua's interventive rap

Music has been a determining factor in society since ancient times. Combined with words it has played a key role in the propagation of ideas. As an example of this, in ancient Greece the *aoidos* (bards) sang epics to the accompaniment of a *phorminx,* a light and simple cithara which helped them set the movement and rhythm of a narration and facilitated the memorization of verses.

In addition to its symbolic power, music – and art in general – has always played a decisive role in the construction of identity in contemporary societies, providing an instrument for resistance and political struggle. This is evidenced by the strict relationship between musical genres, their content, the historical and socio-economic context that triggers their emergence, and the cultural viewpoint and the social origins of its actors.

As I have previously argued in Chapter 2, several sociological studies have provided a deeper understanding of this multifaceted phenomenon. The pioneering work of Max Weber, W.E.B. Du Bois, Alfred Schultz, Richard Peterson, and Pierre Bourdieu, among many others, have offered, over the years, different epistemological contributions to understand music as a complex

phenomenon that involves the people that produce it and the effects it has on listeners, while being simultaneously an activity and an object, an institutionalized system and a product.

Researchers William G. Roy and Timothy J. Dowd claim that "the sociology of music is relevant for such varied subfields [of sociology] as stratification, social movements, organizational sociology, and symbolic interactionism" (Roy & Dowd 2010, 184), and that the study and understanding of music is not possible without an analysis of the socio-cultural context in which it is produced and consumed, especially when the objective is to recognize what this practice is capable of promoting at a collective level. According to the above-mentioned sociologists, in contemporary societies music can be perceived as "techonology of the collective": it is an element of unity and identity for groups whose members come together in consonance with their musical tastes.

The idea that I intend to defend here is that artistic objects are texts with social importance that represent systems of shaed values and beliefs, and that these cultural objects are means through which both individual identities and social movements, as well as national legacies are built: in summary , "culture operates practically" (Acord & DeNora 2008, 225). Finally, as Clifford Geertz (1983; 1993) theorized, artistic practices are cultural systems and the cultural relevance given to artistic objects is always related to local matters.

Following the above observations, and in the sequence of Chapter 2, I will further examine the relevance of music in Portugal and the cultural impact it had – and continues to have – in shaping the identity of the country and its citizens, fomenting action both in private and individual spheres and in the public and collective spheres. To this end, I believe that two music genres can be observed as distant from each other in time, yes close in terms of intentions and functions, and these are protest music and contemporary rap. Despite coming as a result of very distant and different political, cultural and historical contexts, as well as being characterized by distinct mentalities and discourses, these two phenomena reveal certain common points, both in terms of aesthetics and in terms of their role as political and cultural counter-discourses, as well as in terms opposition to a specific the socio-political context. Inspired by Terry Eagleton's theory, according to which all literature is intertextual, I see that there is a connection between protest songs and rap, and that they share several features. This allow me to start thinking in terms of a true tradition of protest music in Portugal, that is, the persistence of the use of music as a narrative of resistance against dominant ideologies.

It is known that during the *Estado Novo* one of the mains purposes of the policies implemented by Salazar was that of building a truly Portuguese national identity by boosting

national pride and the perception of being Portuguese. This plan, which became known as Policy of the Spirit [Política do Espírito], involved various state organs and ultimately endorsed Fado as the national musical genre par excellence. This corresponded to what Salwa Castelo-Branco and Jorge de Freitas Branco (2003) refer to as "folkrorization". Researcher Susana Sardo explains that this process "was marked by the proliferation throughout the whole country of groups of traditional music that was exclusively transmitted orally, that brought music, dances and dress to the stage, displaying them in a pageant style" (Sardo 2014, 65).[109] Folklore at that time was conceived as "a nostalgic representation and utopic configuration of a past way of life of the Portuguese people" [a representação nostálgica e configuração utópica de um modo de vida de outrora do "povo português; Sardo & Pestana 2010, 66]. It should surprise, then, to realize that:

> Here it is no longer the poetry of the word that is important, but rather the poetry of the image and of actions, politically regulated by invoking emotions, feeling and attitudes that the Estado wants to associate with the people, which it sees as an anonymous and acritical mass, the real representative of the Portuguese "being" (Sardo 2014, 66).[110]

Protest songs are embedded in this political and cultural context. In this specific musical universe they become a reaction to the status quo, an act of dissent by the voice of the people whom the regime tried to silence and sanction through censorship and "folkrorization." The protest song's movement began to take shape in Portugal from the 50s onwards, soon becoming a powerful musical, cultural and political counter-canon, born from the reaction against the nationalistic, oppressive discourse. In fact, if on the one hand in those the dictatorial regime promoted an anonymous and innocuous image of the Portuguese folk using popular beliefs and the neutralization of everything that was considered inconvenient and inappropriate, on the other hand the anti-fascist protest songs increasingly directed their works towards the revival of all those aspects of popular culture and music that were not in keeping with the idealized image of the country and its people. They thereby appealed to their listeners and singers, encouraging them to identify with a variety of struggles, actions and political commitment.

As said in Chapter 2, among the main factors that fostered the appearance and success of protest songs in Portugal, and after, the revolution of 1974, two more situations of social relevance strongly associated to the political and cultural context of that time need to be mentioned: the

[109] Original text: "Ficou marcado pela proliferação ao longo de todo o país, de agrupamentos de música tradicional de transmissão exclusivamente oral, que trouxeram para o contexto de palco a música, as danças e os modos de vestir, apresentando-os em forma de espetáculo/desfile."

[110] "Aqui, já não é a poética da palavra que interessa, mas sim a poética da imagem e da ação, reguladas politicamente pela invocação de emoções, sentimentos e atitudes que o Estado quer associar ao povo, por ele entendido como uma massa anónima e acrítica, verdadeiro representante do "ser e estar" português."

outbreak of a Colonial War, that forced the generation of the 60s to mobilize massively, and their exodus abroad (mainly to Paris) where the Portuguese youth of that time lives in exile (Corte-Real 1996).

Despite the geographical distance from the country, the aim of protest singers was always to "stimulate action by joining poetry and song" [estimular à ação através da união de poesia e do canto; Lopes-Graça 1946]. This can be detected in certain stylistic choices, that allowed to obtain the desired effect: the priority was always to produce a song that was "simple, objective and direct in order to mobilize people more efficiently" [simples, objetiva e direta a fim de atingir uma maior eficácia na mobilização das pessoas; Corte-Real 1996), and this translated in the use of a language that was simple and easily understandable by the public, that was merged with traditional Portuguese music and with its simple, melodic and strongly intimate, compelling tone (Corte-Real, 1996) in order to give emphasis to the message in the lyrics. Hugo Castro explains that "several studies refer the importance that these movements had […] also due to their aesthetic, stylistic and thematic revival of popular songs (Castro 2015, 3). [111]

The urban context of (music) production, together with the influences of music coming from France and Brazil and the appropriation of rural musical elements converged into a practice that impacted the Portuguese society and politics for nearly four decades and that had as "fundamental unit of reference an attitude of political and cultural intervention centered on and legitimized by the Revolution of April of 1974" (Corte-Real 1996, 144).[112] This was also fostered by the great impact of the Revolution and to consequent questioning of Portuguese history and traditions: the main effect of this cultural shift was a period of cultural self-reflection especially manifested by songwriters (Trindade 2016). As a result of this move, music gained more ideological, creative and political autonomy, indelibly setting the ground for what ended up being produced in Portuguese music in the following eras. Hence, I believe that protest songs leave a legacy that has survived up to today and finds its expression in new expressions where musical style continues to be closely related to political and cultural intervention, and to the aim of encouraging the listeners to take action.

By saying this, I am thinking of rap – a musical and cultural movement that emerged and consolidated in Portugal Between 1986 and 1996. Its strong component of social and political struggle and interventionist and reactionary viewpoints is where I identify the persistence of the above-mentioned legacy. Once again, in rap music is linked to activism as a reaction to a context

111 Original text: "Em várias abordagens é referida a importância que estes movimentos tiveram [...] também pelo seu papel de destaque em assumirem-se como movimentos de renovação estéticas, estilística e temática da canção popular."
112 "Unidade fundamental de referência a atitude de intervenção político-cultural centrada e legitimada da Revolução de Abril de 1974."

marked by inequalities and social invisibility, but more importantly by the tendency to silence its irreverent voices. In this sense, it can be considered a worthy successor of protest songs.

As I explained in Chapter 2, part of the first generation of Portuguese rappers is comprised by the offspring of immigrants, and this explains the use of the Cape Verdean language and of elements taken by the African oral traditions. These aesthetic choices intended also to be political: rap was directed to a young, socially excluded public, and it is through language that protest finds its strategy. The use of creole in rap to address sensitive issues like social exclusion, racial biases, gratuitous police violence and marginalization, that is, to describe the daily life of this peripheral youth, is in itself an ideological, political and discordant act (Pardue 2012). Rap, in the hands of the second generation of immigrants, is experienced as a conquest: the rediscovery and achievement of a voice that was silenced by an inequitable capitalist system and by a colonialist cultural legacy. Hence, I believe that both the emergence of protest songs, and the appropriation of rap by young African descendants living in post-revolutionary Portugal result from an urgency to raise a different voice, a counter-discourse, as a reaction to dominating system. Although the socio-political scenarios that foster their emergence are different, both musical genres display the urge to react against centralizing and confining powers that tend to annihilate differences and silence all those elements that threaten the realization of a specific political plan.

In addition to this, I have detected another common feature to the two musical phenomena, and this is the style of the lyrics. Despite the differences, both genres aim at offering predominantly simple, straightforward lyrics, where slang is colored with commonly used popular expressions, and erudition becomes synonymous with popular wisdom. In both cases, this strategy helps to reach its intended public: in the case of protest songs, I am referring to the people of a poor and "submissive" country; in the case of rap, I am thinking of the marginalized, forgotten and excluded youth. In both cases the purpose of the compositions is not just of distraction or entertainment; both share the need to encourage the public's mobilization and identification with their verses, creating a symbolic space of recognition and raising awareness about a common a struggle and the need of unity in order to overcome the limitation imposed by a specific socio-political context. This makes it even more clear to see how both practices find their space as counter-canons, by creating music by the for the people, inspiring them to fight against the constraints imposed by the system, hence aiming at intervening in the world.

Indeed, Rap and protest songs are different musical styles. Different because of the time in which they were produced – rap is a product of contemporary society whereas protest songs were strictly associated with the dictatorial regime and the Revolution -; different because of the attitudes that they convey and different because of their narratives. They are also very different because of

the ideologies behind them and the struggles they represent. However, among all these differences, there are also some similarities: in addition to the lyrical style, where words predominate over music, both practices share urban and syncretic origins, as well as some analogies in the themes they address (social criticism and a call for action), in the feelings that they transmit (outrage, pessimism and frustration), and in their view of the reality around them (fatalism, opposition, deconstruction) (Guerra et at. 2016). This became very clear during the post-2008 austerity and during the severe economic crisis: an extreme political and social context was created in Portugal and popular music was widely used as a space for condemnation and protest, where intervention and unrest was promoted, and where the need of a strong, collective identity able to resist the abuse of power was constantly reinforced. On one hand, during these times the music scene saw a revival of old protest songs – for example a renewed focus on songs like José Afonso's *Grândola, vila Morena,* José Mário Branco's *FMI,* among others – and this revitalization demonstrates that "those songs continue to be synonymous with resistance, revolution and social conscience" [essa canção continuou a ser sinónimo de resistência, de revolução e de consciência social; Guerra et at. 2016, 150); on the other hand, it also sees the rise and protagonism, and subsequent affirmation of rap in the Portuguese music scene with artists such as Valete, Chullage, Boss AC and Capicua, all of whom take action with songs that speak out openly against the crisis, the government and the precarious conditions to which people are condemned.

The music market of recent Portuguese history, then shows a strong bond between rap and protest songs which finally converge in a common struggle. Their voices assert themselves offering a space of recognition for those who don't find it in society. Also, it is precisely this commitment, and this connection what allows me to state that rap's subversive tones and rebellious features were not unprecedented to the tradition of making music in Portugal.

The example of the strict relationship between rap and protest songs can be found in an artist who has been increasingly conquering the market and winning over the public through her music. The rapper Capicua, in this sense, represents the perfect bridge between the past and the present of protest music, where activism is the common thread and words are the driving force.

Born in 1981 in Oporto, part of what can be considered the second generation of Portuguese rappers, Ana Matos Fernandes has been involved in hip hop culture since she was 15 years old, first through graffiti (as "Odd"), and later on, and with increasing intensity, through rap. In her own words, "she has been a militant MC since 2004" [é MC militante desde 2004].[113]

As an acclaimed rapper, acknowledged both in the national hip hop community and the Lusophone community (as shown in Chapter 2, 2018 saw the launching of the project Língua

[113] Her complete biography can be found on her personal website: http://www.capicua.pt/capicua.

Franca, in collaboration with Portuguese rapper Valete and Brazilian rappers Rael and Emicida), her success is largely due to her emotionally charged and politically engaging lyrics where spontaneity is combined with a strong preoccupation with contemporary social issues – as evidenced by her participation in social projects, namely as a central member of the three editions of OUPA (Cerco, Ramalde e Lordelo), in the ambit of the program "Cultura em Expansão" [Culture in Expansion] of the City Council of Oporto.

Much can be said about Capicua's trajectory, as she has done a lot of collaborative work, mixtapes as well as three solo albums. However, to my reflection, particularly outstanding are her musical influences, as they certainly contributed to the development of a conscientious and dedicated rapper. Among these influences, of which Portuguese rap is probably the most important (a common factor to most Portuguese rappers), also include her exposure to protest songs from an early age. In an interview to the newspaper Jornal das Notícias, she explained that:

> As a young girl I listened to the music of my parents, April singers, a musical legacy that marked my generation a lot. I was born in the 1980s, a generation of sons and daughters of people who lived intensely April 25th, the PREC, and who really like those songwriters. I would listen a lot to Fausto José Mário Branco, Sérgio Godinho, Zeca Afonso, etc (Capicua em Neves 2016).[114]

April singers not only provided a cultural background for this artist, where music is seen as a space of non-standardized and alternative information fundamental to criticize the constrictions and brutality of power, but they also inspired her to produce poetic writing charged with action. Ultimately, her passion for words was the driving force that led the artist to get involved with rap music.

Two songs in particular exemplify Capicua's commitment to the opening of spaces for debate about Portugal's contemporary social context, exposing those lesser-known realities through a poetry that is raw, direct, profoundly honest and combative. The first of these is *Medo do medo* [Fear of fear], dates 2012 and represents the artist's contribution to the struggle against the crisis of that time. According to Paula Guerra, in fact,

> fear [is] perceived […] as a legitimizer of a more conformist and less activist attitude of people […] who prefer security/protection in detriment of freedom when it comes to risks they are faced with or that are strategically place on them [at the same time being on] an indelible component of a superstructure, that is, ideological instrument that

[114] Original:"Em miúda ouvia o que os meus pais ouviam, os cantautores de Abril, todo esse património musical que marcou muito a minha geração. Nasci nos anos 1980, esta geração é filha de pessoas que viveram intensamente o 25 de Abril, o PREC, e que gostavam muito desses cantautores. Ouvia muito Fausto, José Mário Branco, Sérgio Godinho, Zeca Afonso, etc."

> legitimizes the instituted social, political and economic power, […] fundamental mechanism to maintain the 'state of things' (Guerra et al. 2016, 163).[115]

An almost obsessive repetition of the word "fear" at the beginning of each verse recreates in the listener that state of anxiety in which people live, victims of a system that uses terror to paralyze them so that they don't question its absurdities. Fear reaches everything: "Fear of the crisis and of crime / […] / Fear of you and of me / Fear of the times", but also "Fear of dogs and of insects / Fear of crowds / Fear of the floor and of the ceiling / Fear of solitude", and even "Fear of God / And fear of the police / Fear of not going to heaven / And fear of justice".[116] It is a feeling that affects everyone without distinction and spreads throughout all aspects of people's lives, dividing them and driving them away from true community values, fundamental in the struggle against the abuses of the state and of power. It is transformed into "fear of opening their mouth / and of terrorism" [medo de abrir a boca / e do terrorismo].

The xenophobic aspect of this feeling of terror and anguish is also mentioned by the rapper from the north when she sings "fear of Jews, Blacks / Arabs, Chinese" [Medo de judeus, negros / Árabes, chineses]; again this leads to the isolation of individuals and the feeling that on each corner there is an enemy: "I buy a gun / I grab my bag, close the condominium / I look over my shoulder / I defend my domain / I protect the property / which is private and invades / A desire to put up a grating / around reality".[117]

Responsibility is placed on an undefined "them", a plural subject of which there is no direct reference in the lyrics and only appears at the end of the song, where the obstinate, hard and honest narration is suddenly subverted: "They fear that we aren't scared" [Eles têm medo de que não tenhamos medo], says Capicua. The rapper joins the other terrified people and shares this feeling with them, pointing out the reason: the ones who are really scared are those who want to control the people and do so by using terror. In this sense *Medo do medo* is a grievance and a warning call, an invitation to open ones' eyes and stop being a victim of the snares of the system.

115 "O medo [é] entendido [...] como legitimador de uma atitude mais conformista e menos ativista por partes das pessoas [...] que preferem a segurança/proteção em detrimentos da liberdade perante os riscos que lhe são apresentados ou colocados estrategicamente sobre si [ao mesmo tempo sendo uma] componente indelével da superestrutura, ou seja, instrumento ideológico legitimador do poder social, político e económico instituído, [...] mecanismo fundamental de manutenção do 'estado das coisas.'"

116 "Medo da crise e do crime / [...] / Medo de ti e de mim / Medo dos tempos"; "Medo de cães e de insetos / Medo da multidão / Medo do chão e do teto / Medo da solidão"; "Medo de Deus / E medo da polícia / Medo de não ir para o céu / E medo da justiça".

117 Original text: "Compro uma arma / Agarro a mala, fecho o condomínio / Olho para cima do ombro / Defendo o meu domínio / Protejo a propriedade / que é privada e invade / Uma vontade de por grade / à volta da realidade".

The second song that I find interesting is more recent and dates from 2014. It narrates the daily life of the women who crosses the Tagus river every day to go to work in Lisbon. These are the women who bear all the weight of the patriarchy and of colonialism in their daily lives, in their humble professions and in their private lives. *Mulher do Cacilheiro* [Woman of the Ferry Boat] is a song dedicated to "real" women, which condemns their precarious conditions, marked by racial biases and by submission (daily violence, domestic violence, psychological violence from living in an extreme condition).

The song, which arose out of an invitation by the sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos to act in a performance around the subject of post-colonialism, is a perfect example of Capicua's style as a rapper and as a writer, attentive to the details of the daily life, that yet are portrayed poetically. By describing the protagonist, the rapper calls attention to the features that identify her immediately as a working woman, an immigrant: *"*Hand cracked by bleach / Black skin short hair / Yearning for Cabo Verde / Longing for a fair world" [Mão gretada da lixivia / Pele negra cabelo curto / Saudade de Cabo Verde / Vontade de um mundo justo].

Saudade, that feeling of yearning often associated with the diaspora, gives the trip an almost dreamlike quality in which the forward movement of the boat becomes a return home:

> This rocking of the boat / Evokes the Sea of Santiago / And along Barreiro / One can almost see the Island of Maio / Almost feel the same smell / And her longing grows / To carry on in the ferry boat without interruption until Pedra Badejo (Capicua 2014).[118]

The longing to return characterizes a good part of the experience of imagination of those who came to Portugal from Africa - a feeling fed by the deception and disappointment of unfulfilled expectations for a better life.

Capicua doesn't offer us merely a careful account of this exemplary woman's daily life, but she uses this poetic space to depict the naked truth of life in Lisbon, questioning the most common stereotypes and beliefs: "Until she spots the Salazar bridge / There on the left / Or 25th of April / As is fitting to say now / And understands that even if they build bridges over the river / It is too big / For them to succeed in uniting us".[119] The rapper thus uses irony to speak of the changes that the April revolution promised but never brought about, revealing a lucidly critical view of the political and cultural trajectory/path of the country.

[118] "Este balanço do barco / Lembra o Mar de Santiago / E ao largo do Barreiro / Quase vê a Ilha de Maio / Quase sente o mesmo cheiro / E vai crescendo o seu desejo / De seguir no cacilheiro A eito até Pedra Badejo" (Capicua 2014).

[119] "Até que vê a ponte Salazar / Ali ao lado esquerdo / Ou 25 de Abril / Como agora é bom dizer / E percebe que mesmo que façam pontes sobre o rio / Ele é demasiado grande / Para que consigam unir-nos" (Capicua 2014).

The lyrics continue with a clear reference to the "Epistemologies of the South" of professor Boaventura de Sousa Santos: "And there in the middle of the Tagus / Under the blue sky / She realized that christ / Had turned his back on the south". The woman of the ferry boat "is just one more Black woman / Just one more emigrant / Cleaning woman / Just one more who from afar sees the imperial magnificence / Of the so-called terreiro de paço of the capital Lisbon."[120]

Throughout the song the narration is descriptive, detailed and moving. It is characterized by strong realism and by subversion of the collective imagination and involves a revival of themes and classical verses dear to Portuguese culture (the boat, the sea, the symbols of the empire, religion) from a critical perspective that points at its limits. This song, once again, reveals Capicua's perception of contemporary society and her effort and determination to eradicate the identity and cultural stereotypes which condition so much the view of contemporary Portuguese reality and hinder the resolution of problems associated to them. At the same time, she responds to the exploitation that women are forced to endure as the condemnation of the abuses comes directly from an assertive female voice which is loud and clear.

In the line of the considerations made in Chapter 2, I consider that Capicua works as a good example of the interconnection between rap and protest songs: although there are more aggressive rappers whose messages of protest involve firmer and more affirmative approaches, I believe that this artist from Oporto managed to join tradition and innovation, respecting the old intentions of the April Singers while touching the issues of current times. Hence, I would like to reinforce the idea that despite rap and protest songs being incomparable at first sight because they belong to different periods of the political and cultural history of Portugal, they do have common elements, the most important being that both are powerful symbolic tools by which values and messages are transmitted, translating views and perceptions of the world that move away from the preestablished patterns and from the value systems sponsored by the establishment. Their firm aim is to provoke change, and encourage social and political action. On this basis, I believe that rap in Portugal is part of a movement of aesthetic, stylistic and thematic revival of popular songs that originated with protest songs and that women are a decisive part of this movement. They continue a tradition of composing lyrics and music in a urban context, but especially they reinforces the ideological, creative and political autonomy of protesting through songs.

[120] "E ali no meio do Tejo / Debaixo do céu azul / Deu conta que até cristo / Virou as costas ao sul"; "é só mais uma preta / Só mais uma emigrante / Empregada da limpeza / Só mais uma que de longe vê a imponência imperial / Do tal terreiro do paço da Lisboa capital." (Capicua 2014)

3.8 A closer look into Eva Rapdiva's successful career in rap between Portugal and Angola

The African region has seen the highest growth among businesses run by women in recent years. According to the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), the 2016/2017 Women's Report released in September 2017, women's entrepreneurial activity has been experiencing a global 10% increase: Sub-Saharan Africa leads with the overall highest female entrepreneurship rates. In addition to this, according to the report, "across all 74 economies, women entrepreneurs have a 5% greater likelihood of innovativeness than men" (GEM 2017). However, the World Economic Forum reminds us that "today, the Global Gender Gap score stands at 68%. This means that, on average, there is still a 32% gap to close" (World Economic Forum 2018).

In this positive scenario, businesses run by women still face severe constraints. In some measure, I believe that this comes as a consequence of structural, socio-cultural inequalities that facilitate men and that end up undermining women in the search for credit and in the access to education, for instance. Cultural norms, in fact, often make it more complicate for women to build business network or to have access to the market, inside and outside Africa.

Despite the fact that women make up the majority of the world's poor, in the African region their participation as entrepreneurs in the informal sector and their increasingly full economic participation is being recognized as a factor of growth. As Boateng explains, "the roots of African female entrepreneurship predate colonization, which resulted in gendering of work and women's marginalization from the mainstream economy" (Boateng 2018, 3). Hence, in today's post-independence era, women's businesses represent true efforts in the fight to bring Black women into the mainstream, especially in the African region. As a matter of fact, "Africa is the only region in the world where more women than men choose to become entrepreneurs" and "policies that foster gender equality would have a tremendous impact on its growth" (Gaye 2018). Thus, the fact that as entrepreneurs women tend to be restricted to sectors that have been traditionally female is not to be considered linked to their lack of skills but most likely to a lack of information.

Agreeing with Meyers (2002), I also believe that another crucial factor in the process of affirmation of women's agency is their owning, and our understanding, of self-determination: "self-determination […] is best understood as an ongoing process of exercising a repertoire of agentic skills — skills that enable individuals to construct their own self-portraits and self-narratives and that thereby enable them to take charge of their lives" (Meyers 2002, 4). The reconceptualization of self-determination has led to the development of the "feminist voice theory" (Meyers 2002). The theory draws upon the idea that, to women, both speaking one's own voice and leading one's own life become priceless, and this is because most of the time their experiences are represented

according to culturally rooted narratives and conventions that dislocate them and offer distorted versions of them. Again, as Meyers explains: "what motivates feminist voice theory is the fact that women are systematically denied the opportunity to discover themselves for themselves, to interpret themselves as they think fit, and to live their lives according to their own lights" (16). Thus, understanding and promoting women's self-determination contributes to expand their agency and empowerment, while it also reveals how socio-cultural inequalities inhibit women's skills. Following on from these considerations, I believe that rap made by women cooperates to the building of a space where female agents can speak for themselves and build a space of emancipation and mutual empowerment, while also proving their entrepreneurial skills.

As far as global rap is concerned, in fact, throughout history Black women have constantly and consistently given their contributions and made efforts to build their own careers, overcoming social and cultural constraints. Becoming a rapper most of the time means being determined to achieve space and recognition in a male dominated field where women suffer of minor representation, while also having to overcome the prejudice suffered for not carrying out traditional female roles. Furthermore, women in rap also struggle against objectification and marginalization: in terms of lyrical and image production, they are frequently depicted as mere sexual bodies to the mercy of men's desire and power, while in terms of music production they are often relegated to background roles, that is, to singing in choruses.

With regard to this, Morgan (2004) considers that Black women have become almost invisible within rap and Hunter (2011) argues that their objectification within rap is due to white consumers. In fact, this faith is particularly evident when we observe the careers of female artists coming from post-colonial countries, where not only the public, but more importantly the institutions, are still anchored to a questionable and controversial past. Yet, the works and achievements by Black women in rap are fundamental proofs not only of women's entrepreneurial abilities but also of the urge to build a space where they can give voice to their experiences (Rose 1994).

Hence, especially in rap, women's contribution and participation is more than a musical matter: it's also about resistance against a wide range of dominant discourses. As a woman, and particularly a Black woman, achieving a career in rap has a deeper meaning: it means overcoming historical and socio-cultural barriers, while making a political statement and contributing to the feminist and womanist cause. With the regards to this, Isoke (2013) explains how hip hop as a whole works as "a source of empowerment for women of color" since "through hip hop women are able to boldly and unapologetically lay claim to the male dominated public sphere" (Isoke 2013,

122). Moreover, Chepp (2015) argues that female MCs use irreverence to claim respectability. With her words.

> cultural subjects create this alternative space in part by rejecting culturally imposed hegemonic norms around what constitutes respectable culture; I suggest they do this by strategically appealing to a 'politics of irreverence' (Chepp 2015, 209).

Bearing in mind these considerations, I believe that Angolan rapper Eva Rapdiva suits perfectly the scenario described above. Her works, and more in general her successful career, showcase the extent to which Black women in rap own their space and build their own unapologetic narratives, while also proving that, as entrepreneurs, they achieve independent positions of power. Today, in fact, Eva Rapdiva is considered "the Queen" of Angolan rap, this being also confirmed by her win as best female rapper at the Angolan Music Awards in 2016, 2017 and 2018.

Eva Marise Cruzeiro Alexandre, this her birth name, began freestyling in the early 2000s, at the age of 12, at the Fernando Namora school in Brandoa, in the outskirts of Lisbon. As she often claims, Portugal is definitely her birthplace as a rapper, and artists such as Boss AC, Black Company, Da Weasel, Valete and Sam The Kid, for instance, are still among her core references. As she explains to Rita Sousa Vieira:

> I started listening to rap in the Tagus' South Bank [Margem Sul], in Arrentela, where I lived back then. Black Company, Boss AC… I took in a lot of rap made in the South Bank too, Chullage and so on. But when I was 11/12 years old I moved to Lisbon, to the Sintra Line. Benfica, let's say. And I started going to school in Amadora. There were a lot of MCs and freestyle circles at my school. We also had them in the South Bank but Amadora was where I emerged and I decided that this was exactly what I wanted to do, and where I felt hip hop's energy (Vieira 2018).[121]

In Lisbon, then, Eva began participating to rap freestyle battles, and later events, mainly with Bob Da Rage Sense and Sir Scratch. As she recalls during an interview to the Angolan YouTube channel *2 Contra 1* [2 Against 1] released in May 2018:

> I know that the only thing that matters to people are recorded songs, but I have a whole life in hip hop and rap, with Bob and Scratch for instance, that could result in ten albums. It's those freestyles we made. When Bob had a show in Porto

[121] Original: "Eu comecei a ouvir rap na margem sul, na Arrentela, onde vivia na altura. Black Company, Boss AC... Bebi muito também do rap da margem sul, Chullage e por aí adiante. Só que aos 11/12 anos mudei-me para Lisboa, para a linha de Sintra. Benfica, vá. E começo a estudar na Amadora, onde, na minha escola, havia muitos MCs e rodas de freestyle. Na margem sul também havia, mas onde me afirmei e decidi que era mesmo isto o que queria e onde senti aquela energia do hip-hop e do rap foi na Amadora." Full interview is available at https://24.sapo.pt/vida/artigos/eva-rap-diva-angola-e-a-casa-pela-qual-tenho-de-lutar-portugal-e-a-casa-onde-tenho-paz

we all went, we stepped on stage, we sang and rhymed. It was the same with Scratch. […] We always made music together (2 Contra 1 2018).[122]

Eva's skills as a freestyle rapper soon led her to build a name for herself within the Portuguese scene, quickly achieving a strong following - especially on YouTube – thanks to her straightforwardness, her drive and decisiveness. Despite the numerous invitations, during a long time Eva refused to record songs, often arguing that, if recorded, her rhymes would lose their authenticity and genuineness and basically what distinguishes her as an MC: her spontaneity. However, she was still featured in Ryhmann's first album in 2006, while in 2008 she took part to Sam the Kid's reedition of *Pratica(mente)*, joining Ruky and Daddy'o'Pop in the track "O Beat matou-me"; in 2009 she also recorded a track as part of Bob Da Rage Sense and Sir Scratch's mixtape, *Incendiários* [Incendiaries], a compilation that also features the well-known Portuguese rapper Capicua.

In this regard, the friendship between Eva Rapdiva and Capicua dates back the early 2000s and has resulted in several collaborations. Among these, the track "Feias, Porcas e Más" [Ugly, Dirty and Bad] with singer Tamin and rapper M7, featured in Capicua's second mixtape *Capicua Goes West* (2013): here, the three rappers alternatively make a statement about their place in the rap scene, each praising their skills and toughness as true MCs, while Tamin sings the chorus recalling the song's title. Moreover, in 2018 Eva performed alongside Capicua, Tamin, M7, Blaya, Marta Ren, Ana Bacalhau and Dj One, or in other words the Guerrilha Cor de Rosa [Pink Guerrilla Army], and contended the victory of the Redbull Music Culture Clash against three other crews. The contest took place in Lisbon, at the Coliseu dos Recreios, on March 2, 2018, in the shape of a battle inspired by Jamaica's famous "sound clashes": each round saw different crews contending the public's support and response; the "Pink" crew won the second round, but did not manage to win of the whole contest. In addition to this, and as another proof of the long-lasting friendship and professional respect between the two rappers, Eva Rapdiva will also be featured in Capicua's next album, to be released later this year.

As far as her work as a solo artist is concerned, as I said, it took some time before this Angolan "Queen" surrendered and opted to record her own album. Until 2014, in fact, Eva Rapdiva counted several collaborations and was already performing on stage either in Portugal or Angola (where her work was already being positively received) but did not have a record in her name. In

122 Original: "Eu sei que para as pessoas a única coisa que importa são as músicas gravadas, mas eu tenho uma vida de hip hop e de rap, por exemplo com o Bob e com o Scratch, que dava dez discografias. Que é aqueles freestyles que a gente fazia. O Bob tinha um show lá em Portugal, no Porto, íamos todos, subíamos todos ao palco, cantávamos, rimávamos. O Scratch é mesma coisa. [...] Nós sempre fizemos músicas juntos." The full interview is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=06HKI90pnnY

this sense, her decision to move to Angola was a fundamental step forward for her career: carrying with her a ten-years background of experience in making rap in Portugal, Eva moved to Luanda in 2011 where she started working as a speaker in the radio program *Beatbox*, broadcasted on Radio Luanda, and later after, as a fulltime rapper.

The year of 2014, in fact, sees the release of her first solo album, *Rainha Nzinga do Rap* [Njinga Queen of Rap; Mad Tapes] an independent work where she gives voice and musical shape to her position as a woman, a rapper, a feminist activist, and as a true "Queen Mother", borrowing the expression from Cheryl L. Keyes (2004). As the title of the album suggests by referring to the 17th century fierce anticolonial warrior Queen Ana Nzinga, Eva Rapdiva fits into the definition given by Keyes of "female rappers who view themselves as African centered icons" and whose "rhymes embrace Black female empowerment and spirituality, making clear their self-identification as African, woman, warrior, priestess, and queen" (Keyes 2004, 266). Throughout the album, the Angolan rapper reiterates a message of self-affirmation and self-determination, calling for respect and gender equality in rap. This becomes particularly evident in the song "Rimas na cara do brada" and in the bonus track "Fuba": both tracks feature Angolan female rappers Kris MC, G'Pamella and Níria, while the latter also features Girinha. In both songs, all rappers showcase their lyrical skills while fiercely attacking and belittling their male peers. Self-assertion is also at the base of the closing song "Rainha Nzinga do rap", where Eva Rapdiva tells her story and builds her own, royal roots. This album, that was produced in an independent manner, represented a decisive turn in her career and a major success, as she explains to Marina Martins:

> The path has been difficult. […] The release of my album in Angola was a success, we sold a lot of copies, something that no other female rapper and very few male rappers achieved. I went to 13 out of Angola's 18 provinces, which is pretty difficult without a large facility, without sponsorship, without working with a big record label. An independent artist had never done this kind of tour. And we managed to do it (Marques 2018).[123]

Following the great success of her first solo album, and while dividing her career between Portugal and Angola, in 2018 Eva releases her second album, *Eva* (STEP), an homonymous work dedicated to her grandmother. The album is filled with collaborations (Gari Sinedima, Landrick, Reptail, Selda and Vuivui for instance) and shows how the rapper is opening her sound and taste to different genres, such as kizomba for instance. In Portugal, the album was released with a bonus track, "Lady

[123] Original: "O percurso tem sido difícil [...]. O lançamento do meu álbum em Angola foi um sucesso, vendemos muitas cópias, o que nenhuma rapper mulher e poucos rappers homens conseguiram. Passei por 13 das 18 províncias de Angola, o que é muito difícil sem uma grande estrutura, sem um patrocínio, sem estar numa grande editora. Um artista independente jamais faz este tipo de circuito lá. Nós conseguimos fazer."

Boss", a nickname and a statement of her central role in managing her career. As she explains in *2 Contra 1* when asked about her relationship with the label STEP:

> I am the kind of person who, in her career, in her work, in everything that involves my career, has to be present, I have to be in charge, I have to manage it, I have to direct it. And this is not negotiable. […] I depend on that. Therefore, I have I have to be aware of everything. […] Actually, in terms of management I was always the one taking care of it. […] With regard to the bookings, I have Always managed most of the dates (2 Contra 1 2018).[124]

Since the end of her contract in April 2018, Eva is working as an independent artist: today she owns her own recording studio and has a solid team around her. The sequence of empowering messages closed by "Lady Boss" – where she also aims at motivating other women in embracing their ambitions without bending to people's jealousies – starts right at the beginning of the album with the song "Outra espécie" [Another kind]: here, Eva underlines how she embodies "another kind of rapper," highlighting her uniqueness and self-proclaiming her successes and power, while also stating that "rap made by women has never been so good" [o rap femenino nunca esteve tão good] and inviting other women to "forget what they say, you can be what you want" [esquece aquilo que eles dizem, podes ser o que quiseres]. Following this, in "Beleza não é tudo" [Beauty is not all] she also retrieves the invitations: to choose self-determination and self-definition, staying away from men-centered stereotypes of femininity and power.

With her latest work, Eva Rapdiva confirmed herself as a dissident voice within the national and international music industry, being acknowledged by the public inside and outside Angola, all around the Lusophone world. Today, with almost 500 thousand followers on Instagram and more than a thousand monthly listeners on Spotify, this "feminist, activist, radio host, entrepreneur and rapper" – as her profile states – is also a leading voice in claiming space, visibility and recognition for Black women, especially in the Portuguese-speaking world. As a business owner and a business manager, Eva Rapdiva has achieved a central space in Angolan mainstream culture, with countless successes and collaborations, her recent one being a partnership with *Sumol* - a Portuguese brand that sells soft drinks worldwide – , where her both her face and her empowering lyrics are featured on the cans of their drinks. Thanks to her smart entrepreneurial moves and wise, open view, Eva's messages, her works and her story, are increasingly reaching a wider public and consecrating her as the queen that she is and as a true example of female empowerment and emancipation within the Lusophone world.

124 Original: "Eu sou uma pessoa que na minha carreira, no meu trabalho, tudo o que envolve a minha carreira, eu tenho que estar presente, eu tenho que mandar, eu tenho que gerir, eu tenho que direcionar. E isso não é negociável. [...] Eu dependo daquilo. Então eu tenho de estar a par e passo sobre tudo. [...] A nível de management na verdade fui sempre eu que fui fazendo. [...] No que toca o booking, a maior parte das datas também sempre fui eu que fui gerindo."

3.9 Breaking boundaries, challenging modernity, building revolutions: rap in Portugal and its new generation of female voices

Over the past four decades, hip hop has evolved and grown from a local phenomenon that gave voice to the U.S-born Blacks and first and second-generation Latinos and Latinas, to an international multimillion institution that shocked and changed the music and entertainment industry. As a cultural and artistic phenomenon, it has reached youths all around the world. Despite starting as a party-based practice, hip hop managed to evolve into a proper art form, becoming the direct expression of the social, economic, political and cultural realities and conditions of those who were marginalized and oppressed. Its performative elements and peculiar style provided the young generations with the means and methods of expression that thrived on social commentary, political critique, religious exegesis and street awareness and fight against racial prejudice, cultural persecution and gender disparities, among many others.

As a result of both its longevity, its innovativeness and its compelling messages, it is a shared opinion that hip hop culture cannot be discarded as just an ephemeral trend, folk art or a youth movement that soon will come to an end. Instead, L. Phillips, K. Reddick-Morgan and D. P. Stephens describe hip hop today as "the new global cultural dominant" (Phillips, Reddick-Morgan & Stephens 2005, 253). Therefore, one must observe it as a cultural, political, economic and intellectual phenomenon similar to previous artistic, cultural and political movements. Moreover, it can be considered a platform that allows these movements to continue their ideological battle for more awareness and their work towards the building of change. Nevertheless, as a cultural manifestation hip hop presents its own contradictions and disparities, as well as its own internal tensions. When it comes to women's participation and visibility and their struggle for recognition, these strains seem to remember some of the profound discrepancies built throughout modernity. Hence, their observation allows us to expose and discuss not only the role played by women within this culture but also their exposure to history and society.

Women have been essential to the building and evolution of hip hop culture, particularly when it comes to rap music. However, critical analyses and historical accounts of the phenomenon have always tended to minimize their contributions, also disseminating a sexist view of both rap and hip hop, as well as reinforcing the masculinist discursive strand that runs through them. In the present section, I focus precisely on how women's role in rap can challenge modernity and its patriarchal and sexist stratification. Moreover, I aim at showing how their role has been pivotal as performers, as well as producers, and how academic research has helped to break the boundaries of a narrative that tends to neglect their inputs. Finally, I would like to focus on the evolution of

female rap in Portugal, presenting a new generation of female rappers who is slowly conquering its space and building its own revolution.

Despite its massive growth - on a performative as well as a media level -, the attention given to women rappers is uneven when compared to the one drawn towards men. Interestingly, this lack of space doesn't correspond to a real lack of participation of women in the building and spreading of the culture. Instead, this unpleasant situation can be explained by referring to the intricate relations of dominations and power between genders that take place within modern society and culture.

Male hegemony represents the perfect example of a paradoxical submission, which is itself the result of what he calls "symbolic violence":

> the mild, subtle violence, invisible to the eyes of its victims that is carried out essentially through the purely symbolic ways of communication and knowledge, or, more precisely, of the lack of knowledge, of recognition and, ultimately, of emotion" (Bourdieu, 2002, 2-3).

As I have mentioned before (see Chapter 1), Bourdieu's study reflects on the importance of symbolic violence as a "modern" means of domination, and this helps explain why some women surprisingly adopt, incorporate and reproduce the dominant point of view without questioning it or transgressing it. However, when it comes to hip hop culture, if on the one hand this lack of information confirms Bourdieu's intuition on symbolic violence suffered by women, on the other hand, the role played by women particularly in rap, challenges it and allows us to discuss modernity from a different point of view. By owning their voice and participating of the cultural production in this field, female artists and producers actually do not indulge nor obey to this world's pre-set order of domination, allowing us also to consider new paradigms of gender relations, new references for contemporary "hybrid cultures" (Canclini 1995).

As with many other artistic and cultural manifestations, the dominant discourse within hip hop culture tends to minimize the importance of women, presenting them as mere accessories or ornaments to men's activity. As sexism and misogyny are primarily extensions of the normative patriarchal privilege, Mark Anthony Neal states that the marginalization of women within hip hop culture can be partially explained with the embrace of these privileges by some men,

> particularly when those women don't conform to the normative roles assigned to women within hip-hop (the chicken-head groupie, oversexualized rhyme-spitter, baggy clothed desexualized mic-fiend are prime examples)

(Neal, 2004, 247).

The fact that women can challenge this order and consequently threaten men's domination triggers what can be considered an unconscious reaction in men to keep their domain intact. The need to downgrade women and set their space underneath a "man's shadow" corresponds to the effort to preserve the state of things as they are. However, most women rappers do not identify with these dynamics and actually challenge with their work most of the issues that characterize this culture as predominantly masculine and misogynist. First of all, according to Keyes' study, many female rappers do not identify with the categories mentioned above, and they have introduced their own ones: "in the female rap tradition, four distinct categories of women rappers emerge in rap music performance: "Queen Mother," "Fly Girl," "Sista with Attitude," and "Lesbian"" (Keyes 2004, 266). Artists can shift between these categories or belong to more than one simultaneously; moreover, each category is considered being representative of African American female identity in contemporary urban culture. Although this division can be applied mainly to U.S.-based artists, it still shows the effort that women put in creating their space of recognition away from men's domain. By moving beyond the shadows of male rappers and creating their own references based on their skills and musical style, women are increasingly distancing themselves from the stereotypes about females as artists in a male-dominated world.

Then, their effort in challenging traditional values and relations can also be observed in women's discursive strands. L. Phillips, K. Reddick-Morgan and P. Stephens identify three central themes that "serve to highlight women's dual oppositionality within Hip-Hop culture" (Phillips, Reddick-Morgan and Stephens 2005, 261). And these are: talking back to men against sexist assaults and demanding respect for themselves, empowering women through self-help and solidarity with one another, and, finally, defending black men against larger, mainstream society.

If the first theme aims at engaging the classic feminist topic of fighting patriarchy, the second one focuses on solidarity between women in the struggle against the disempowering messages of the dominant discourse. Finally, the third theme shows how female rappers can challenge not only the traditional foundation of modernity but also the conventional view of feminism: by expressing solidarity and alliance with black men they demonstrate "a complex [...] political consciousness and exercise their oppositionality to mainstream racism, classism and raced sexisms that affects both men and women in the community" (269). Hence, female rappers are crucial to the building of new foundations for the relations between genders, since they offer a

revolutionary perspective on a possible shared struggle between men and women. In other words, they work to unify through a common goal, providing once more an inspirational point of view.

Belittling women is indeed part of hip hop's dominant discourse just as it is part of society and modernity, both interpreted as a set of culturally-given relations that need to be seen as arbitrary and need to be continuously discussed. However, these few, general examples offer an insight of how female rappers themselves fight against a pre-set order that tends to banish their presence and silence their voice. Researchers and academics also challenge these normalizing forces to build an alternative narrative that recognizes women's participation in hip hop culture and their role as peers alongside male rappers. Thanks to the efforts of scholars such as Tricia Rose (1994), Nancy Guevara (1996), Joan Morgan (2004), Patricia Hill Collins (2006), among others, female voices receive visibility, and attention is drawn to their works, creating more awareness with regards to their double struggle: that of being women and that of being Black. In this sense, academics and performers work together towards the breaking of old cultural boundaries that, again, tend to put women in a subaltern position.

Tricia Rose (1994) identifies three central themes that predominate the works of black female rappers: "heterosexual courtship, the importance of the female voice, and mastery in women's rap and black female public display of physical and sexual freedom" (1994, 147). These themes are contextualized both in dialogue with male rappers and in dialogue with broader social discourses, including feminism. From a very different perspective, Joan Morgan's collection of personal essays, *When Chickenheads Come Home to Roost: My Life as A Hip Hop Feminist* (1999), is significant because it is written for a non-academic audience and it exposes some of the contradictions met by African-American women as well as those whose histories have been shaped by racial oppression. According to Patricia Hill Collins, Morgan's renewed focus on "personal is political" represents "a striking feature of the feminist politics expressed by the African-American women in the hip-hop generation" (2006, 162). Morgan, in fact, refers to herself as a "Hip-Hop Feminist", and stresses the need for

> a feminism committed to "keeping it real." We need a voice like our music—one that samples and layers many voices, injects its sensibilities into the old and flips it into something new, provocative, and powerful. [...] We need a feminism that possesses the same fundamental understanding held by any true student of hip-hop. Truth can't be found in the voice of anyone rapper but in the juxtaposition of many. [...] They lie at the magical intersection where those contrary voices meet—the juncture where "truth" is no longer black and white but subtle, intriguing shades of grey (Morgan 2004, 281).

Furthermore, Nancy Guevara offers examples of women's contributions in all elements of hip hop culture, proving that "women elaborate styles and subjects of their own that often are very different from those of the men" (Guevara 1996, 59). The presence and active participation of women in hip hop culture extend and deepen the political significance of the culture itself since they break the boundaries set by prejudice against racially oppressed groups and the Western culture's double standards applied to women artists. Their resistance against the stereotyping images of femininity and female agency, this is, against the media representation of their involvement in hip hop culture only as "cheerleaders, bystanders and exotic outsiders", is probably their most radical contribution to the building of new forms of revolution.

Interestingly, many articles addressing women's exclusion in rap have been written by women and offer feminist analyses of women's contributions to hip hop culture (Rose, 1994). In this sense, they break another boundary, that of women's contributions in the academic arena. Moreover, the fact that women work together (both in art and research) towards a common goal proves how powerful their joint effort can be in deconstructing stereotypes and offering new, less restrictive images of women's participation in cultural production.

Even if women rappers represent a minority both in the USA and in Portugal, their presence in hip hop can be found since its early ages. However, women MC's have always been seen as novelty acts. In fact, women have been rapping since 1976 thanks to Sharon Jackson's (aka Sha-Rock) appearances in DJ Kool Herc's parties, who then joined the group Funky 4+1. The first all-women crew, the Mercedes Ladies, was formed in the South Bronx in 1977 and it was composed by two DJs and four MCs. In 1978, Paulette Tee and Sweet Tee released the single "Vicious Rap" and became the first women to rap on a record, and when rap went largely commercial, approximately between 1978 and 1986, "more than sixty records featuring over thirty female MCs or DJs were released" (Phillips et al. 2005, 255).

In this sense, I would like to underline that women's presence within hip hop culture came under different roles. Particularly relevant is their contribution as music producers. In fact, rap's first global hit song, "Rapper's Delight" (1979) was produced by Sugar Hill Records, a label owned by former R&B artist Sylvia Robinson, whose intuition was crucial to the global spreading of the whole culture. Another woman, Debbie Harry of the new wave group Blondie, was responsible for the single "Rapture" (1981), a song that paid homage to New York's rap scene and reached the top of the charts worldwide. She can also be considered an example of early white rap. In 1985, Salt-n-Pepa made their first appearance under the name *Supernature*. Two years later, their album *A Salt with a Deadly Pepa* became the first gold record by a female rap group, and today they are

considered the first female rap superstars. Around 1990, a proliferation of female rappers began to make a strong appearance in the market. Among these, special mention goes to Queen Latifah's *All Hail the Queen* (1989), Missy Elliot's album *Supa Dupa Fly* (1997) and Lauryn Hill's solo record *The Miseducations of Lauryn Hill* (1998). This latter work, in particular, is considered being a turning point in the history and evolution of female rap: it was nominated for ten Grammy Awards and won five. According to Norfleet, "Elliot's and Hill's success in diversified realms of hip-hop may indicate the beginning steps of the normalization of female voices in the male-dominated genre of rap music" (Norfleet 2001, 697). However, as we've been saying throughout our work, a real normalization has never taken place entirely, and efforts still need to be made to challenge a pre-existing order that the tends to annihilate women's presence and value.

When observing Portuguese rap, a similar lack of visibility can be registered with regards to women. Wivian Weller (2005) attempts to explaining this situation through the little attention given by the field of Feminist Studies to those cultural practices typical of adolescence and youth, underlining the importance of filling this gap in order not only to understand the future of Feminism, but also to change the analytical perspectives and the understanding of youth in general. As Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie reminds us, talking about gender is not easy, and the main issue with it is that it establishes the way we should be instead of acknowledging the way we are (Adichie 2015). In fact, we have to bear in mind that gender and culture are built in an interactive and circumstantial way, and people have the power to intervene in this signifying process: "Culture doesn't build people. People build culture" (Adichie 2015, 39). In this sense, everybody's effort is crucial and necessary to the renewal of gender as a defining category both in youth and in adult production.

The sub-representation of women within rap in Portugal affects all three generation of female rappers, this is, from its early ages in the mid-1980s up to today. According to researcher Soraia Simões (2017), an historical discontinuity determines the perception of the presence of women within rap in Portugal, and this leads to the deceptive, yet common opinion that their participation in rap music starts in the 21STI century with rapper Capicua (whose major visibility among the media can be seen as an attempt by mainstream culture to maintain its order). In disagreement with this misperception, Simões (2017) refers that during her field research among the first generation of rappers, she came in contact with numerous records of women's presence and participation in hip hop culture in Portugal. Furthermore, Simões points at the pivotal role played by female groups such as Djamal and Divine, who both managed to record their works and attempted at building a career as artists. Still, despite their efforts, this first generation of afro-descendant, female artists ended up abandoning the path of music and rap (see section 3.3 of this chapter).

The second generation of female rappers, which finds in rapper Telma TVon and Dama Bete probably its leading figures, also seems to have suffered a similar treatment among the media and the culture itself, and many artists refer to the demotivating effects of continually having to battle for the building of their own space. Efforts in this sense can be seen in Dama Bete's project Hip Hop Ladies, an attempt of building a community of female rappers to unite and empower women artists, and TVon's supervision, alongside DJ Cruzfader, of the album *Raparigas na Voz do Soul* (2000) - see section 3.4. As I explained before, this latter project aimed at collecting the works of various female artists coming from rap and soul music. However, during the interview I had with DJ Cruzfader in Lisbon in December 2017, he attributes the failure in opening a real path for these women after the record to the women themselves, by stating that they weren't persistent in the promotion of their work. In my opinion, this perspective is strongly masculinist and does not reflect the actual struggle suffered by women in music or culture in general. However, a new generation of artists is paving its way into the market and the media. Particularly relevant in this sense are rapper Mynda Guevara's works, which focus mainly on female empowerment and aim at building awareness around delicate themes such as domestic violence and women's struggles.

Through a constant effort in self-promotion (she frequently reinforces the idea that she finances her own work), Mynda is building her revolution. Conscious about this, after starting her career a solo, she changed her name in Mynda Guevara, inspired by the Argentine Marxist revolutionary figure of Ernesto "Che" Guevara. Mynda's lyrics acknowledge women's fight for recognition with rap. Her first track, *Mudjer na Rap Krioulo* (2014), is precisely a manifesto and a statement of her intents: "I wanted to remind people that there are women who rap and that rap doesn't have a gender" (Duarte, 2018). Having found her inspiration in the works of female artists such as Lauryn Hill, Young M.A., IAMDDB e Paigey Cakey, Guevara's intention is to motivate women in owning their voice as rappers and her lyrics center precisely on women's power. However, she acknowledges that the presence of women is still considered being "unnatural" within the rap scene and that this is still an example of macho culture. Also, the results in self-promoting her tracks through music videos and among platforms such as YouTube and Instagram show how the music industry is also being revolutionized by a new generation of performers who operate towards more democratic visibility of their products and do not obey to the strict rules of the market.

All works by Mynda Guevara feature lyrics in Cape Verdean Creole, a choice that seems to challenge a whole ideological system, familiar to the well-known Portuguese cultural scenario of racial exclusion and homogenization. In conclusion, I would like to remember that, in Portugal, giving recognition to the contributions and to the presence of women rappers - who are also mainly

of African origins and for this, victims of a double marginalization – forces to face deeper issues, social and historical wounds that are connected to the colonial past, the implied yet not acknowledged racism of its mainstream culture and, obviously, the intrinsic and naturalized masculine domination that rules its dynamics of legitimation.

3.10 Towards a more democratic representation of women: Portugal's female rappers through the voice of Mynda Guevara

Democracy, by definition, is a political system where all citizens participate equally and are equal before the law. The term appeared for the first time in the political and philosophical thought developed in Athens, Greece, during classical antiquity - this is, between the VIII century BD and the V century AC. What is considered to be the world's first democracy (or at least the best documented one), in fact, dates 508-507 BC and took place in Athens, having its leading figure in Cleisthenes. Yet, despite its etymology, participation was not open to all residents: to vote, one had to be and adult, male citizen whose rights were not under suspension (this means, who had paid his debts to the city). In this perspective, the population excluded from any decision-making process included foreign residents ("metics"), slaves, freed slaves, children and women.

With regard to these latter ones, they had few rights in comparison to male citizens. Being unable to vote, as well as own or inherit land, apparently their place was at home and their role was to raise children. Moreover, female babies were at a much higher risk of being abandoned at birth by their parents than male offspring, and the education of girls was particularly oriented towards dancing, music and gymnastics, having its ultimate goal in preparing them for their life as mothers and house keepers, more than as intellectuals. Furthermore, one should remember that the (little) information available on the role played by women in the ancient Greek society has been produced almost entirely by male authors.

In this unbalanced scenario, yet, some exceptional personalities managed to rise above limitations and gain long-lasting acclamation, becoming true examples of women's power of emancipation: poet Sappho of Lesbos, leader Aspasia of Athens or philosopher Arete of Cyrene are just a few examples of women's ability to fight social and cultural marginalization and become leading figures. Women were also greatly represented within Greek religion and mythology: a surprisingly strong cast of female characters enlivens myths, legends and foundational tales where the feminine becomes synonymous of intelligence, courage, honor (Athena), fertility (Demeter,

Persephone) on one side, as well as emotion, passion and intricacy, mainly when moved by jealousy (Hera; Aphrodite) on the other hand.

Myths, as cultural narratives, are used to impart cohesion, linearity and consistency to a culture's logic and to validate people's existences. Through the lens of patriarchal logic, though, they become timeless cultural narratives that disclose what can somehow be considered the cultural archetypes of femininity. They are often used to reinforce a stereotyped imaginary. However, as Renato Nogueira cleverly proves, female mythological figures and heroines are also exemplary in terms of emancipation, independence and empowerment:

> Godesses are the collective representation of the past that portray human ambiguities and disputes experienced by women in different social and cultural contexts, but that still very actual (Nogueira 2017, 16).[125]

In Nogueira's perspective, the female figures can help to better understand life, the world and mankind as a whole. In other words, for once, women can be used as examples that work for everybody, avoiding the well-known sexism that frequently characterize Western languages and cultures. However, despite this interesting and useful analysis, I do not aim at discussing female representations in the past nor I aim at debating on ancient democracies. I do believe, though, that understanding our cultural heritage is fundamental to the comprehension of our present, hence this brief introduction: to offer a short insight on the limits of democracy when it comes to women's integration and participation since ancient times.

Indeed, thanks to the efforts and perseverance, and the joint forces of activists, scholars and artists, the recognition of women as social, political and cultural actors in Western, modern democratic societies has overcome some of the above-mentioned limitations. Boundaries have been broken and women are definitely more emancipated than in the past. However, to a less optimistic, probably more realistic eye, women still struggle for recognition, basic civil rights and equality, and much more is needed in order to achieve a democratic representation of people despite their gender within contemporary Western societies and cultures.

The observation of the intricate dynamics of legitimation and the internal tensions that mark hip hop culture, and more specifically rap, can be useful to discuss women's place in today's world. As a result of both its longevity, its innovativeness and its compelling messages, it is a shared opinion that hip hop culture cannot be discarded as just an ephemeral trend, folk art or a youth movement.

125 Original: "As deusas são representações coletivas do passado que retratam as ambiguidades e disputas humanas protagonizadas pelas mulheres em contextos sociais e culturais diferentes, mas que se mantêm atuais"

Yet, despite its massive growth, the attention and regard given to women rappers is uneven when compared to the one drawn towards men. This lack of space doesn't correspond to a real lack of participation of women in the building and spreading of the culture. Even if the number of women rappers who achieve success is smaller than men, both in the USA and in Portugal, traces of their participation in hip hop can be observed since the early ages of the culture, in both areas. According to The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music "women have been part of hip-hop expression from its early ages, primarily as part of crews such as the Family Four Plus One and Sugar Hill's female group, Sequence" (Norfleet 2001, 696). Yet, women MC's are (still) often seen as novelty acts, occasional phenomena, not as equally impacting as men.

As I have been stressing trough my work, in Portugal the sub-representation of women within rap affects all three generation of female rappers, this is, from its early ages in the mid-1980s up to today. Yet, a new artist is paving its way into the market and the media: Mynda Guevara. A young rapper from Cova da Moura, she embodies a strong, leading figure. Mynda's works focus on female empowerment and aim at building awareness around delicate themes such as domestic violence and the struggle of being a woman within rap. As she reinforced during our conversation in May 2017, she finances her own work and manages it through self-promotion. In fact, her hard work can be observed in the self-promoting of her tracks through music videos on platforms such as YouTube and Instagram, where she has gained a consistent number of followers and fans. This proves what Nancy Guevara has pointed out about women in hip hop culture: that they all express a sharp understanding of

> both the commercial establishment's interest in hip hop and the official opposition to hip hop by the political authorities, as well as the prevalent gender discrimination manifest in the expectations of their male peers and in the omission or distorted portrayal of their role by the media (Guevara 1996, 60).

Having started her career singing refrains for male rappers, she changed her name in Mynda Guevara - inspired by the Argentine Marxist revolutionary figure of Ernesto "Che" Guevara - when she decided to continue as a solo artist and began writing and performing rap in Cape Verdean creole. All works by Mynda Guevara, in fact, feature lyrics in creole, a choice that seems to challenge a whole ideological system and the well-known Portuguese scenario of cultural homogenization through language (Pardue 2015). Despite speaking Portuguese at home, Mynda uses creole because it's the language she hears "in the street" and among her peers.

Guevara found her inspiration in the works of other female artists (such as Lauryn Hill, Young M.A., IAMDDB e Paigey Cakey). Her intention is to motivate women in owning their voice, and her lyrics center precisely on women's empowerment. Her first recorded track, *Mudjer na Rap Krioulo* (2014), is a manifesto and a statement of these intents, while *Magoa silenciosa* (2017) shows her effort in exposing women's struggles in dealing with domestic violence and emotional abuse. Interesting for the purposes of this section, the song *Hey mana* (2016) is a warning for her "sister", to pay attention to men and their intentions ("Abri pestana odja pa bu vida tempo sa ta passa / Ez krê usau manipulau lebau pa dentu di ses casa") and to have respect for herself ("Respeta bu cabeça pa dipoz ez respetau / Firmeza na bu dia a dia ka podi faltau"). It is an exhortation directed to women for them to keep their head high ("Manti cabeça labantadu coragi e fé / Midjores dias ta bem txiga e verdadi mé") and to value their thoughts and principles ("Valoriza bu cabeça undi bus principios"). Mynda reminds her sisters that "better alone than in bad company" ("Sê pô sta mal acompanhada bu ta sta bó só") and that we all need a direction in our life and goals to achieve ("Ranja um rumo na bu vida objetivos pa conquista") in order to avoid becoming victims of any form of manipulation. In order to achieve success a woman needs to have attitude and humbleness ("Ku postura e humildadi bu ta txiga longi") and never lose hope ("Manti sperança um dia bu ta txiga la"). With regard to this, Mynda openly invites her peers to take her path as an example ("Foca na mim observa mó ki mi n'sta hoji").

In *Hey Mana*, Mynda shows a strong spirit of solidarity towards other women, as well as the preoccupation and urge to leave a message to her female peers who may be lost in life. It translates into a powerful encouragement to build a strong self-esteem and resist manipulation through the use of intelligence and determination ("Moral pa riba ka bu cai na tentaçon / Manti di odju vivo , manti ku atençon"). By empowering women through self-help and solidarity with one another, focusing on solidarity between women in the struggle against the disempowering messages of the dominant discourse, Myda's discursive position can be perceived as deeply rooted in feminism. As Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie reminds us, gender is culturally built and it establishes the way we should be instead of acknowledging the way we are (Adichie 2015). In this sense, everybody's effort is crucial and necessary to the renewal of gender as a defining category both in Hip Hop culture and in modern societies. In Portugal, acknowledging the contributions and presence of black women in rap - who are victims of a double marginalisation – forces the cultural establishment to face social and historical wounds, the colonial past, racism, but more importantly the intrinsic and naturalized patriarchal mentality that rules its society and limits it democracy.

CHAPTER 4

HIP HOP CULTURE IN BRAZIL

The present chapter focuses on the emergence of hip hop culture in Brazil and on the different steps that took this practice to the heterogeneous world that it is today. As I did in chapter two, here my aim is also to discuss some of the social, political and cultural elements of the Brazilian panorama that help explaining the power of hip hop's early years in São Paulo. Having made its first steps in the country during the very last years of a dictatorial and highly authoritarian regime, hip hop culture matured into a practice that was strongly connected to politics and social intervention. Since the 1990s, hip hop artists and activists have accompanied the country's politics with vibrant participation. This became patent during the first years of President Lula's government. Today, hip hop and rap are part of Brazil's music industry, proving that the "movement" has gone through deep changes, mainly in terms of media exposure and internal diversification. Here, my considerations come as the result of both some field research I conducted in Brazil between the April 18, and May 25, 2018, and bibliographical analysis. In São Paulo, I had the opportunity to meet King Nino Brown, one of Brazil's first break-dancers and founder of Zulu Nation Brazil, and Toni Carlos Pereira (aka Toni C.), writer and founder of *LiteraRua*, an independent publishing house that focuses mainly on marginal, militant literature and hip hop-related works.

4. 1 Racism in Brazil

Ethnical diversity and cultural hybridism are probably Brazil's most iconic and intriguing aspects; at the same time, they are probably the most challenging ones. On the one hand, they raise doubts about the building of the country's modern identity, uncovering the power strategies that favor white elites - who find themselves represented by it - and stigmatize Black [preto] and Brown [pardo] citizens - normally are excluded from the country's standards; also, Brazil's ethnical and cultural heterogeneity exposes the consequences of two long-lasting, devastating practices, that have ended and today are considered concluded, but still affect the perception and integration of diversity in its many forms: colonization and slavery.

Since the country's independence (1822) and the official abolishment of slavery (1888), Brazilian elites – which are not very different from the colonial ones – have endeavored to build

narratives of inclusion and miscegenation in order to disguise the strong racial prejudice that governs its modern society, politics and cultural legitimation as a whole: Black and Brown, as well as indigenous people are still considered second class citizens and are still struggling for recognition and basic human rights.

As a matter of fact, more than 75 million people of African descent live in Brazil today, making it the second largest Black population in the world. This number is so high because it is intrinsically connected to slavery: in fact, approximately six million Africans were introduced in the country before the end of the slave trade (Ribeiro 1995); behind this dreadful practice there were the Portuguese, who played a central role in the Atlantic slave trade of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries by controlling most of the ports (Angola, Mozambique) and operating a greater number of slave voyages. Brazil probably ended up receiving a majority of African slaves because of its geographical position: its proximity to Africa definitely made it easier for the boats to reach its coast.

Most of these African people were men and were destined first to sugar plantations (1550-1600), later to gold mines (1700-1800), while the majority of African women arriving to the country ended up serving as the maters' concubines, given the lack of white women back then: most of today's so highly praised miscegenation, thus, comes as a consequence of a violent act of domination of the white Portuguese master over the Black female slave.

Brazil's hybrid nature is then deeply enrooted in racial mixing, which finds its origins in colonization and slavery, a practice the country was the last to abolish (with the Lei Áurea, on May 13, 1888); the late abolition, moreover, makes Brazil the last country in the Western world to have taken this fundamental step towards civilization. Nonetheless, Brazil's emblematic hybridity is also a consequence of the intense migration flows of the 1800s of manpower coming from Europe: beginning in the 1820s, in fact, and growing strong in the late century, immigrants came here from central and southern Europe as free workers attracted by the opening of the country's ports (1808), and as consequence of the lack of an economic system, back home, able to respond to an increasing demographic demand. This change in terms of immigration policies (from Africans to Europeans) is also responsible for the shift form a slavery regime towards a capitalist production system, which had started with coffee culture (Levy 1974). By the end of the century, then, landowners, highly in need of labor, began to recruit workers from Europe even more actively, using freelance recruiters, while the government enacted policies to dissuade nonwhite groups from coming to Brazil (such as immigration from Japan, for instance).

The practice of promoting European immigration in South America through national policies at the turn of the 20th century also became known as *whitening* [branqueamento]. The political measures of Brazil's first republic (1888-1889) aimed at diluting the country's "Black blood" in order to solve the "Negro problem" (Skidmore 1974): by increasing the number of white people living in it, Brazilian white, middle-class elites hoped that these would mix with Blacks and diminish the latter's presence in the country. According to Skidmore:

> The beginning of the Republic was dominated by the dogma of "whitening" – the elite's belief that recognized white's "scientific" superiority (as proclaimed among the North American and European scholars) and posited that, in the course of the following century, Brazil would practically "bleach" the non-white element. Alongside that, there was the notion that African, by their very nature (as in arts and Afro-Brazilian religions) was primitive and barbaric (Skidmore 1998: 301).[126]

This specific ideology found its scientific basis on social Darwinism and scientific racism, and consisted of applying both the theory of natural selection and white supremacy to Brazilian society and race, in order to justify the idea that white individuals, with their blood, allowed other ethnicities to evolve and advance, culturally and genetically. Nonetheless, the ideology of whitening exposes how, in today's Brazilian society, race and skin color still determine an individual's social status and interact in regulating social relations.

Yet, the whitening or eugenic theory's supremacy among Brazil's cultural elites, was called into question by the publication, in 1933, of Gilberto Freyre's *Casa-grande & Senzala* [The Masters & the Slaves]. Freyre, who based its postulates on Franz Boas's cultural theory, approached race and racial diversity in Brazil from a very different perspective: arguing that miscegenation was at the basis of country's racial and cultural formation, he advocated that racial mixing was the proof that in Brazil no race was inferior to another. Taking into consideration the different stages of the country's social and cultural evolution, the Brazilian sociologist – who is still praised for his innovative contributions – showed that racial mixing began during the colonial era, with the Portuguese, who had manifested particular empathy towards the indigenous population and a particular propensity towards miscegenation and cultural interpenetration; the Portuguese themselves, in fact, were an hybrid population who had had enduring contacts with other people

126 Original: "O começo da República havia sido dominado pelo dogma do "branqueamento" — uma crença da elite que aceitava a superioridade "científica" dos brancos (conforme pregada nos círculos eruditos dos EUA e da Europa) e supunha que, no decorrer do século seguinte, o Brasil praticamente "alvejaria" o elemento não-branco. Paralelamente a isso havia a concepção de que o africano de per si (como na arte e religião afro-brasileiras) era primitivo e bárbaro."

(such as the Arabs and the Jews). Freyre aimed at demystifying the notion of racial determinism, while suggesting that cultural and environmental factors were more poignant in the building of modern Brazilian society. The relationship between the master and his slaves in the sugarcane plantations was Freyre's model and inspiration when suggesting that Brazil's foundations were miscegenation and cultural hybridity.

Despite the fact that sociologist Gilberto Freyre never openly referred to the existence, in Brazil, of any racial democracy, it had a great impact on the country's image of itself and was considered a key to the understanding of contemporary racial relations. Freyre's studies, not only paved the way for later considerations on the country's unique race relations, but more importantly, set the basis for what will become its public discourse. In fact, since the 1930s Brazilian governments and institutions have drawn upon his theory in order to promote the idea that Brazil is a unified, multiethnic society. Today, in Brazil, the dominant discourse still tends to defend the idea that the country is free from racism and racial discrimination, and such subjects, as a result, have become some sort of taboo: it is still very unpopular to question them. Black citizens still struggle for having basic human rights and they occupy a subaltern space within society, a situation that is not too different from the one they were forced to during colonialism and slavery:

> Treated as a pack animal exhausted by work, as a mere investment destined to produce the maximum profit, [the Black man] coped with very precarious conditions for his survival. Ascending to the condition of free worker, before or after abolition, the Black man found himself yoked to new forms of exploitation that, despite being better than slavery, allowed him to integrate into society and into the cultural world as sub-proletariat compelled into his former role, that continued to be that of a service animal (Ribeiro 1995: 232).[127]

As Darcy Ribeiro explains, Black and Brown people still suffer from various forms of exploitation, and he goes on stating that "this detrital, predominantly Black and Brown humanity, can still be seen today, close to the urban areas, in every large estate area, consisting of seasonal workers, beggars, bricoleurs, servants, blind people, cripples, diseased, crowded in miserable shanties"

[127] Original: "Tratado como besta de carga exaurida no trabalho, na qualidade de mero investimento destinado a produzir o máximo de lucros, enfrentava precaríssimas condições de sobrevivência. Ascendendo à condição de trabalhador livre, antes ou depois da abolição, o negro se via jungido a novas formas de exploração que, embora melhores que a escravidão, só lhe permitiam integrar-se na sociedade e no mundo cultural [...] na condição de um subproletariado compelido ao exercício de seu antigo papel, que continuava sendo principalmente o de animal de serviço."

(233).[128] Despite the fact that Brazil never had formal segregation (unlike the United States), the history of non-white individuals in the country is made of almost five hundred years of slavery and more than one hundred of racial discrimination and underrepresentation. The "romantic" view fostered by the narrative build around the notion of racial democracy does not make any justice to the complexity of racial relations in contemporary Brazil, and their impact on underprivileged groups. Also, the State's apparatuses seem to have found in it the perfect strategy to neglect racial oppression as a founding element of its modern society, obscuring the fact that Black, Brown and indigenous people are discriminated in terms of employment, housing, mediatic exposure, education, politics and a number of other aspects that make it unconfutable to acknowledge it (Nascimento 1978).

Moreover, at first sight, the myth of a sort of "racial paradise" seems to have discouraged Black and Brown citizens to claim equal rights after abolition. Yet, even before 1888 Black people created their own, clandestine, social movements - mainly as a means of fighting or escaping slavery. Quilombos, for instance, were created precisely with the intention to evade the plantation and the master's domain (Carneiro 2001), becoming true symbols of Black social organization, rebellion and, of course, resistance. Capoeira can be seen as another one.

Proper Afro-Brazilian social movements, however, started arising mainly in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro in the beginning of the 20th century, with the emergence of Black newspapers that directed their works to the fight for citizenship and the building of a national Black organization. The 1930s see the birth of the Frente Negra Brasileira [FNB – Brazilian Black Front], considered responsible, with its many members and followers, to have had a crucial role in the fight against racial discrimination and exclusion at that time; however, after becoming a political party, the Frente's life ended in 1937 when Getúlio Vargas declared all parties illegal forcing them to dissolution. Hence, during Brazil's Estado Novo, Black political and social movements definitely faced some downturn, yet never entirely abandoning the fight: in 1944, in fact, Abdias do Nascimento founds the Teatro Experimental do Negro [TEN – Black Experimental Theatre], one of the strongest promoters of Black empowerment, having in Nascimento one of the strongest leaders of the black power movement.

However, probably the most effective organization was, and is, the Movimento Negro Unificado [MNU – Black Movement United]. As reported on the official website:

[128] "Essa humanidade detritária predominantemente negra e mulata pode ser vista, ainda hoje, junto aos conglomerados urbanos, em todas as áreas do latifúndio, formada por braceiros estacionais, mendigos, biscateiros, domésticas, cegos, aleijados, enfermos, amontoados em casebres miseráveis."

> The **Black Movement United (MNU)** is a pioneer organization for Black Population's fight in Brazil. Founded on June 18, 1978, it is officially launched on June 7 of that same year, during an event on the staircases of the Municipal Theatre of São Paulo under full-fledged military rule. The act represented a referential, historical framework in the fight against racial discrimination in the country (MNU website).[129]

In fact, during the last years of the regime (1978-1985), the MNU was able to organized a series of corporative actions and centers all around the country to promote social activism in defense of Black people. With the regime's downfall, the Movement's actions against racial oppression eventually led to the official criminalization of racism by the Brazilian Constitution of 1988: the Law nº7.716 of January 5, 1989 – also known as the Caó Act – "defines the crimes resulting from racial and color prejudice", covering issues such as "preventing or hindering to someone, suitably qualified, to any position in Direct or Indirect Administration, as well as to utility companies" or "reject, deny or hinder student's enrolment or entrance in the public or private education of any degree".[130]

Racism in Brazil, then, is officially condemned by its Constitution, and before that by a series of ineffective decreet-laws:

> The Brazilian black population was first entitled to the right to resort to the judiciary to report racial disputes starting the 1950s. Racial or color discrimination started to be considered a misdemeanor after the enactment of Law no. 1.390/51, known as the Afonso Arinos Act. […] In the 1980s, however, the demand for a statutory provision that would criminalize racism arose as a consensus objective among organized black activists. The majority opinion regarding in period was that revoking the Afonso Arinos Act would be necessary as it turned out to be ineffective (Machado, Santos and Ferreira 2013, 2-3).

If on the one hand the Constitution condemned racist acts as crimes with consequent punishments, on the other hand during the 1990s the Caó Act was reviewed and it underwent three amendments.

Studies on racism have progressed today and activism is increasingly moving Brazilian citizens to take actions, especially against the current government's measures and ideological line. Moreover, I believe that Marielle Franco's assassination - a dreadful, cruel slaughter that shocked the entire world – exposed how violent, powerful and silencing Brazilian elites are, and how fear is

129 Original: "O **Movimento Negro Unificado (MNU)** é uma organização pioneira na luta do Povo Negro no Brasil. Fundada no dia 18 de junho de 1978, é lançada publicamente no dia 7 de julho, deste mesmo ano, em evento nas escadarias do Teatro Municipal de São Paulo em pleno regime militar. O ato representou um marco referencial histórico na luta contra a discriminação racial no país." Further information on MNU is available at https://mnu.org.br/

130 The full law can be found at https://www2.camara.leg.br/legin/fed/lei/1989/lei-7716-5-janeiro-1989-356354-publicacaooriginal-1-pl.html.

used to control people freedom. Racial discrimination is a fact as much as racial democracy is a myth. In Brazil, today as yesterday, being Black is often associated with being poor, unemployed, politically and living in *favelas*.

4.2 Communities called *favelas*

Peripheries, do not refer only to urban spaces, social and political categories, but deeply challenge how we interpret today's global order, and the strategies through which subject respond to the struggle against representative cultural models. Peripheries, in fact, today are physical and symbolic spaces where *Otherness* and diversity find their main location.

Today's post-modern world produces and reproduces dialectics of force and power between different agents; these dialectics and tensions were established by long-lasting processes of modernization, where connections between different spaces, at a local and a global level, started being established based on power/strength/dependence relations: "modernization has created, though its asymmetries, centers, peripheries and semi-peripheries […] whose hierarchy of relationships is subjected to forms of accumulation and relationships of exchange and domain that are unequal" (Albertazzi & Vecchi 2004, 224).[131]

Peripheries, then, come as a consequence of a series of asymmetries generated by modernity, which continue being reproduced and reinforced in current times. In this unbalanced global scenario, globalizing forces tend to homogenize differences into common standards and foster an image of the global system where apparently diversity has no reason to exist. Hence, heterogeneity – being this economic, social, cultural, racial or gender, for example – struggles to achieve recognition and legitimation as an equally relevant factor within today's societies and its representation is constantly negotiated:

> The site of cultural difference can become the mere phantom of a dire disciplinary struggle in which it has no space or power. […] The Other is cited, quoted, framed, illuminated, encased in the shot/ reverse-shot strategy of a serial enlightenment. Narrative and the cultural politics of difference become the closed circle of interpretation. The Other loses its power to signify, to negate, to initiate its historic desire, to establish its own institutional and oppositional discourse (Bhabha 1994, 32).

131 Original: "È la modernizzazione che ha creato, attraverso le sue asimmetrie, centri, periferie e semiperiferie[…] la cui gerarchia di rapporti è condizionata da formo di accumulazione e relazioni di scambio e di dominio disuguali"

Brazil's cultural and social landscape and its peripheral spaces, known as *favelas*, are often object of studies and analysis, yet less often they are given the power to build their own enunciations and signifying processes.

Politically and socially speaking, the term "favela" is quite equivocal within Brazil's lexicon. The term came into common usage in the beginning of the 20TH century, yet its appearance dates back to the end of the XIX when it referred to the precarious settlements that started growing in Rio de Janeiro after the Canudos War, more precisely in the area today known as Morro da Providência. The "morro," in fact, was initially named "morro da favela", taking its name after the favela plant, an urticant bush that was indigenous to the region of Canudos, almost as if the rapid and disordered development of the shacks in Rio could resemble the plant's uncontrollable spread in that region. Today, *favela* refers to Brazialian shantytowns in general. Moreover, despite the fact today's modern slums started arising in Brazil in the 1970s as a consequence of the internal migrations of people towards the cities from the rural areas, human settlements in the outskirts of the country's biggest urban centers actually date back to the XIX century: by the end of the century, with the abolition of slavery, Black and poor people (read: former slaves) were secluded from living in the city center and "forced" to reside far away in its suburbs, in areas that back then were called "African neighborhoods" (Ribeiro 1995). From then on, these areas have grown from isolated shacks into full, self-built neighborhoods.

Since then, the meaning of the term *favela* has been extended towards the most varied and questionable acceptations, referring not only to a physical space, but also - and more dramatically - to a social category, or in other words to the people living in very poor conditions usually in the peripheries of Brazil's largest urban areas. The 2010 Census carried out by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), described these areas as "subnormal agglomerates" [aglomerados subnormais], which are

> Groups of 51 or more residential units characterized by **the absence of a property deed** and **at least** one of the following features:
>
> - Non-compliance in terms of roads and dimension and shape of the batches **and/or**
> - Lack of fundamental public services (such as garbage collection, sewage network, electricity and street lighting) (IBGE 2011).[132]

[132] Original: "É o conjunto constituído por 51 ou mais unidades habitacionais caracterizadas por **ausência de título de propriedade** e pelo menos **uma das características abaixo:**
- irregularidade das vias de circulação e do tamanho e forma dos lotes **e/ou**
- carência de serviços públicos essenciais (como g, rede de esgoto, rede de água, energia elétrica e iluminação pública)."

By definition, then, a "subnormal agglomerate", or slum, is just a city neighborhood with poor housing. However, the term carries emotional values, fears and judgment: "to call a neighborhood a slum establishes a set of values - a morality that people outside the slum share - and implies that inside those areas, people don't share the same principles" (Neuwirth 2005, 16). The location of these spaces, thus, legitimates the existence of a symbolic (and spatial) distance between a polished, organized and socially valuable world (the center), and its shadow (the periphery), a space were illegality, criminality, danger, horror and abuse find their location.

The notion of "subnormal agglomerate" used by IBGE emerged in 1987, but it was only in 2006 when the Institute started discussing the need to increase the knowledge of these substandard areas: hence the 2010 Census, with the specific intention to provide updated information about the topography, urban profile and sanitary conditions of these densely populated spaces, which can be considered a result of the failure of capitalism, a deficit of democracy and the faults of modern city plans (Francavilla 2012, 78). As the IBGE explains in the report: "their existence is linked to the strong real estate and land speculation, and the consequential territorial spreading of the urban fabric, to the lack of the most varied infrastructures, including transports, and, finally, to the peripherization of the population" (IBGE 2011).[133] Hence, *favelas* appear in the urban landscape as a response of the underprivileged citizens who, having no access to proper housing, start populating areas considered less valuable and less profitable, and more within their economic reach.

The statistical data collected in 2010 showed that the most densely populated slums are located in the South-Eastern region of the country: "59.3% of the population living in subnormal agglomerates (6.780.071 people) are concentrated in the metropolitan regions of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Belém, Salvador and Recife" (IBGE 2011). As far as the city of Rio de Janeiro is concerned, for instance, more than one million people live in shantytowns, where "they don't own the land, but they hold it" (Neuwirth 2005, 3). In São Paulo, Brazil's most populated center, more than two million people do not have access to proper housing. Darcy Ribeiro unfolds the mechanisms behind this phenomenon, highlighting how these spaces are less sub-normal than what they look like:

[133] "Sua existência está relacionada à forte especulação imobiliária e fundiária e ao decorrente espraiamento territorial do tecido urbano, à carência de infraestruturas as mais diversas, incluindo de transporte e, por fim, à periferização da população."

> The urban population, left to their fate, finds solutions to their major problems. Odd solutions, it's true, but they are the only ones in their power. They learn to build slums in the steepest hillsides beyond every urban regulation, yet allowing them to live close to their workplaces and to live together as regular human communities, organizing an intense and proud social live (Ribeiro 1995, 204).[134]

In fact, each *favela* is a unique, fertile ground where true, complex, and very dignified social relationships take place. The conceptual standardization of the slums' distinctive features under the term of *favela* is often considered an attempt to dilute the peculiarities of each community into a singular, homogenizing category that ends up limiting, stigmatizing and marginalizing even more huge portions of the Brazilian population, who find themselves silenced and deprived of their often long and noble history. In reality, these communities are far from the negative and stigmatizing representation offered by national media, and what most favelas have in common is the fact that they are "the stronghold of creativity, invention, full entrepreneurship, arts, affections and solidarity" (Meirelles & Athayde 2014, 17).[135] According to Meirelles and Athayde's groundbreaking research, in fact, favelas are definitely less poor and better connected that what most people imagine, and its residents are very eager to finalize the necessary processes of social and economic inclusion; more importantly, their research showed that "94% of slum dwellers consider themselves happy" [94% dos moradores de favelas se considera feliz; 29), which is not quite in line with the country's general perception. In addition to this, "81% of the dwellers like the community where they reside and 66% of them are not willing to leave it" [81% dos moradores gosta da comunidade em que reside e não está disposto a sair dela; 30-31]: they are proud of living there and have an optimistic view of the future. The favela, then, isn't just a physical space where people are forced into spatial contiguity; it is also an affective space where reciprocity and mutual help cooperate in the building of strong human ties, creating unique relations of proximity that are fundamental to its sustenance.

Indeed, peripheries embody the asymmetries and hierarchies of capitalism, modernization and contemporary urbanism, with their unequal distribution of capital and wealth. However, these communities also showcase cultural vivacity and vibrant creativity, building their own space of enunciation. As "cultural workshops" (Francavilla 2012) urban peripheries also become the locus of

134 Original: "A própria população urbana, largada a seu destino, encontra soluções para seus maiores problemas. Soluções esdrúxulas é verdade, mas são as únicas que estão a seu alcance. Aprende a edificar favelas nas morrarias mais íngremes fora de todos os regulamentos urbanísticos, mas que lhe permitem viver junto aos seus locais de trabalho e conviver como comunidades humanas regulares, estruturando uma vida social intensa e orgulhosa de si."

135 "A favela é o reduto da criatividade, da invenção, do empreendedorismo pleno, das artes, dos afetos e da solidariedade."

enunciation (Ribeiro 2017) of those who are socially, politically and culturally left aside. Strategies of resistance and expression such as hip hop culture and the literary movement Literatura marginal are perfect examples of the cultural vivacity of Brazilian *periferias*. Through these cultural, artistic and political manifestations, the most marginalized are able to address their peculiar reality, putting it at the center of their texts and lyrics. In this way, the *periferia* shows all its lively complexity and its true colors: here, heterogeneous communities manage to build indissoluble bonds with the space they inhabit despite its limitations, finding daring, creative strategies to cope and resist against uncontrolled violence, lack of infrastructures and a general state of abandonment by the State. In addition, cultural movements and their members have a crucial role within the neighborhood they are part of, as they use their voice to implement more awareness – mainly towards younger dwellers – while showing that art and creative expression may become a different path for the making of a living: by addressing drug dealers and murderers, and underlining the state of injustice and fear that rules their world, they encourage people to take action in order to make change possible. They speak from the periphery to the periphery, and encourage the periphery to speak to the rest of the world. The aim is to overcome marginality, not only as an economic condition, but also as a cultural one, while reinforcing the community's self-esteem and cultural pride:

> the urban spaces of Brazilian metropolitan regions, especially their poor peripheries, constitute a dimension of Brazilian society in which we can observe both an inventive engagement with democratization and some of its most dramatic limits (Caldeira 2006: 104).

Due to her extended research in São Paulo's metropolitan area, Caldeira calls the process through which peripheries are built and have expanded "peripheral urbanization", identifying three main features:

> First, its most important feature is to operate within a specific temporality: it is a long-term process that produces spaces that are always in the making. Second, it has transversal engagements with official logics. Third, it generates new modes of politics through practices that produce new kinds of citizens, claims, circuits, and contestations. Cities produced through this type of process are usually highly unequal, and the quality of different sections of urban space varies considerably. Peripheral urbanization is a mode of production of space quite pervasive in societies of the global south. (Caldeira 2015: S127)

Part of the global South, Brazil's attempts to "hide" its peripheries have went quite wrong. Peripheries, in fact, find their loud voice in their community, and through these communities they find their identity and strength.

4.3 Marginal literature

What is or isn't canonized within a cultural system represents an example of the universal struggles that live in every human culture, and this is based on the fact that a non-stratified human society doesn't exist. Resembling societies, cultural systems always operate towards the maintenance of some sort of balance which allows them to avoid a collapse; this balance comes as a result of the constant opposition between its different strata: in other words, without any input or tension, any cultural system will probably stagnate – and metaphorically die. Hence, counter-cultures and subcultures, that is, those cultural manifestations that arise in opposition to a dominant system, are crucial to this latter one both to maintain its legitimacy and to guarantee its survival. Diversity is the necessary condition in order for a sociocultural system to work properly: "in order to fulfil its needs, a system strives to avail itself of a growing inventory of alternative options" (Even-Zohar 1990: 26).

The history of literature and art in general consists of a permanent dialectic of positions, centers and peripheries, involving not just aesthetical transformations, but also social and political changes. In this sense, cultural and literary studies have opened their doors to new fields of work, and have started observing more and more seriously artistic products that before were almost ignored and commonly considered "marginal" or "peripheral." As far as Brazilian literature is concerned, the notions of "marginal" and "peripheral" can be somehow ambiguous. Bosi's considerations on João António's novels help explaining this ambiguity:

> The term marginal creates misunderstanding; as a fact, in the advanced capitalistic society, there are no artworks that can be considered completely marginal. Their production, circulation and consumption, in some way or another, end up falling into the cultural market [...] (Bosi 1992, 5-6).[136]

[136] Original: "O termo marginal é fonte de equívocos; sei que, na sociedade capitalista avançada, não há nenhuma obra que, se publicada, se possa dizer inteiramente marginal. O seu produzir-se, circular e consumir-se acabam sempre, de um modo ou de outro, caindo no mercado cultural. O seu produzir-se, circular e consumir-se acabam sempre, de um modo ou de outro, caindo no mercado cultural dragão de mil bocas, useiro e vezeiro em recuperar toda sorte e malditos."

To Bosi, Brazilian culture showcases heterogeneity, this being also translated into its literary system where the concept of "marginality" ended up taking different shapes and meanings through time. In light of these considerations, a first interpretation of the aesthetical/cultural concept of marginality refers to the peripheral position voluntarily occupied by some Brazilian authors, or in other words, to the fact that these refused to rely on standard publishing channels and chose to use alternative methods of distribution. The literary trend of the 1970s works as a good example of this: during this decade a group of "marginal" writers had a strong position against the commercial networks of production and distribution by sharing their poetic artworks through little handmade books in bars, museums, theatres and cinemas. However, all intellectuals of this movement came from the Brazilian middle-class of that time and had had access to education. Nevertheless, by doing this during the dictatorship, they did not aim at causing an "aesthetical revolution," but claimed cultural change, opting for operating from a marginal position within the social and cultural system of that time, which they did not identify with. As Buarque de Hollanda explains, "this group's marginality isn't just literary, but it unfolds as a marginality that is experienced and perceived straight from daily life" (Buarque de Hollanda 2004, 113).[137] Marginality, in this case, consists of a specific position with regards to society and the literary field that is consciously undertaken; it can be seen as an effort to subvert a pre-defined order, a manifestation of rebellion, as well as a space that is chosen and not given.

Yet another meaning of marginal in literature can be found in those works that aim at rereading and reinterpreting the reality of the oppressed groups through non-canonical texts that distance themselves from the dominant aesthetics and contents. An example of this peculiar idea of marginality, Ruben Fonseca's work reports in fictional terms the luxury and the violence of the urban reality seen through the lives of prostitutes, murderers and marginal individuals. Here, marginality unfolds as the subject of the novels, where reality is described using a rough style, in order to represent the "naked truth". In this case, the term "marginal" doesn't point out just to a literary condition (that of being non-canonical texts), but it also refers to a social, economic and political reality: the experiences described are always set in the peripheral areas of the big cities and the characters are mostly subaltern individuals.

From another perspective, marginal texts can be defined based on the language they showcase and on the socio-cultural value of their contents. In this case, the concept refers to Deleuze and Guattari's studies on *minor literature*. As I have mentioned before, according to Deleuze and Guattari, minor literatures display three characteristics: the deterriorialization of

[137] "A marginalidade desse grupo não é apenas literária, mas revela-se como uma marginalidade vivida e sentida de maneira imediata frente à ordem do cotidiano".

language, the connection of the individual to a political immediacy, and the collective assemblage of enunciation (18). A minor literature is political, collective, revolutionary, and even spatial, since by deterritorializing one terrain it maps a new one. The book *Quarto de Despejo* by Carolina Maria de Jesus can be considered a good example of this idea of marginality, where literature becomes a strategy of resistance against living on the margin of the social, cultural and political capital. In Jesus's work, "the margin takes the shape of the literary tension's decentered space where historic and biographical memory converge" (Annavini 2012: 92), and the author becomes a witness to the urban and social evolution of the margin in a postmodern and capitalist world.

Closely related to, and almost inspired by, Carolina Maria de Jesus's work, in the late 1990s and beginning of 2000s, the concept of marginal literature has come to represent the set of writings by those living in the slums of the big urban centers, who experience marginality on a daily basis, not only as a spatial condition (the favela), but also as a social, cultural, political and racial one: these voices are those of Brazil's cultural and racial minorities, its most marginalized citizens. Through these texts, subaltern voices find their means of expression; here, the *Other* becomes the subject of his own statements, finding his own way of dignifying, legitimizing and acknowledging his presence as a cultural agent. By *Literatura Marginal*, then, I am referring to a body of heterogeneous, non-canonical, and countercultural works, written by favela residents, that share similar features. Among these, the fact that most of these texts constantly condemn a life that is scored by political, social and racial prejudice, and living conditions that are marked by discrimination and injustice as a whole; also, these "marginal" authors claim the right to speak for themselves, showing full awareness when it comes to using the most varied literary expressions (from chronicles to stories, from poetry to journalistic texts, for instance) to convey their experience and reality directly, with no filters nor the bending of an external eye.

In fact, during his interviews, the major promoter of this revolutionary literary movement, Ferrez, frequently stresses the need of giving direct voice to the individuals who are normally "left out" by the system, and of offering them a space of free expression without the filter of any external observer that could easily distort the image of the periphery; also, this contemporary literary movement works as a source of literary proofs that come directly from those who grow up and live the *periferia* on a daily basis.[138] In the hands of these writers, literature becomes a weapon to fight

[138] Pseudonym of Reginaldo Ferreira da Silva, Ferrez is a resident of Capão Redondo, a popular district in the southern area of São Paulo. He is a poet, an activist, a rapper and a cultural critic, member and leader of the literary group *Literatura marginal*, also very active in his district and author of *Capão Pecado* (2000), *Manual Prático do Ódio* (2003), *Niguém é inocente em São Paulo* (2005) and *Os ricos também morrem* (2015). He is the founder of *DaSul*, a group that organizes cultural events and meetings for the dwellers of the district.

against the oppression suffered by means of the intellectual and middle-class elites who control and influence the cultural and mediatic scenario in Brazil, fostering a deteriorated image of the underprivileged and silencing their voice: "insignificance and marginality is what *periferia* dwellers represent to the Brazilian middle class, traditional historiography, and all too frequently to each other" (Pardue 2008, 2). The struggle is carried out also by employing a very peculiar language, that is, one that reproduces the suburban slang and orality in general. The aim is that of mimicking the reality they are part of to the greatest extent possible. Literature, then, becomes a means of overcoming a condition of marginalization, questioning and challenging canonical language and contents: "when the writer is placed at the margins of his fragile community, his text and his voice will tend to build a second potential community, with its specific awareness and sensibility" (Francavilla 2012, 86).[139] Hence, marginal writers find in literature a space of recognition not only for themselves, but also for the community they belong to.

As a result of the joint efforts put by Ferrez and his "comrades" in this project, Brazilian magazine *Caros Amigos* chose to focus three special publications on them. Finally, some of the chosen texts reached the shelves of the bookstores with *Literatura marginal: talentos da escrita periférica* (2005): the book collects eleven texts from authors coming from the different *periferias* of the country, among whom are Ferréz, Preto Ghoéz, Gato Preto, Erton Moraes, Allan Santos da Rosa, Alessandro Buzo and Laura Mateus.

Besides the similar contents of their works and their related aesthetical choices, most writers have in common an active career in rap movements such as the Clão Nordestino, the MHHOB (Movimento Hip Hop Organizado do Brasil), the Cooperifa or the Quilombo Urbano. They are also responsible for the organization and coordination of various activities within their communities: Alessandro Buzo, for instance, is the founder of the community library *Suburbano Convicto* in the district of Itaim Paulista. More importantly, hip hop culture appears to be the main reference to the majority of these writers (most of whom are also rappers), representing another common thread running through their works. Hence, rap and marginal literature are inextricably linked, both being acts of real emancipation against cultural, social and racial oppression.

4.4 The emergence of hip hop culture in Brazil

[139] Original: "Quando lo scrittore viene sistemato ai margini della sua fragile comunità, il suo testo e la sua voce tenderanno a costruire una seconda comunità potenziale, dotata di una precisa coscienza e una sensibilità."

From its early steps in the African-Brazilian communities of São Paulo, and later Rio de Janeiro, Brazilian hip hop has spread throughout the country and grown into a national phenomenon. Unlike what happened in Portugal, where rap and hip hop were both received as "ready-to-use" products and initially emulated, Brazilian and North American hip hop developed quite simultaneously, or at least quite similarly since they both started out under akin conditions. Again, hip hop's initial steps were given through dance and Black music, later evolving into rap as a proper musical genre; its visual element, instead, is considered being the evolution of a practice that was already known to the country.

As far as contemporary graffiti is concerned, the practice of writing on walls was already performed in Brazil. In fact, before the emergence of graffiti as an element of hip hop culture in Brazil, the cities' walls had already been used as a canvas for political statements back in the 1930s, by the hands of political candidates who used them as platforms to publicize their campaigns and slogans; in the 1960, then, the practice was taken over by students, who began using the streets' walls to express their dissent against the military government (Siwi 2016). After going through a short break in the 1970s, graffiti was revived during the 1980s through the actions of groups of youths tagging their crew's name, taking both the well-known shape of graffiti art, with its rounded, colorful lettering, and the controversial shape of *pixo*.[140] In this respect, urban art in Brazil today has two, distinct appearances, which are both mostly visible in São Paulo: if, on the one hand, graffiti artists, mostly coming from hip hop culture, have been accepted and integrated in the field of visual arts and are now praised for their artistic skills, on the other hand *pixadores* (aka artists who perform *pixo*) are still discarded as less valuable or as being responsible for polluting the city's appearance (Pereira 2010); however, in its early ages, the two practices and its participants often dialogued, being both performed by peripheral youth as "part of a style of dressing and acting that was considered young and commonly called 'street culture'" [Parte do estilo de vestir e de atuação que era considerado jovem e geralmente chamado 'street art'; 152].

Hip hop's emergence in Brazil, however, is strongly linked to music consumption, racial segregation and dance as an agent of socialization. As most studies and documentaries on hip hop's early years point out, breakdance is undoubtedly the first element of this multifaceted culture to

[140] *Pixação* (from the verb *pichar*, to cover with tar) is a very peculiar practice of writing on the city's walls that emerged in São Paulo in the 1980s and is still one of city's most visible marks, and that still corresponds to the esthetic manifestation of youth coming from the peripheries (Pereria 2010: 146). In terms of urban writing, it consists of a straight lined, sharp edged and monochromatic calligraphy usually used to refer the name of a youth collective ("griffe") or the name of an individual writer. *Pixação* is about visibility and recognition, as well as adrenaline and risk: the higher the *pixo*, the bigger the respect for the writer. It also about revolt against social injustice and urban segregation, and about seeking "to positively degrade the urban environment" (Siwi 2016). Despite the fact that artists, such as Kobra, have moved from the streets to studios and are among Brazil's most appreciated muralists, *pixação* has always been strongly refused both by local authorities and residents, who consider them contaminating.

have rooted among Brazilian youth in the mid-1980s (Andrade 1996; Silva 1998; Guasco 2001; Pardue 2008; Martins 2015). Hip hop in Brazil is also linked to the building of Black subjects and their cultural identity:

> Hip hop culture, which is characterized as being a social practice promoted by underprivileged youth, and mainly by Black youth, seeks to give visibility to the Black population, towards the building of the Afro-descendants' identity and the increasing of their self-esteem, and of a less stigmatized self-perception (Martins 2013, 261).[141]

The process of building of a Black collectivity, however, had started before the emergence of hip hop culture in spaces of sociability that today are considered precursors of this practice. In fact, to the 1970s's Black and mestizo youth, *bailes blacks* [black parties] represented much more than mere entertainment venues; they were political spaces where Black identities were discussed and negotiated, and daily racial discrimination was suspended (Félix 2005, 18). As Toni C. explained during our conversation in São Paulo on May 7, 2018, one of hip hop's strongest elements was definitely dance, mainly because it was "easy to be carried" through cinema and advertisement (Toni C, personal conversation, 2018). In this sense, according to LiteraRua's founder, the 1970's Black parties can be considered hip hop's prehistory:

> Hip hop culture didn't come as set, and didn't come with rap. Before this, during hip hop's prehistory, in the 1970s we had a dictatorial regime that prevented people from manifesting in several ways, whereas it was aligned to north American policies. Hence, while on the one hand it forbid any cultural manifestation, on the other hand it allowed funk and soul records to reach Brazil, as part of its plan of commercial freedom and free trade with the United States. These records, this music started to show up, they played on the radio, and you don't need to have studied English to understand that "black is beautiful" endures the fight for racial and ethnic pride of [Black] people's culture
>
> (Toni C, personal conversation, 2018).[142]

141 Original: "A cultura *hip hop*, caracterizada como uma prática social promovida pelos jovens pobres, principalmente pelos jovens negros, atua no sentido de dar visibilidade à população negra, no sentido da constituição da identidade e no crescimento da autoestima do negro-descendente, uma percepção de si mesmo menos estigmatizada."

142 Orginal: "A cultura hip hop não chegou pronta, e não chegou com rap. Antes disso, a pré-historia do hip hop, você tinha na década de 70 uma ditadura que proibia as pessoas de se manifestarem de diversas formas; por outro lado, e contraditoriamente, é uma ditadura alinhada com a política norteamericana. Então, do mesmo jeito que ela proibia as manifestações culturais (por exemplo: a capoeira foi muito proibida durante muitos anos/séculos no passado); por outro lado, um disco de funky, de soul dos EUA é permitido entrar no Brasil porque fazia parte desse liberdade comercial, desse livre comércio com os EUA, e tal. Então começava a chegar esses discos, essas músicas, tocavam no rádio etc., e não precisa de ser um estudiosos inglês para saber que "black is beautiful" é uma certa luta de orgulho racial, étnico, de uma cultura de um povo."

Starting in the 1970s, thus, *bailes blacks* became spaces where Black, north American music was played alongside local artists such as Tim Maia, Tony Torando, Gilberto Gil, Sandra Sá, among others, and people could gather to dance to exclusively Black and mestizo rhythms. Given the highly pronounced and markedly danceable rhythms, this mix of soul, funk and rap songs became known as "balanço" (Camargos 2015, 42). Moreover, according to Pardue, the Brazilian performers mentioned above "internationalized Brazilian *negritude* by creating a hybridity of "traditional" Africanity, contemporary Brazilian social commentary […], and globalized black pop of James Brown and others" (Pardue 2008, 46). King Nino Brown, whom I had the pleasure to meet in Diadema on May 9, 2018, confirmed this while sharing with me his personal experience as one of hip hop pioneer dancers:

> I first got involved in Black parties. Back then, in the Calux favela we had the "sedinha", where Black parties happened. It started in 1977. I went to this party, I managed to get in because of my brother-in-law… I couldn't get in as a minor. I was 15 years old, I stayed in a little corner just observing everything. And they played all that was Brazilian popular music, but that had rhythm for dancing. And also Marvin Gale, Ray Charles, Al Green, Roberta Flack… And when they played James Brown it was then that the guy started saying things about James Brown, talking a little bit about him, introducing him, like an MC. In 1977 (King Nino Brown, private conversation, 2018).[143]

During our chat, Nino Brown - who is also known for being the founder of Zulu Nation Brazil - recalled his teenage years living in São Bernardo do Campo, in the ABC region of São Paulo, where he had moved in 1975, at the age of 13, from the state of Pernambuco, in the Northeast. Nino, thus, was one of the many Brazilians who were attracted to São Paulo by new workplaces in the metallurgic industry, which was based there. In fact, as a consequence of the government's policies towards national development, between the 1940s and the 1970s São Paulo became (and continues to be) the industrial center of the country (Caldeira 2001). Industrial growth was followed by intense urbanization. São Paulo's new pattern of urbanization, that started to take place in the 1940s, is usually referred to as the center-periphery model (Caldeira 2001), and it reflected the social stratification and the economic distance of the city's population: a segregating pattern where

[143] "Eu comecei a me envolver com os baile Black. Então você tinha a favela do Calux, você tinha a sedinha do Calux, que é lá que tinha as festas Black. Começou em 1977. Eu fui nessa festa, eu entrei porque o meu cunhado… porque não podia entrar de menor. Eu tinha 15 anos, eu fiquei lá num cantinho só observando. E tocava tudo o que era música brasileira popular, mas que tinha um ritmo para se dançar. E também Marvin Gale, Ray Charles, Al Green, Roberta Flack. E quando tocava James Brown era a hora que o cara começava a falar algumas coisas do James Brown, falando um pouco dele, uma introdução, tipo MC. Em 1977."

the middle and upper classes occupied the central, legalized and well-equipped areas and the underprivileged and working classes were placed in a precarious and illegal periphery. Moreover, the peripheries became theater of intensive, uncontrolled construction. If, on the one hand, this project of modernization managed to diversify the city's social fabric, on the other hand it reinforced dynamics of power and wealth distribution mostly based on racial-ethnic factors that became patent in the city's contours:

> Both Brazil and the metropolitan region of Sao Paulo changed in dramatic but paradoxical ways: significant urbanization, industrialization, sophistication and expansion of the consumer market, and diversification of the social structure were accompanied by authoritarianism, political repression, unequal distribution of wealth, and a hierarchical pattern of personal relations. In other words, Brazil became a modern country through a paradoxical combination of rapid capitalist development, increased inequality, and lack of political freedom and respect for citizenship rights (Caldeira 2001: 43).

As the majority of Calux's Black and mestizo dwellers, Nino started working as a metallurgic at very young age: "life was harsh, with no electricity at home, a wooden *barraca* with no address in a neighborhood that lacked basic infrastructures", he recalls [A vida era difícil, sem eletricidade. Favela são barracas em madeira, feito de qualquer jeito, não tem rua; Nino Brown, personal conversation, 2018]. At night, he joined his peers in different venues of the São Bernardo Residents' Associations, such as the Sedinha in the Lago garden or the Sede do Calux in the Calux garden. During the last years of the military dictatorship, the economic downturn was deeply affecting Brazil's working class, and people were coping with unemployment, inflation and a general increase of poverty; hence, Black parties worked not only as recreational spaces but also as platforms for the building of new forms of cultural resistance, as well as political practice. In these same years, the *bailes* became also known for their crucial role in the building of Black identities and in strengthening Black political union under the Black Movement [Movimento Negro] (Félix 2000).

Moreover, between the 1970s and the 1980s, urban social movements spread within the peripheries of big cities such as São Paulo, contributing to the building of a new consciousness and encouraging the active claim for political citizenship and social rights among their dwellers:

> Starting in the mid-1970s, the working classes, especially in Sao Paulo, began to organize a series of political activities that substantially affected politics and the dominant authoritarian rule. A new type of trade union movement emerged in ABCD, that is, the area of the metropolitan region of Sao Paulo […]. This movement rejected the trade union structure

> organized since the time of Getúlio Vargas, and it had a new leadership that the state and the elite were unable either to coopt or to repress. At the same time, a series of neighborhood-based social *movements* emerged in the poor urban peripheries, frequently supported by the Catholic Church, advancing the idea that they had "the right to have rights." […] A central inspiration for these movements was an urban and collective experience of marginalization and abandonment, in spite of individual efforts of integration through work and consumption (Caldeira 2006, 104).

People's everyday life was deeply affected by the cultural transformation that these movements elicited (Caldeira 2015). More importantly, what these movements truly encouraged was political action. In fact, as a result of the joint forces of trade union movements, social movements and minority movements (such as the Movimento Negro Unificado), the early 1980s see the foundation of the Partido dos Trabalhadores [PT- Worker's Party], "probably the first political party in Brazilian history that was not created or commanded by the elite" (Caldeira 2006, 105). In this sense, the *bailes blacks* seem to have played a crucial role as a space of sociability and resistance, not only with regards to the Black struggle but also as a fundamental agent in Brazil's process of democratization.

As far as hip hop culture is concerned, the *bailes* were fundamental to the empowerment of Black youth through music. Crucial to this process, James Brown's records were probably the most inspiring works towards the building of that Afro-Brazilian consciousness and pride that would then become increasingly powerful with hip hop, some years later. Hits such as "Say it loud – I'm Black and I'm proud" (1968) fostered the idea that "Black is beautiful," becoming true anthems for Brazilian peripheral youth. Moreover, as for North-American hip hop, Brown's dance moves inspired breakdance figures and styles in the culture's early ages in Brazil. In this sense, the *bailes* were also crucial to the building of the first dance crews, such as Nelson Triunfo's Funk & Cia, as well as to the spreading of rap, in the initial form of "funk falado" [spoken funk] (Camargos 2015).

Nelson Triunfo is, indeed, the man considered the "father" of hip hop culture in Brazil (Rocha, Domenich & Casseano 2001). He is also considered a pioneer for implementing breakdance moves to his routines during Black parties, later taking breakdance "to the streets" of São Paulo's downtown area. According to Yoshinaga, "Nelsão" – in English: "big Nelson", due to his tall stature and big "afro" hair - first came into contact with breakdance in 1983, through a friend who had recently returned to Brazil from the States, excited about the style and vivacity of those peculiar, acrobatic moves (Yoshinaga 2014, 179). Promptly understanding that the practice, with its aerobatic techniques, was pioneering and unprecedented for Brazil, Triunfo began training and creating his own choreographies for the parties:

> Little by little, together with his friends from Funk & Cia, he continued to improve the moves. He designed performative sequences that began amusing the public in the parties, especially in a night club called Fantasy. However, he felt that, despite the fun it provided, dancing in ballrooms was something limiting for a practice that was born on the streets (Yoshinaga 2014, 180).[144]

Yoshitanga - Triunfo's official biographer - explains that actually the process of taking breakdance downtown São Paulo was gradual: in fact, Nelson and the group Funk & Cia had made their first attempts to dance outdoors some years earlier (approximatively five) around the central area of the Viaduto do Chá, known since the 1960s for being a meeting point for Afro-Brazilian youth (181). However, the main breakthrough happened around 1983, when the group started dancing on the stairs of the Municipal Theatre of the city, using a style that resembled performing with break moves:

> The routine was always the same: wearing their peculiar clothes, the dancers brought their massive *boomboxes* (as they called the huge portable sound systems) to the chosen spot, they pressed *play* and, without any ceremony, they formed a circle. A few minutes later, a curios crowd would surround them, coloring and loosening up the habitual order of the downtown area of the city (182).[145]

As Silva (1999) explains, the act of appropriation of the streets is central to the hip hop movement, where the streets start being used as stages for artistic expression. According to Toni C., taking the practice to the streets was both a practical and economic decision: on the one hand, nightclubs did not offer enough space for the crews' dance exhibitions nor for their fans, whereas the streets did; on the other hand, the *bailes* had entrance fees, which in most cases were quite high for the 1980s young break-dancers and their friends, who ended up rolling out to the streets (which were free). Moreover, during our conversation in May 2018, Toni C. mentioned that taking breakdance to the downtown area of the city was strategic, since São Paulo's central area was a very common transit area for the city's *office-boys*, mostly young, Black and poor *periferia* dwellers whose only job

144 Original: "Aos poucos, junto aos companheiros de Funk & Cia, continuou a aprimorar os movimentos. Desenvolveu sequências performáticas que começaram a maravilhar o público nos bailes, sobretudo na casa noturna Fantasy. Mas sentia que, apesar do prazer que proporcionava, dançar nos salões era algo limitador para uma manifestação que nascera nas ruas."

145 "A rotina era a mesma: com seus trajes aberrantes os dançarinos levavam seus imensos *boomboxes* (como denominam os enormes aparelhos de som portáteis) para o ponto escolhido, apertavam *paly* e, sem qualquer cerimônia, formavam uma roda. Em poucos minutos uma multidão de curiosos os cercava, de forma a colorir e descontrair a mecânica rotina da área central da cidade."

opportunity was that of being couriers. These young individuals constantly moved around the city center, and this, according to Toni C., would explain why hip hop culture developed so fast and intensively once it reached the city's downtown area. Today's version of this profession are São Paulo's *motoboys*, delivery boys who move by bike, who have become one of the city's most peculiar trademarks:

> [In São Paulo] there is this one job, the *motoboys*: messengers on a motorcycle. This phenomenon is typical especially in São Paulo, it is related to São Paulo's traffic, to the city's size, it is related to the number of people in São Paulo and to São Paulo's economy. [The city's] economy is so big, so energetic, [with its] many businesses, industries, offices, so how do I can possibly leave this place and arrive in the South area within an hour? There's only one way: it can only be made by motorbike, there's no other way. Then, this *motoboy* occupation is part of São Paulo's identity; they have their own culture, they own language. In the decades of the 1970s and 1980s, this boy didn't use a motorbike. He walked and took the bus. He was the so-called *office-boy*. And this was the occupation of those who where entering the job market, of young people. As a profession, it requires little knowledge, little education (as in, formal education). In other words, it was for the young, poor, Black, from the periphery, to become office-boys. To become an office-boy was a consumption dream for this culture. This guy was moving around the city center the whole time, so the city center becomes a meeting point, a point of convergence. Thus, when the need to come out dancing in the streets emerged, it was because people were working there (Toni C., personal conversation, 2018).[146]

The social, cultural and economic profile of the 1980s office-boy seems to correspond to that of the early break-dancer, and Toni's considerations seems to offer a more structured perception of how hip hop culture developed in São Paulo. After an initial "wandering" phase, by the end of 1983 break-dancers opted for "stopping" in what seemed to be the perfect spot for their dance gatherings: the corner between 24 de Maio street and Dom José de Barros, close to the famous Shopping Grande Galerias, today known just as *Galerias* - a mall build in the 1960s, pioneer for that time, that has turned into a subcultural landmark of the city with underground music shops, tattoo studios and street wear shops. Here, "a sidewalk made by plates of a slippery stone [was] quite suited for sliding feet and turning on the floor" [uma calçada formada por plaas de uma pedra escorregadia,

[146] Original: "Você tem uma profissão, que são os motoboys: mensageiro de moto. Isso é um fenômeno de São Paulo, sobretudo, tem a ver com o transito de São Paulo, o tamanho da cidade, tem a ver com a quantidade de pessoas em São Paulo e com e economia de São Paulo. [A cidade] tem uma economia tão grande, tão forte, [com] tantas empresas, industrias, escritórios, que como que eu faço para um livro sair daqui e chegar na Zona Sul numa hora? Só tem um jeito: só pode ser de mota, não tem outra forma. Então, essa profissão de motoboy hoje é uma identidade de São Paulo, tem uma cultura própria, tem uma linguagem própria. Na década de 1970-1980 esse cara não andava de moto, ele andava a pé, pegando ônibus. Era o chamado "office boy". E essa era a profissão de que tem tá entrando no mercado do trabalho, do jovem. E é uma profissão que exige pouco conhecimento, pouca formação (ensino formal). Ou seja, era o jovem pobre, negro, da periferia a virar office boy. Era o sonho de consumo virar office boy, para essa cultura. Então o cara tava circulando o tempo todo ali pelo centro de São Paulo, e o centro vira um ponto de encontro, de convergência. E aí surgiu essa necessidade de sair dançando no meio da rua. Era porque as pessoas estavam trabalhando ali."

bastante apropriada para deslizar os pés e girar no chão; Yoshinaga 2017,185). The corner between the two streets today is considered hip hop's "ground zero" [marco zero]. On September 26, 2014 the area was eventually consecrated: a granite block from that glorious ground was engraved, celebrating hip hop's initial spot, its elements and the pioneer artists who joined forces in the building of the movement.

It is to say, though, that Triunfo and his friends did not perceive hip hop as a social movement, nor a political one: they danced just to have fun (Rocha, Domenich & Casseano 2001). Still, dancing in the middle of a downtown street represented both an act of (re)appropriation and an act of rebellion. The police soon began picking on the group of young dancers:

> Since people were still living the last years of military dictatorship, one of the allegations as that gathering had 'subversive' connotations. […] However, back then the dancers' gathering on São Paulo's ground didn't have any specific political implication. Oddly enough, Nelsão's impressive black hair was considered the manifestation of a possible encouragement towards civil disobedience (Yoshinaga 2014, 186).[147]

The lawmen, endorsed by the shopkeepers of the area, regularly ordered them to dismantle the circle, often ending up taking the "transgressive" dancers back to the police station to run some background checks. Yet, this did not stop hip hop from earning an increasing number of aficionados. By 1984, breakdance was spreading around country, becoming a true "fever" that was also growing globally, proved by the major success of films such as *Breakin'* and *Beat Street* (Yoshinaga 2014). The media's attention played a crucial role in transforming breakdance into a huge trend, deeply affecting the perception of the street performances in both a good and a bad way: on the one hand, breakdance fans and practitioners were constantly growing, and the space in the 24 de Maio was becoming increasingly small; on the other hand, the initial "rodas," led by Nelson Triunfo, began losing their public, who was eager to perform and started building new crews. The mediatic exposure gained by 1984 also fostered the release of the first rap tracks by Black Juniors and Buffalo Girls, for instance; yet, producing a full rap album was too expensive for these early performers and the market's interest towards rap would take longer to show. Alongside breakdance, rap was always present in the streets and in impromptu events.

147 Original. "Como ainda se viviam os últimos anos da ditadura militar, uma das alegações era a de que aquela reunião possuía caráter "subversivo." [...] No entanto, até aquele momento a reunião dos dançarinos em solo paulistano não possuía qualquer implicação política específica. [...] Por mais estranho que pareça, a imponente cabeleira black de Nelsão era apontada como indício de um possível incentivo à desobediência civil."

São Paulo's breakers began looking for new spots around the city, and soon the new meeting point had been found: by the end of that year, young hip hop performers began meeting in the São Bento subway station (Burdick 2013). As Toni C. explained - and I saw myself too when in São Paulo - the location was ideal: with its patio and stairs in the shape of an amphitheater, the area naturally allowed to create dance shows and contests, also offering enough space for everybody to watch and participate. Moreover, it had a strategic position, close to the Sé and Anhagabaú, it was in the center of a crossroad of people coming from all around the ABC area of São Paulo. Here, the hip hop movement substantially began to take shape, cohabiting the space with the São Paulo's punks:

> In the city center, these spaces manifest the ways to negotiate identities, "transit spaces", that offer to those who are part of them an identity and a group reference focused on the idea of us. In the portion of São Bento the space of recognition, where a series of meaning is combined, transforms as it is seen, not as a mere space, but as a sort of small island built (Martins, Barros & Lima 2015, 70).[148]

From being initially a space of recognition and identity negotiation, the São Bento subway station today is remembered and celebrated as the biggest meeting point for hip hop fans in São Paulo, becoming also a reference for other followers around the country, a true "sanctuary" for the Brazilian hip hop movement (Rocha, Domenich & Casseano 2001). Moreover, the early years of the São Bento era were crucial to the building of a proper hip hop movement as it is considered today, that is, not only an aesthetic movement but also a political and cultural practice of empowerment of Afro-Brazilian, marginalized youth. Here, break-dancers, DJs, graffiti writers and rappers congregated to perform and exchange knowledge and information. Also, it was during these years when performers who had started as break-dancers transitioned – or just experimented - to other elements, such as rap, Djing or graffiti; among these, artists such Osgemeos, MC Jack, DJ Alam Beat, KL Jay, Thaíde and Dj Hum, Rappin' Hood, and Racionais MCs (Yoshinaga 2014): some of Brazil's most iconic hip hop references who were part some of its strongest crews (Back Spin, for instance, was Thaíde's crew).

As far as Brazilian rap is concerned, the years between 1985 and 1988 were also fundamental to its development and affirmation as a local practice, a proper music genre and probably as hip hop's most powerful element. As I have mentioned before, Brazilian youth initially

148 "No centro urbano, esses lugares exprimem os modos de negociação identitária, "espaços de trânsito", fornecendo para aqueles que daí fazem parte uma identidade e uma referência grupal centrado na ideia de nós. No pedaço da São Bento o espaço de reconhecimento onde se combina uma série de significados transforma-se como sendo visto não apenas um local, mas numa espécie de pequena ilha construída."

came into contact with North American rap, soul and funk music during the *bailes*; by the mid-1980s, an embryonal version of rap, called "tagarela" [chatter] started to pave its way among these youth, "a funny, fast and playful rhythm" (Andrade 1999, 88), as a local response to the North American version that most were unable to understand and was reproduced exclusively in the rhythm (Rocha, Domenich & Casseano 2001). Tagarela was basically "party" rap, celebrating physical attractiveness, parties, drinking and romance (Burdick 2013). Pepeu's work is a good example of this initial, quite superficial style. Nino Brown, during our conversation, also referred to it as "funk falado" [spoken funk].

In 1987 - during the "São Bento era" – break-dancers started to direct their interest towards rap compositions too (Pardue 2008), and the practice began gaining shape and being more structured. During an interview available on YouTube, rapper Thaíde explains that the (future) rappers began building poems after observing how break-dancers moved to the rhythm, in an attempt to reproduce, with words, the same effect.[149] Also, particularly after 1985, rap started to connect more to politics and social matters:

> The end of the military censorship in 1985, the acceleration of preparations for the centennial of the abolition of slavery, the growing influence of the black movement, and the mobilization around the writing of the new federal constitution thrust the issue of race squarely into the public eye. Influence by these events, a faction of the São Bento subway station began to focus explicitly on black identity and political commentary (Burdick 2013, 31).

According to Andrade (1999), this was how the best-known rappers emerged from the hip hop movement, such as Racionais MCs, Thaíde and Dj Hum. Still, the attempts at integrating rap in the music market had not given positive results so far: in 1987, "the first rap album, *A ousadia do rap*, recorded by the label Kaskata's, had nearly no success" (Rocha, Domenich & Casseano 2001: 51). Rap's turning point happened a year later:

> One afternoon of 1988 Ruberval Oliveira and Cassius Franco, members of the band O Credo, arrived at the São Bento station with some news: they had been invited by two representatives of the label Eldorado to record an album. Since their body of work was not enough to fill an LP, Ruberval and Cassius put forward to Gilson Fernandes de Souza and Vagner Garcia, from the label, the idea of producing a compilation album with different rappers that attended the

[149] Full video is availble at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jFo_QyNz4BY .

meetings at the metro station. Suggestion approved, the only thing they had left to do was to recruit the participants to the project in order to put it into action (Yoshinaga 2014: 235).[150]

The album took the name of *Hip Hop Cultura de Rua Vol.* 1: three other rappers joined O Credo, having two tracks each for a total of eight songs. These were Thaíde & DJ Hum, Código 13 and MC Jack. As Toni C stated about hip hop's landmarks, albums can also be considered as part of them: "the first rap compilation that emerged – there's a controversy about this too – is the album *Hip Hop Cultura de Rua*, and another album called *Conciência Black* (1989). […]. Thaíde and DJ Hum emerged from the first compilation, and Racionais MCs emerged from the second" (Toni C, personal conversation, 2018).[151] Hence, both albums where crucial shifts for the careers of two of Brazil's most famous hip hop artists of all times. Particularly Racionais are probably the most important rap group in the whole country, having played, with their works and political actions, a fundamental part in the struggle against racism, police brutality and life conditions in the *favelas* and towards the empowerment of Afro-Brazilian people and negritude as a cultural, identity and political matter.

Derek Pardue (2008) identifies four different moments within hip hop culture with regard to the discursive trends about *negritude*. The years between 1987 and 1992 showcase an initial ideology of union [união] within the movement, where all elements of hip hop come together and blackness is lived and perceived as a communitarian element:

The first historical moment of hip hop culture in Brazil (1987–92) is characterized by a conventional critique of racism and celebration of racial mixture as part of the overarching discourse of *união*. In the first historical moment of Brazilian rap music, *negritude* only appeared an inescapable fact of self. The very utterance of *negro* was significant as these young men attempted to articulate experiences of marginality to a new sense of collectivity in the form of a new "hip hop movement." Yet, it would take time before local hip hoppers were to become *informados* about what sort of identification processes and performative strategies were possible in hip hop. (Pardue 2008, 102)

150 Original: "Numa certa tarde de 1988 Ruberval Oliveria e Cassius Franco, integrantes da banda O Credo, chegaram à estação São Bento com uma novidade: tinham sido convidados por dois representantes da gravadora Eldorado para gravar um disco. Como ainda não possuíam repertório suficiente para preencher um LP, Ruberval e Cassius tinham dado a Gilson Fernandes de Souza e Vagner Garcia, da gravadora, a ideia de produzir uma coletânea com vários rappers que frequentavam os encontros na estação do metrô. Sugestão aprovada, só lhes restava recrutar os participantes do projeto para coloca-lo em prática."

151 Original: "Outros marcos são os discos: a primeira coletânea que surgiu de rap no Brasil, tem uma disputa também sobre isso, mas é uma disco chamado "Cultura de Rua" e outro disco chamado "Consciência Black. [...] Dessa coletânea saiu o Thaíde e o DJ Hum, na outra saiu os Racionais."

The narrative of unity in terms of negritude, however, seems to be challenged by the decision, by means of a group of MCs, to "split" from the rest of the community of São Bento and look for an alternative meeting point. In 1989, in fact, most rappers move to the Roosevelt Square [Praça Roosevelt]. The reason of this split remains unclear; yet, most participants of that time reassure that there was no "separation" between the people who met in São Bento and the ones who began gathering in Roosevelt Square, and that it was solely a matter of space (which in São Bento wasn't enough anymore); it proves that São Paulo's hip hop scene was growing, "multiplying", and that it needed a wider area for their encounters (Yoshitanga 2013). Others, point at the fact that the São Bento station began being popular among white people too (Burdick 2013). However, Silva (1998) argues that the division between the gatherings in São Bento and those in Roosevelt Square was a positive fact, since it demonstrated the rappers' need to differentiate themselves from the rest of the participants to the movement. According to Toni C., this shift within the movement happened in response to the different interests of rappers and break-dancers:

> Roosevelt Square today has been completely transformed, it's very different. [In the past] it was uglier and it had a subterranean, underground, underworld feeling per se, but it was a gathering spot, people started meeting there and there is where the first posse of Brazilian hip hop arose, which is called Aliança Negra. One of the reasons why they met there was the people, every time they met there they brought a folder: since there was no internet and no books on rap, the information one had available was through newspaper and magazine clippings, so people put those into folders and brought them with their tags, signatures, and exchanged them in order to know more about the culture. It was a way of exchanging information. Yet, the guys who were more connected to dancing, didn't care much about this. There were more cultural people, people who were more "for the culture" itself, and there were people who wanted to exchange information more. And so they gathered in Roosevelt Square with this intention, that of exchanging folders. And from there they became posses (Toni C 2018).[152]

[152] Original: "E a Praça Roosevelt hoje está completamente transformada, é outra coisa. Era muito mais feia e por si só já tinha um ar meio de subterrâneo, de underground, de submundo, mas era um ponto de encontro, as pessoas começaram a se encontrar ali e ali se formou a primeira posse de hip hop do Brasil, que se chama Aliança Negra. Um dos critérios, um dos motivos dele se encontrarem ali era o pessoal, porque eles sempre que se encontravam levavam uma pastinha… como não existia internet e tudo mais, e não tinham os livros com as publicações sobre rap, o que você tinha de informação era o que você colheu dum jornal, um recorte de jornal, um recorte de revista e tal, e então você colocava aquele numa pastinha e levava com as tags, as assinaturas, e trocava, para conhecer um pouco da cultura. Era uma maneira de trocar informação. Só que o pessoal que estava ligado mais à dança, não necessariamente se ligava muito nisso. Tinha um pessoal mais cultural, mais pela cultura, e tinha um pessoal mais querendo trocar essa informação. E ali ele se reuniram na Roosevelt com essa função, de trocar essas pastinhas, de trocar ideia... daí que vira a posse."

In fact, Roosevelt Square became known in hip hop history as the place where the first Brazilian *posse* was born, Sindacato Negro. According to Yoshitange (2013), as a youth organization, the *posse* emerged after activist Milton Sales's took the initiatve to create a collective, the Hip hop Organized Movement [MH2O – Movimento Hip Hop Organizado] (1987), that aimed at politicizing hip hop youth and redirect their actions and revindications into more organized activities: "a racially militant attitude flourished in Roosevelt Plaza. Freed from the dance-party scene and attending black movement meetings in the vicinity, the Roosevelt Plaza rappers formed the first Brazilian posse (a collection of rap groups) Sindacato Negro (Black Union) in 1988" (Burdick 2013, 31). From this moment, rappers, who were already in close contact with the Black Movement, began building their own militancy and spreading hip hop's core values (attitude, respect, unity, knowledge, are some examples) to reclaim justice and dignity for Black, peripheral dwellers. In the beginning of the 1900s, Posses such as Aliança Negra (from Tiradentes, in the eastern part of São Paulo), Conceitos de Rua (from Capão Redondo, in the Southern area of the city) and Posse Hausa (from São Bernardo do Campo) began spreading all around the metropolitan area of the city and their actions took place in less central spaces. In these years, moreover, local administrations encouraged and supported the use of hip hop as a tool for social integration for youth living in the peripheries (Rocha, Domenich & Casseano 2001): in the 1990s, hip hop culture functions through pedagogic actions and takes the shape of a Black youth movement, fact that is unprecedent in the country's social history (Andrade 1999).

As per Pardue's analysis, from 1992 to 1996 the discourse on *negritude* is expanded and centered around a specific Afro-Brazilian ideology; artists focus on finding their cultural roots and for the first time the Afrocentric narrative is articulated by Black working-class citizens instead of middle-class intellectuals or activists, through the appropriation of symbols of resistance and directing their works more towards a political struggle:

> The second historical moment of hip hop development involves an expansion of the term "*black*" (left untranslated in Brazilian Portuguese) to include a greater and more descriptive level of social critique. This moment from 1992 to 1996 marks a relatively high level of consciousness symbolized in more systematic involvement with MNU (United Black Movement) and other black political groups, in addition to a more acute sensibility to diaspora and Pan-Africanism (103).

The third phase identified by Pardue corresponds to the years between 1996 and 1999 and is characterized by the rising of Racionais MC's. After releasing "Pânico na zona sul" as part of the independent LP *Consciência Black* (Zimbabwe records, 1988), in 1990 the group records their first

solo album, *Holocausto Urbano* followed by *Raio X do Brasil*, in 1993. These works set the ground for their 1997 album, *Sobrevivendo no Inferno*, a huge commercial success despite their well-known refusal to appear on mainstream media. The narrative of these years, which Racionais embody perfectly, is mostly directed towards describing life in the *periferia*, offering true reports of violence and poverty. *Negritude* is seen as part of everyday and it is depicted as a consequence of the injustices of the system, generating what is considered the Brazilian version of "gangsta rap:"

> the São Paulo hip hop community began to figure race as ultimately secondary to socio-geographical realities of the *periferia*. To some extent, *periferia* and the marginal have always been significant in hip hop, but during these years, the shantytown report of violence and poverty (*denúncia*) became the unshakable paradigm of hip hop narratives. Hip hoppers explained *negritude* as part of the banal nightmare that is "reality" and replaced a focus on Afro-centricity with brief qualifiers of discrimination, thus depicting blackness as a mere side effect of the *sistema* (system) (111).

Moreover, the year of 1993 marks the beginning of rap's first phase of true success - traceable, again, through Racionais' albums: by 1998, after the release of *Sobrevivendo no Inferno*, rap experiences a true boom in terms of production, events and local participation. This enabled a process of renovation and opening towards new paradigms and styles (Yoshinaga 2013).

Finally, Pardue identifies a fourth moment, where "*negritude* involves a competitive and creative struggle between the aesthetics and ethics of the "marginal" and the "positive" hip hoppers" (115). This moment corresponds to recent times, from the year of 1999 onwards, and is characterized by the common search for "concrete solutions beginning with sharper strategies of collectivity built on education and entertainment" (115). In line with these common goals, the year of 2002 sees the officialization of the Brazilian affiliation to the Zulu Nation by means of Nino Brown, who was nominated "King" by Afrika Bambaataa himself. Zulu Nation Brazil operates as an NGO and ended up administrating Diadema's "Casa do Hip Hop" during several years.

Moreover, the early 2000s also see a shift in the perception and acknowledgment of hip hop artists as worthy participants and true agents of change in the country's social and political scenario. As I have previously explained in this chapter, the emergence and evolution of hip hop culture in Brazil was strongly linked to the emergence of activism in defense of social, economic and racial equality as the pillars of the newborn democracy. Hence, most performers were also politically very active and involved in the defense of the rights of Afro-Brazilians, as well as the living conditions of *periferia* dwellers and other minorities, and more in general in defense of the equal distribution of wealth and rights in order to achieve a true democracy (very different from the

racial one sponsored by Brazilian institutions). In this sense, since the decade of the 1990s most rappers had been manifesting through their works a very clear and open opinion against those capitalist and neoliberal measures that had been implemented back in the late 1970s and were showing their results at that time (1990s-2000s). The cutbacks in public expenditure or the fiscal and commercial reforms that favored the market pull work as good examples of these measures (Camargos 2015). According to Camargos (2015), in fact,

> this process of capitalist modernization, underpinned by the Brazilian State, was seen as negative throughout the production of those rappers performing during the 1990s and the following decade, being this a cultural practice that was part of these transformations while simultaneously nurturing from them and from the societal atmosphere that the time brought. In the middle of this shift, the public interest had not been taken into the necessary consideration, with the exception of one-off measures that aimed at mitigating the tensions and easing the pressure within society, without ever engaging with its causes (Camargos 2015, 116-117).[153]

If, on the one hand, hip hop culture found its fuel and motivation in the social and economic void that segmented Brazilian citizens; on the other it was precisely this void and the State's negligence towards all those second class subjects what rappers reproved and verbally attacked in their rhymes. Also, rappers became known for being active members of their communities, not only as their spokesmen but more importantly as true "multiplying agents" who educated and disseminated information. Therefore, hip hop's political engagement against the State's exploitation and neglect manifested both through creativity and artistic work, social commitment and active participation. In addition to this, hip hop artists have never hidden their political preferences: rappers have always condemned the capitalist and neoliberal turn as one the major causes of the aggravation of both levels of unemployment and precariousness, as well as exposed the general feeling of distress experienced by the working class who was mostly affected by the economic changes, while being completely disregarded by politicians (Camargos 2015).

The participation and legitimation of hip hop artists as political subjects has always been ignored or even ostracized by the Brazilian establishment and its power institutions. Until the early 2000s, rappers and hip hop artists in general were rarely taken into consideration; the same

153 Original text: "Esse processo de modernização capitalista, respaldado pelo Estado brasileiro, foi visto em negativo na produção dos rappers atuantes durante os anos 1990 e na década seguinte, que, como não poderia deixar de ser, era uma prática cultural inserida nessas transformações e que simultaneamente se alimentava dela e de toda atmosfera societal que o período proporcionou. No bojo dessas mudança, os interesses públicos não foram levados na devida conta [...], salvo medidas pontuais que visavam atenuar as tensões e diminuir a pressão da sociedade, sem jamais atacar suas causas."

happened with their lyrics and their claims. However, with the election of Brazil's 35th president, Inácio Lula da Siva – better known simply as Lula – the situation changes quite radically. Founder of the Workers' Party (PT – Partido dos Trabalhadores) Lula has long been considered Brazil's most successful president and he is definitely one of the country's most popular politicians: among the positive results achieved during his government (2003-2010) there has been the implementation of social programs such as Bolsa Família [Family Allowance] and Fome Zero [Zero Hunger]. The latter, in fact, was a network of programs of federal assistance – among which there was also Bolsa Família, according to which poor families had access to financial aid and free education for their children – with the objective of eradicating hunger and extreme poverty from the country. Due to his humble origins and his insight, his initiatives as a politician were mostly directed towards the poorest sections of the country while still operating towards gradual reformism. In this sense, the impact of his approach to politics and social change has become known as "lulismo" [lulism], a term coined by André Singer to identify the political strategy of balancing the interests of the private industry with the ones of organized labor forces and achieve general agreement among the population and the various political forces.

According to Toni C, hip hop played a crucial role in Lula's first election. In fact, the founder and director of LiteraRua expressed his clear opinion about president Lula during our conversation. When asked about his opinion on the relationship between power institutions and hip hop, Toni answered that

> today, the authorities tolerate rap. But it has never been well received. Imagine there is a movement that elects the Federal President… I mean, rap didn't elect Lula by itself, but the culture still transformed people's way of thinking. A cognitive transformation is much more difficult [to achieve] than the building of a bridge. Einstein used to say this: it's easier to destroy an atom rather than to destroy a prejudice. So, it helps understanding what we're talking about. We are talking about the impact [of hip hop culture]. Racionais MCs' were greatly responsible for Black Brazilians knowing their history, being proud of their origins, for the poor knowing that he doesn't need to be ashamed of himself, he needs to have self-esteem. Lula is a consequence of all this. […] He is a great catalyst for all of this, this change of reasoning. Before changing or creating the middle class, one needs to change the way you think about himself, his worldview, his ability to travel and know the world, and so on (Toni C., May 2018, private conversation).[154]

[154] Original: "Hoje o poder tolera o rap. Mas nunca foi bem visto. Imagina que você tem um movimento que elege um Presidente da República... Quer dizer, não foi só o rap sozinho que elegeu o Lula, mas você tem uma cultura que transformou a maneira das pessoas pensarem. Uma transformação cognitiva é mais difícil do que construir uma ponte. O Einstein falava disso: é mais fácil destruir um átomo do que destruir um preconceito. Então, dá bem para perceber do que estamos falando. É disso que estamos falando: desse impacto. O Racionais MCs é um dos grandes responsáveis pelos negros saberem sua história, ter orgulho da sua origem, o pobre saber que ele não tem que ter vergonha de si mesmo, autoestima, etc. Consequência disso é o Lula. Mas isso tem um grande caminho, tem uma série de outras coisas intrincadas. Mas é um grande catalizador disso tudo, essa transformação de raciocínio. Antes de mudar e se virar a

Therefore, hip hop's role in the election of Brazil's 35th president wasn't only that of openly supporting his program and his victory, but more importantly that of setting the ground in order for his message to reach the population and win their votes. Artists such as Dj Hum & Thaíde, Nelson Triunfo and Racionais MCs, for instance, publicly took part to Lula's political campaign. And, in acknowledgment and respect towards the support given, once elected Lula officially received a delegation of some of Brazil's most knows hip hop artists (MV Bill, GOG, Rappin' Hood, among others) in Brasilia, at the Palacio do Planalto, showing full support to the movement – Lula, at the end of the meeting, wore a "hip hop" cap offered by the guests – and true recognition of its contributions. As Toni explained:

> Once elected, the first movement that Lula invited to Brasilia was the hip hop movement. There, he put on a hip hop cap. He hosted a group of rappers, and this was the first social movement that he hosted after being elected. Never before in the history of Brazil had a Federal President wanted to welcome the hip hop movement. Don't you think this is a provocation? He's under arrest at the moment, so it was clearly an affront. And is hip hop also under arrest? A part of it is, even without Carandiru, a part is behind bars. Another part has been killed, like Sabotage. And another part is keeping quiet (Toni C., May 2018, personal conversation).[155]

Being the author of the book *O Hip Hop está morto* [Hip hop is dead; 2012; 2014] - a novel where hip hop becomes a person and takes Samara, a young student eager to meet "him", through a journey that touches the most important steps of the culture in Brazil - Toni C.'s perspective with regards to the evolution of hip hop culture in Brazil is quite biting mainly with regards to its most recent phases. According to him, if on the one hand hip hop - and the people it represented - gained true recognition with Lula's election and throughout his government, on the other hand the new context and conditions created by the President's measures, as well as the access to internet for example, unfortunately led to a loss in terms of power and references when it comes to hip hop as a countercultural expression. As he discloses:

classe c, classe média, e tudo mais, antes disso voce precisa de mudar a sua maneira de pensar sobre si mesmo, a sua maneira de ver o mundo, possibilidade de viajar e conhecer o mundo, e assim vai."

155 "O Lula, quando se elegeu, o primeiro movimento organizado que ele recebeu em Brasília foi o hip hop. Ele colocou bonzinho do hip hop ali. Ele recebeu um coletivo de gente do rap, foi o primeiro movimento social que ele recebeu assim que ele assumiu. Nunca antes na história do Brasil um presidente queria receber o hip hop… Você acha que isso não é afronta? Ele tá preso na hora dessa, então é afronta. E o hip hop tá preso? Uma parte tá, mesmo não tendo Carandiru, uma parte tá presa. Uma parte foi morta, como o Sabotage. E uma parte tá calada."

O Hip Hop Está Morto revolves around those issues, and it is produced basically in that time. I wrote it in 2001, but is was part of that suffering, of that moment, of the reflection of that time. There are many factors, I would not point just at only one. I am not sure whether internet is the major one, for sure it played a role, it changed the whole world, hip hop wasn't the only one to go through this. Internet had many positive roles for the movement. It happens, it's a generational matter, people get old, it needs to be renewed. Rap is a movement of protest, hip hop is a counterculture, and contesting, saying "no" to those who is in charge, is associated with being young. The guys who were part of the movement, creating music and all that, becomes well-established, he becomes "a situation," let's call it this way. How can he continue to express opposition if today he is well-established? As far as politics are concerned, that is the time when Lula is elected. In that time, we witnessed to the eradication of unemployment in Brazil. Lula creates employment. He empowers poor people, and poor people start having more economic resources and identifying with the middle class - this term I am not so fond of – and based on this they stop thinking that they are poor. So, if people are not poor anymore, how can they listen to rap, which is music made by poor people? This is one way of seeing things. If there's full employment, or in other words, it is easy to get a job, how can rap build a narrative against society? Hence it dies, it loses its authenticity (Toni C., May 2018, personal conversation).[156]

In his book, Toni C gives literary shape to his personal analysis of the changes that have affected the hip hop community in Brazil in the past decades. Summarizing his view, Toni argues that hip hop, as people used to know it, "dies" around the beginning of the decade of 2000s, not only because of a generational shift, but also because of the loss of symbolic elements, as well as physical spaces, that in those years were evolving into something different due to the different socio-political context that was taking shape within the country. As he explained during our conversation, "hip hop's program becomes more serious between the years of 2000 and 2005/2007" and responsible for this is a "new generation of freestylers who pop up after Eminem's film *8 Mile*."[157] These youngsters had no resources to record their music and began rapping in the streets around 2003. Born in the end of the 1990s, therefore during the heydays of the hip hop movement,

[156] "*O Hip hop está morto* tem a ver com isso, e é produzido basicamente nesse período. Foi em 2001 que eu escrevi, mas fazia parte dessa angustia, desse momento, dessa reflexão desse tempo. Tem vários fatores, eu não atribuía a um único. Nem sei se a internet é a principal, certamente ela tem papel, ela mudou o mundo inteiro, não é só o hip hop que passou isso. A internet tem várias funções positivas para o movimento. Acontece, tem uma questão geracional, o pessoal vai ficando velho, enfim, é preciso renovar. O rap é um movimento de contestação, o hip hop é uma contracultura, e é típico de quem é mais novo contestar, dizer não concordo com o quem tá aí. O cara, faz parte desse movimento, cria música e tal, e passa a ser consagrado, passa a ser "situação," vamos chamar assim. Como é que ele vai continuar sendo oposição, hoje, se ele está estabelecido? Inclusive politicamente. Politicamente nesse período, politicamente é quando o Lula é eleito. A gente tem nesse período, um extermínio do desemprego no Brasil. É criado emprego. O Lula cria emprego. Ele fortaleceu o pobre, o pobre passa a ter mais recurso, ele se identifica com a classe média - esse termo que não gosto muito - e a partir disso ele começa achar que ele não é pobre também. Se eu não sou pobre, como é que eu vou ouvir rap, que é música de pobre? É uma forma de ver as coisas. Se existe pleno emprego, ou seja, se é fácil conseguir emprego, como é que eu vou construir um discurso no rap dizendo que a sociedade está uma bosta? Então a coisa vai morrendo, vai perder veracidade."

[157] "O hip hop tem um programa mais sério lá entre 2000 e 2005/2007. É decretado o fim do hip hop, a falência dele, a morte desse movimento, e passa a surgir um rap das ruas mesmo, pela molecada que quer ouvir, quer fazer música, e não tem aonde tocar, não tem dá para gravar disco, não dá para fazer, não tem onde vender, não tem nada, e eles começam a fazer freestyle na rua. Ele se apresentam como uma nova geração. Isso em 2003/2005."

from parents who listened to rap or even produced rap, they grew with hip hop as a clear reference and as one of their strongest aspirations. Toni C. explained that

> they began rapping in the streets, at the entrance or at the exit of parties, or because they had to no money to get in, and they battled with their friends. This generation consecrated Pro Jota, Emicida, Marechal and Rashid. They are considered the new generation, that is still around today. Along with a number of women who became rappers: Karol Conka is one of them (Toni C., May 2018, personal conversation).[158]

This new generation of rappers also seems to correspond to what Sterling identifies as the next phase of Brazilian hip hop. Following Pardue's considerations, Sterling (2012) establishes that another era takes place after 2004: defined as "the mediatization of hip hop narratives" (180), it comes as a consequence of the spreading of internet connection in less advantaged areas, allowing hip hop to achieve major expansion. As follows:

> With the greater mediatization of hip-hop occurring through websites dedicated to the medium, the proliferation of MP3s and video shares, growing social networks like Facebook, the inception of MTV-Brasil and later YouTube, hip-hop networks expanded spatially and temporally. […] Video, more so than any other media, allows hip-hop performers to transcend their spatial racialization, enabling declarative moments of the hidden transcript (189).

Partly in line with Toni C's considerations, Sterling's analysis focuses exclusively on the impact of internet and social media in less advantaged urban areas. However, as I have previously unfolded here, the massive changes that came as a consequence of the spreading of internet (a fact that has been globally registered) were just part of the shifts that led to a new wave of performers and styles within hip hop in Brazil. Yet, according to Toni C. hip hop continued "under attack," this being proved by the shortness of life of one of his most promising artists, Sabotage, who truly embodied a new generation that was embracing this new, mediatic path, and who sadly was killed at a very

158 "Tem uma geração de freestyle que vem depois do film *8 Mile* do Eminem, como consequência disso. É o moleque que tem 15 anos de idade, ele nasceu no final da década de 90, no auge no movimento hip hop. Então o pai dele ouvia rap, ele é filho de quem ouvia rap, de quem fazia rap, e ele tá querendo fazer rap. Como que ele faz rap? Brincando no meio da rua, na calçada, antes de entrar no baile ou saindo do baile, ou porque não tem grana para entrar no baile, duelando com os amigos. E é uma geração que consagra o Pro Jota, o Emicida, o Marechal, o Rashid. São considerados a nova geração, que tá aí até hoje. Junto com uma série de mulheres que passaram a fazer rap, tem desde o começo, mas passa a ter um protagonismo muito grande das mulheres, a Karol Conka é uma delas.

young age and at the beginning of his career as a rapper.[159] During our conversation, he summed up his story:

> I could say that, materially, Sabotage is part of that branch, of those promises of something new that was about to come. Sabotage is this guy who spent twenty, no almost thirty years, longing for the opportunity to record his album. He died at the age of 29. He recorded one album, took part to the film *Carandiru* and to another film. Till then it was imaginable for a rapper to be part of a film! He began getting on TV, which was another thing that rappers didn't do, because he understood that music only worked when associated to image. His career was meteoric. He did a lot of things, and in less than two years. He was a big promise, the great hope of a renewal of the movement. He was a very talented guy, almost illiterate, who came from the *favela* and left it to record an album, and when he finally succeeded, two years later he was killed, in the very peak of his career. This is Sabotage's story, in short (Toni C. 2018).[160]

To Toni C, Sabotage's "short story" or meteoric career works as a good example of how hip hop was still facing deep struggles and was still being ostracized. Moreover, his attitude towards the media must be considered pioneering. As a matter of fact, most of today's best known rappers have massive media exposure: Emicida and Karol Conka, for instance, regularly work on television today in programs such as *Manos e Minas* and *Superbonita*, respectively.

As a matter of fact and despite its transformations, hip hop, as a countercultural expression, has been globally charged with political claims. After its emergence in the Bronx as a party-oriented practice it soon became the main channel for the free expression of discontent by means of those who were excluded and marginalized. More specifically, hip hop spread around the world because of globalization and as a consequence of the economic shift and the reorganization of the urban space that took place after neoliberal measures. In this sense, hip hop can be related to what Santos defines "counter-hegemonic globalization" (Santos 2005), and that is

159 Further information on Sabotage's death can be found at https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/fsp/cotidian/ff2501200301.htm.

160 Original: "Eu podia dizer, fisicamente, o Sabotage é um dessas vertentes, essas promessas de um novo que estava por vir, e o Sabotage é um cara que levou vinte anos querendo gravar o disco dele pra cantar, para fazer o rap, quase 30 anos, porque ele morreu com 29 anos. Ele gravou um disco, participou no filme *Carandiru*, participou de outro filme. Até então um rapper no cinema era coisa inimaginável! Começou a ir para televisão, que era outra coisa que o rap não fazia, ele começou a criar uma nova forma de fazer o movimento, com visual muito forte, associando visual com música, porque ele sacou naquela época que a música só anda com imagem e a carreira dele foi meteórica, fez um monte de coisas, tudo em 2 anos de carreira, porque depois de dois anos ele foi assassinado. Essa era a grande promessa, a grande esperança de uma renovação do movimento, era uma cara talentosíssimo, praticamente analfabeto, dentro da favela, que sai para construir um disco, levou anos para construir um disco, foi necessário quase o movimento de papo inteiro se juntar para construir o disco dele por falta de questão de recursos etc. e quando ele finalmente consegue o disco dois anos depois ele é assassinado, em pleno auge da carreira. Essa é a história do Sabotage em resumo."

> The extensive set of networks, initiatives, organizations and movements fighting against the economic, social and political consequences of hegemonic globalization and that oppose to the conceptions of global development underlying to it, while at the same time they offer alternative ones. Counter-hegemonic globalization focuses on the fight against social exclusion. Given that social exclusion always comes as a result of unequal power relations, counter-hegemonic globalization is driven by a redistributive *ethos* in the broadest sense of the word, that entails the redistribution of material, social, political, cultural and symbolic resources. Since exchanges and unequal power relations are defined by politics and laws, counter-hegemonic globalization unfolds into political and legal battles guided by the idea that legal and political structures and practices can be questioned through alternative political and legal principles. I called these alternative principles and these struggles in their defense "subaltern cosmopolitan politics and laws"
>
> (Santos 2005, 7).[161]

Operating through collective global actions and using transnational networks, counter-hegemonic globalization finds in hip hop culture one of its channels. Even if today, in Brazil, the hip hop movement has less glare within the media and the approach to music production, and the new generation of rappers grew up with totally different cultural references and political panorama from the one embraced and experienced by the first performers, the culture still operates within the country as a multiplying network of positive social actions and information.

[161] Original: "O conjunto vasto de redes, iniciativas, organizações e movimentos que lutam contra as consequências económicas, sociais e políticas da globalização hegemónica e que se opõem às concepções de desenvolvimento mundial a esta subjacentes, ao mesmo tempo que propõem concepções alternativas. A globalização contra-hegemónica centra-se nas lutas contra a exclusão social. Atendendo a que a exclusão social é sempre produto de relações de poder desiguais, a globalização contra-hegemónica é animada por um *ethos* redistributivo no sentido mais amplo da expressão, o qual implica a redistribuição de recursos materiais, sociais, políticos, culturais e simbólicos. Uma vez que as trocas e as relações de poder desiguais se cristalizam na política e no direito, a globalização contra-hegemónica desdobra-se em lutas políticas e lutas jurídicas orientadas pela ideia de que é possível pôr em causa as estruturas e as práticas político-jurídicas através de princípios político-jurídicos alternativos. A estes princípios alternativos e às lutas em sua defesa chamei política e legalidade cosmopolita subalterna (Santos, 2002: 465; 2003)."

CHAPTER 5

FEMALE VOICES FROM SÃO PAULO'S RAP SCENE

After presenting various reflections on hip hop culture and rap made by women, in this final chapter I focus exclusively on female rappers from São Paulo. Following what can be considered the "path" of the research I carried out for this project, here I share some considerations on those female performers who took part to hip hop culture from its the early ages (*velha escola*) as well as in current times (*nova escola*). The chapter is built according to the material I collected while staying in São Paulo between April and May 2018, and more specifically based on the informal conversations I had with rappers Rose MC, Lívia Cruz, Keli Rosa and Sherylaine. Each performer shared her personal experience in rap and the struggles of being a woman in a male centered practice.

Due to my short stay in the country, and considering the dimension of the Brazilian musical landscape (rap has spread throughout the country in the past forty years), the material I collected represents just a small portion of the field of female rappers. Hence, my intention here is to offer an introduction to women's contributions and the issues that come with the choice of doing rap as a woman, with the hope and aim to continue the research I stared in 2018 in the future.

5.1 The first woman to record a rap song in Brazil: Sharylaine and her feminist militancy

As I have already mentioned when analyzing the Portuguese scenario, there is a tendency to cut off or downgrade women's contributions to cultural practices such as rap and hip hop. Attempts to silence their voices can be detected not only in current times but even more clearly in the past. Women, in fact, have been consistently ignored as contributors to the culture's study, while being constantly objectified by their male peers' lyrics. Yet, despite this unappealing prospect, women in rap have never given up and have persistently shown that they do not stand silent when facing male hegemony and sexual objectification.

As far as Brazilian rap is concerned, on the one hand a close analysis of previous studies on its "old school" [velha escola] performers shows that female voices have been silenced, with a similar situation characterizing also their media exposure. On the other hand, by taking into

consideration the different works produced in those years, as well as footage from documentaries, and according to what many participants state today, it also becomes clear that strong, female personalities emerged from the culture's early steps onward. Performers such as Rose MC, Rubia, Sharylaine, for instance, regularly took part to hip hop gatherings at the São Bento station and to well-known night venues. Rose MC explained me this during our conversation:

> Sharylaine was already part of it; there was Rubia, who then took part to RPW, a rap group made by two men and one woman. She had greater importance because of a night club called Santana Samba, that once a week gave space to the "new talents." So on that day only those who did not have their record produced could sing. It was during a party, and she presented it. This was really cool because the DJ back then had this intuition to put a woman, Rubia, in charge. Everybody wanted to perform at the Santana Samba and she put people on the waiting list. She was very organized. Rubia has always been very professional. I had to wait so many months before I could sing. They hosted parties all week long and on Wednesdays there were the "new talents". […] She had more visibility for being the mediator/presenter. And she was a rapper, in fact in my opinion one of the best (Rose MC, private conversation, 2018).[162]

What Rose is saying is also testified by the song "No tempo do Fundão" by Filosofia de Rua. "Fundão" was how people referred precisely to the Santana Samba venue. Hence, the fact that none of these women has been taken into consideration when building a body of works about hip hop culture is still very surprising. Most studies (Andrade 1996, 1999; Pimentel 1997; Herschmann 1997; Silva 1998; Buzo 2011; Teperman 2015) offer a wide range of analytical perspectives on this peculiar culture and its impact on Brazilian peripheral youth, but do not bring up any relevant considerations on its female participants. I doubt that this was totally intentional. Yet, it still exposes the extent to which male dominance is incorporated within society and cultural production. In opposite trend to these studies, Derek Pardue actually dedicates the last chapter of his *Ideologies of marginality* (2008) to rethink and discuss gender constructions within the *periferia*. As he points out:

[162] The conversation took place in Portuguese, in São Paulo, on May 24, 2018. Original: "Tinha a Sharylaine, ela já estava no meio; a Rubia, que depois participou do RPW, que era um grupo de rap, eram dois homens e ela que era mulher. Mas ela teve uma importância maior porque tinha uma casa noturna, chamada Santana Samba; e uma vez por semana tinha uma parte que era "novos talentos", então naquele dia so quem não tinha disco gravado cantava. Era dentro dum baile, e ela era apresentadora. Então, isso foi muito legal porque eles colocaram - o DJ na época teve essa visão- colocou uma mulher, que era a Rubia, e aí todo o mundo queria cantar no Santana Samba, e ela colocava na lista de espera, ela era muito organizada, sempre foi muito séria a Rúbia. Eu tive que esperar não sei quantos meses para cantar. eles tinham um baile a semana inteira e na quarta feira tinham os novos talentos. Era no bairro de Santana. Foi bem legal essa época. E ela teve também destaque por ser a mediadora/apresentadora. E era rapper, alias uma das que eu acho melhores."

> in both the United States and Brazil, hip hop performers and scholars alike have traditionally understood masculinity as common sense and "natural"—an essence of hardness that requires no reflection beyond statements of class and race predicaments. Thus, "gender" discussions in hip hop, scholarly or otherwise, have usually been about the depiction of women in lyrics and videos (Pardue 2008, 121).

What Pardue also registers, then, is precisely the lack of space and voice given hip hop's female participants, while also discussing how masculinity runs within the culture as an ideology of power and social change. According to his analysis, masculinity and femininity in hop hop come as a result of "a complex system of gendered situations, (domestic spheres), language (mano/mana), discourses (feminism, violence, and periferia), institutions (Geledés, Fala Preta!), and musicality (sounds, body images, hip hop "elements")" that find their foundations "in the historical, psychological, and cultural systems of patriarchy, attitude, and machismo" (122).

Particularly the latter permeates the most different spheres within hip hop, and above all *atitude*. As Pardue explains throughout his work, "attitude" involves a tension between behavior, opinion and judgement, becoming an acquired posture that requires constant care, especially for *periferia* dwellers. Involving a series of notions, such as knowledge and "being real", *atitude* is also strictly linked to the notion of hegemonic masculinity, and the consequent notion of femininity (123), both designed through hip hoppers' experience of the themselves and the world around them. Gender dynamics and gender constructions within hip hop, then, present issues most probably connected to the role that women are traditionally assigned within the Brazilian society (mainly in the domestic sphere). This translates into the fact that

> femininity is a status of partiality; that is, presumed values and tendencies of womanhood preclude women from fully participating in hip hop. Their link to "reality," indexed […] in terms of experiences with urban transportation at night, entrepreneurship, and sound production, is lacking. Hip hop males perceive women as weak providers of "information"; they have difficulties in sustaining a "hardcore" exchange of ideas (125)

Moreover, the role played by women within hip hop seems substantially connected to their "image, vocal tonalities and body movement" (126), features that men tend to use to objectify them or to justify very protective attitudes: "in so doing, male hip hoppers (and many female hip hoppers) confirm a more general notion of Brazilian masculinity within the paradigm of patriarchy." Hence, gender is indeed an active discourse within hip hop but it is still "configured as male-female relations, public versus private domains, and a set of 'natural' affinities" (126). Derek Pardue also

argues that, by doing this, hip hop performers and participants emphasize the culture as a field of "homosociality", borrowing the term from Eve Sedgwick's theory (1985).[163]

Yet, within this scenario, Pardue understands that the emergence of feminism as a critique to machismo finds its representation in some institutions strictly linked to hip hop culture. Among these, the NGO Geledés is the most effective. Founded in 1988, the Black Woman Institute [Instituto da Mulher Negra] was pioneer in debating gender, race, popular culture and education. Moreover, it soon became a platform for negritude and feminist hip hoppers. In fact, the relationship between the Geledés institute and hip hop, and later women in hip hop, dates back in the 1990s, as Pardue again describes:

> In the early '90s members recognized the importance of popular culture as a vehicle of communication and a way to attract young black men and women. With respect to hip hop, Geledés is most recognized for its organization of the Projeto Rappers! (Project Rappers!) in 1992. […] After the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, Geledés extended the idea of Projeto Rappers to more directly engage with issues of gender roles and hip hop and thus created Femini Rappers (Silva 1999, 96). (Pardue 2008, 149).

The contributions given to the feminist cause by Geledés up to today are countless. The Institute has been building a strong reputation within the national panorama since it was founded in 1988. Furthermore, its connections to hip hop culture allow us to argue that the culture is used also to articulate paradigms connected both to feminism and to negritude. However, issues such as machismo, patriarchy, racism, violence and masculinity as a whole have hindered the emergence of women as active voices, who have always been far from being subaltern and relegate to "back up" roles. Pardue, then, concludes that:

> In Brazil, hip hop's elements are gendered, as girls and young women seem to find space only as dancers and occasional rappers. As rappers, with few exceptions, women reinforce femininity as passive and imitative in relation to conventional notions of masculinity. In sum, while Brazilian hip hoppers take aim on criticizing and opposing much of what "the system" offers in the way of race, class, socio-geography, national history, and art, they seem to turn the other cheek with regard to gender critique (158).

[163] According to Sedgwick's theory, "male homosocial desire" refers to same-sex relationships that are not of romantic nature. The neologism "homosocial", in fact, was deployed to distinguish from "homosexual". Taking her examples from the 19th century English literature, this groundbreaking scholar argues that male homosociality often prevents the building of male-female relationships and has oppressive effects both on women and men.

Thus, gender critique and gender deconstruction was not among the central topics addressed by male rappers. As mentioned above, however, women were discussed through rap lyrics. With the regards to this, Matsunaga (2008) argues that through the social representation given by rap lyrics, hip hop culture builds gender identities (109). By taking into consideration 32 lyrics both by male and female performes, Mastunaga identifies some difference between them: if on the one hand, women use rap to express and share their personal experiences and build their own identities, on the other hand lyrics made by men are more "wide-ranginge" [mais abrangetens] as they depict events that take place the neighborhood and that do not regard exclusively themselves. This shows how women employ rap as a platform to speak about themselves and as a means to exercise their right to speak out, while also questioning the social constructions build around women. In fact

> female rappers share representations that are already built-in, yet they contribute to the development of new representations by establishing new elements, disseminating other forms of understanding women who, besides being mothers and a partners, also organize themselves into groups and struggles, offering, therefore, references in the building of the world and of women (Mastunaga 2008, 110).[164]

Therefore, despite being timid, women's participation to hip hop culture, and more specifically to rap, has always been fundamental, not only for its renewal of the postulates that regulate the culture itself (machismo, patriarchy, homosociality, etc.), but also for its contribution to a broader debate on femininity, feminism and women's representation as non-traditional but equally legitimated. Works by Sharylaine – the first woman to record a rap song – and Dina Di – the first woman to achieve true success as a rapper – function as good examples of the situation explained earlier here.

Born Ildsaine Mônica da Silva, rapper Sharylaine's long-lasting career "officially" started in 1989 with the track "Nossos Dias" being part of the compilation *Consciência Black Vol. 1*: her track addresses themes such as morality, women's roles, racism, class inequalities and rap as a means of expression and denunciation. Also, being the only woman alongside seven other male groups playing in the compilation, I believe that her refrain works really well as a resume of her pioneer role: "Don't pay attention to this darlin, this is prose / And if everything renovates Sharaylaine is its full-proof" [Não ligue meu bem isto é prosa / e se tudo se renova Sharylaine está a toda prova].

164 Original text: "As rappers, compartilham representações já arraigadas, mas contribuem na formação de novas representações ao instituir elementos novos, divulgando outras formas de compreensão da mulher, que, além de ser mãe e companheira, também se organiza em grupos e luta, propondo, portanto, referências na construção do mundo e da mulher."

However, Sharylaine's contact with hip hop culture dates earlier that the album's release. Born in the East zone of São Paulo, her involvement began quite early, as she explained me during our conversation in São Paulo on May 24, 2018:

> [Hip hop] culture reached me very early, because I was an assiduous visitor of [black] parties. And I came in contact with the culture through a break-dance group during the parties. And, with our exchanges, we started going out together, and I was introduced to São Bento, that was a space to practice breakdance as well as a meeting point. There I began understating a bit more of what hip hop was, yet back then it was all about breaking. […] There I began hearing the first rap rhymes, produced by those who were there and it was listening to one of these songs that I decided that I wanted to sing and not necessarily dance (Sharylaine, personal conversation, 2018).[165]

Before being the first female solo rapper to record a track, then, Sharylaine experienced being a break-dancer – yet she had some limitations after falling during a basketball game and injuring her knee – and more importantly a composer: "When I heard the song I said: this is what I want to do. I started singing my friend's song, changing it in order to put everything into feminine and to add some things, some ideas I already had. I started singing "our" song and I started composing."[166] Furthermore, and again before recording her first track, by 1986 Sharylaine had already founded what today is considered the first Brazilian all-girls rap group, Rap Girl's, with her cousin CityLee and DJ Zulu Master.

Being from the first generation of young Afro-Brazilians performing rap, Sharylaine has to be considered a fundamental witness of the culture's history and evolution in Brazil. Therefore, when I met her in São Paulo during my last days of research, I took the opportunity to ask her if during those early years there were other women/girls taking part to the gatherings at the São Bento Station. We also discussed the reasons why the number of female participants was definitely less than the male ones: was that because girls were less interested in hip hop than boy or because they struggles more than them to actually be present at the gathering? Her answer was acute:

165 Original: "A cultura veio para mim muito cedo, porque eu era uma frequentadora assídua de bailes. e conheci a cultura através de uma gangue de break, dentro dos bailes. E ali, na troca, nós começamos a andar juntos, e eu fui apresentada à São Bento, que era um espaço da prática do breaking e de encontro também. Lá eu fui conhecendo um pouco do que era o hip hop, porém naquela época tudo para nós era breaking. [...] Ali, eu comecei a ouvir as primeiras rimas de rap produzidas por quem frequentava ali e foi ouvindo uma dessas rimas que eu decidi que eu queria cantar e não necessariamente dançar."

166 "Quando vem a música, eu falava "é isso que que quero fazer". E aí eu começo a cantar a música do amigo, altero a música para colocar tudo no sentido feminino e acrescento algumas coisas, algumas ideias que eu já tinha. Começo a cantar a música dele, a nossa música já transformada, e começo a compor."

> The streets are not for women. It was like this until yesterday. Today, in the 21st century, a change of consciousness is occurring according to which any place is a woman's place. But I am referring to a time when the streets were not for women. I heard my father complainig about the fact that I went out while my brother went to bed early. I went to the parties until morning. Why? Because it wasn't for me to be around in the streets. This is fundamental [to understand]. Also: women have very different roles and one doesn't find a space that is open [to her] in the first place. So, for example, I was there, yes, but I came with a gang, I didn't get there on my own. I don't know how it would have been if I had got here by myself. I got there with them and therefore everybody respected me. But I don't think it would have been that easy as it was (Sharylaine, personal conversation, 2018).[167]

What also makes Sharylaine a central figure within Brazilian rap is her militancy as a feminist and her commitment to the defense of Black people's rights. This is clear not only in her lyrics, but more importantly in her interventions during debates, events and workshops (many videos are available online) Furthermore, Sharylaine is a very active element within the Frente Nacional de Mulheres no Hip Hop (FNMH2), a collective of women all coming from Brazil's hip hop scene that have joined forces in the fight against gender discrimination and in favor of women's rights. In the following section of my work I focus more on the Frente's contributions to the building of a true, national and transnational community of women who share a common drive in the fight for having their own voice recognized. Sharylaine's "any place is a woman's place" [todo espaço é o espaço da mulher] has become a true motto for the whole community. With her strength, fearlessness and determination she also proves her words perfectly. Also, being an activist is nothing more than continuing the fight started as a rapper. As she explained: "By the year of 2000 I started working with hip hop as a whole: with cultural policies, in order to integrate hip hop in education, culture, in the Black movement. I took part to this struggle, that today led to the creation of the 'month of hip hop' [Mês do Hip Hop]."[168] Later during our conversation Sharylaine also disclosed that today she actually earns a living thanks to her interventions as a cultural and social activist.

In fact, what surprises the most about Sharylaine's story, however, is that besides recording *Nossos Tempos* in 1989 for the first collection mentioned above, and *Saudade* in 1992 for the collection *Rap do Brasil*, throughout all these year she did not manage to record a full album in her

[167] Original: "A rua não é para as mulheres. Então até ontem era isso. Hoje, no século XXI, isso está havendo uma mudança de consciência de que qualquer lugar é o lugar da mulher. Mas eu falo de um tempo que a rua não era para a mulher. Então eu ouvia meu pai criticando que eu saia e meu irmão ia dormir cedo. eu ia para o baile passar madrugada. Porque? Porque não era o meu lugar estar na rua. Isso é o fundamental. Mas vc tem também: a mulher com vários papéis, que ela não consegue chegar e não encontra à partida um espaço que é aberto. Então por exemplo: eu tava lá mas eu vim com a gangue, não cheguei sozinha. Eu não sei como seria se tivesse chegado sozinha. Eu cheguei junto com eles e então todo mundo me respeitava. Eu não acho que seria assim como foi, tranquilo."

[168] "Quando chega em 2000, aí eu começo a trabalhar com hip hop, de uma maneira geral: políticas culturais, inserção do hip hop dentro da educação, dentro da cultura, dentro do movimento negro. Participei dessa luta, da criação do que hoje chamam do "mês do hip hop"."

own name yet. On the one hand, according to her testimony, this is a consequence of the fact that her first track did not break out after the release of *Consciência Black* – as she said: "não foi minha música que estoirou" - and the production company started to work exclusively with Racionais MC's, also present in the collection with the music "Pânico na Zona Sul", today the most successful and influent rap group of the country. On the other hand, her true skills came out during her live shows, and after a series of attempts – some good, others less good – to achieve a record, she decided to focus exclusively on her live acts and her activities as an activist. As she shared:

> After recording the album, since my music didn't break out, the production company started to work with Racionais MC's, who's music burst from the album. So what happened then? I believed that I had to survive. My music actually broke out in another city outside São Paulo and in another state, but I didn't know. I stayed here playing the part of a figurine. I grabbed the record, I went to the parties' organizers to offer my show, and I did my show. I asked the best DJ of the house to play for me: I prepared the records with all the marks in order for the show and I only asked the DJ to play them. By the end of the 1990s, I thought I had to record more tracks, so I made music independently. I saved the money from all of those shows I did. And I recorded four tracks. It was very expensive. One of these songs circulated through a compilation from 1993, another one became part of another compilation from 1995. All this in a "DIY" style. Two of them were broadcasted on the radio. This was what supported me in order for me to continue working. But this record was never released. Then, in 1994 or 1995 I received a proposal to record an album. But I had to change my whole style. I had to be like SWV – a North American female band – and create party-oriented content, with no protest in it. So I said no. And it didn't work out (Sharylaine,personal conversation, 2018).[169]

The struggle to record her own album did not end with this letdown. After turning her attention and energy towards cultural and social intervention through hip hop, Sharylaine finally saw a breakthrough by the early 2000s, when her project won some funding from the Ministry of Culture. The project she had submitted was precisely that of recording an album. Finally, Sharylaine managed to have her tracks ready to be released by the end of 2011. Yet, after being away from the stages for quite a long time, she felt that the public wasn't ready to receive her work and that she

[169] Original: "Depois que eu gravei o disco, como não foi a minha música que estoirou, a produtora começou a trabalhar com os racionais, que foi a música do disco que estoirou. E aí o que aconteceu? Eu achava que eu tinha de sobreviver. A minha música tinha estoirado em outra cidade de São Paulo e em outro estado do Brasil. Mas eu não soube. E eu fiquei aqui fazendo trabalho de figurinha. Pegava o disco, ia nas equipas de baile a oferecer o show, fazia show. Pedia para o melhor DJ da casa para tocar para mim, preparava os discos com as marcações, tudo como ia rolar o show, e pedia para o DJ só sentar e tocar. Quando foi o final de 1990, eu achei que eu tinha de fazer mais músicas, e aí eu fui fazer músicas de forma independente. E todos aqueles shows que eu fazia, ia guardando dinheiro para gravar. E aí eu gravei. Gravei quatro músicas. Muito caro. Dessas músicas, uma foi distribuída para um disco de coletânea que foi em 1993, a outra foi para um disco de coletâneas que saiu em 1995. Tudo "faça você mesmo". Aí foi uma música para rádio, aliás duas músicas para rádio. [...] Então foi o que foi sustentando para poder trabalhar. Porque esse disco não saiu. Aí em 1994/1995 eu recebi uma proposta para fazer um disco. Mas eu tinha que mudar todo o meu estilo. Era para ser tipo um SWV - é um grupo de mulheres americanas - mas para fazer conteúdo de festa, sem contestar. E aí eu disse que não. Não rolou."

needed to conquer back her space: “When I finished the album, people where asking me: but do you still sing? So I understood I had to do everything in reverse.”[170]

Truly unconventional, Sharylaine revived her career by going back on stage and “in the streets”. For every new song she released, she went out there and gathered with people, bypassing what can be considered a fundamental step: putting her songs online.[171] In fact, probably as a consequence of the fact that she grew up in times when internet was far for being introduced in the country, Sharylaine seemed to have had a hard time adapting to the new rules it imposed. As many other old school performers, she prefers to have direct contact with her public and give her best in the live shows and through her militancy. During our conversation she also reckoned that a true business around hip hop came later and it involved mainly the new generation of performers:

> In Brazil, this business production was still quite weak. But what happened: business came for other generations, the younger generations. They start from there, because they have the tools that we didn’t have. Our tools were different. Our dissemination tool were the parties. If you managed to perform in a party in front of 2000, 5000 people, that was your social network. Just that: you had to be good in the live shows (Sharylaine 2018).[172]

This, in fact, is quite evident when one observes the professional paths of rappers such as Karol Conka ou Lívia Cruz, who both have built a strong network of followers and fans not only through their records but also through social media and television. What Sharylaine has done, though, for the hip hop community and for the community of women who gravitate around it is truly unique: after proving her determination and drive through rap, she began empowering women through her actions and interventions and through constant acts of militancy. By doing this, she shows how rap and activism become inseparable in the hands of a woman, and how women are fundamental to the evolution of one of the most influencing cultural practices of today’s world.

170 "Quando terminei o disco, as pessoas estava perguntando para mim: mas você ainda canta? Aí eu falei: eu tenho de fazer o caminho inverso.”

171 With her words: “E aí eu comecei vir para a rua. Gravava uma música e vinha para a rua, que é isso que eu sei fazer, não só colocar na internet. Eu vou para a rua para as pessoas me verem, para estar presente. Não coloquei praticamente nada na internet, eu fui para a rua.

172 “Até porque essa produção do business no Brazil ainda é muito fraca. Mas o que aconteceu: o business chegou para outras gerações, para gerações mais jovens. Eles já começam a partir dali. Porque ele têm as ferramentas que nós não tínhamos. Nossas ferramentas eram outras. Nossa ferramenta de divulgação era o baile. Se você cantar no baile para 2000, 5000 pessoas aquela era a sua rede social. Só que assim: você tinha que ser bom ao vivo.”

5.2 Rose MC and the use of hip hop as a pedagogic tool

The use of rap and hip hop in general as a pedagogic tool isn't new to the culture's history. Throughout the years the culture's five elements (breakdancing, MCing, Djing, graffiti and knowledge) have consistently been adopted as tools to educate, emancipate and empower mainly underprivileged youth. This scenario, in fact, is not specific to Brazil and it can be related to hip hop's many local experiences around the world. Moreover, it does not refer exclusively to formal education – hip hop has been adopted by teachers as a powerful tool to communicate with their student - but also to informal practices such as non-profit organizations and local initiatives where hip hop was central.

In Portugal, for instance – a country where I have been living for the past six years - I had the opportunity to come in contact and collaborate with a non-governmental association called *Diálogo e Acção*.[173] Founded in 2010 by Ana Rita Chaves - who had arrived to Portugal as a Zulu member a few years before bringing her strong baggage of experience as a social worker in Rio de Janeiro - Diálogo e Acção also represents the Portuguese chapter of the Universal Zulu Nation. Since then it has been offering support and education to the young inhabitants of the poor neighborhoods of Lisbon's greater metropolitan area. Using hip hop culture as a pedagogical tool, Ana Rita Chaves and her volunteers often organize events, workshops and seminars with the specific goal of involving mainly young people and women, creating opportunities and implementing positive messages. Among these, the projects *Olha para mim* [Look at me, 2011] and *Hip Hop em ação – Combate à Exclusão e à Marginalidade* [Hip Hop in action – a Fight against Exclusion and Marginalisation], both supported by the Municipality of Lisbon.[174] I consider this promotion and use of hip hop's elements as tools for social intervention and for the building of knowledge as a means to perceive hip hop as a mental and performative territory where thoughts, aspirations and individual experiences can build new narratives through rhymes, rhythms and the body itself; more importantly, by working with Diálogo e Acção, I came to understand that hip hop works as a very effective tool when it is employed to educate towards the building of peaceful cooperation, dialogues and the exercise of citizenship. With regards to this, Martins explains that:

173 Further information on the association can be found on its official website: https://dialogoeaccao.wixsite.com/dialogoaccaoficial.

174 As far as *Olha para mim* is concerned, it included a series of activities, most of which were playful, and a multi-sensory exhibition directed to people affected by blindness or visual impairment. The exhibition by Mirtilo Gomes was hold in Lisbon from March 15 to April 15, 2011.
Hip Hop em ação was supported both by Lisbon's Municipality and by the Municipality of Roubaix (France) and focused on the use of peaceful exchange and coexistence as a means to fight against social exclusion and marginalization between youth from different neighborhoods.

> What defines citizenship is the citizen's engagement with the social environment. And I would add: the question of citizenship has to be linked to the social actor's participation and to the plurality of his interests, enlarging opportunities and maximizing individual freedom. In this interaction, the actors in civil society metamorphose into intermediator of political interests, becoming co-responsible for the translation and transmission of a variety of different revindications, produces within the social fabric, to a political-institutional dimension, therefore, for the rooting of democratic values in "everyday occurrences" (Martins 2012, 74).[175]

Thus, the use of hip hop as a pedagogic tool stands in the line of those actions that are meant to build free, conscious citizens who will eventually implement change in society. Again, Diálogo e Acção's projects aim precisely at offering alternative opportunities and visibility to underprivileged citizens who have less access to them instead. This becomes very clear through another very successful project that deserves to be mentioned: *Tomando Rumo* [Taking a Course, 2012]. In fact, since 2012 the association is present in the prison establishments of Leiria and Linhó (in the outskirts of Lisbon) with weekly activities for the young detainees, which aim at promoting human and social development, as well as opening them to new life perspectives away from crime and violence; the association also offers support to the families of the young convicted during and after the confinement, in order to fight against criminal recurrence. Among the project's positive results there has been the recording of a CD with original rap songs made by the participants, as well as show where they performed.

Among the association's projects there is another one that is particularly relevant to my work. Organized for the first time in 2010, *Hip Hop de Batom* [Hip Hop with Lipstick] had the financial support of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and was directed exclusively to women. The project aimed at promoting gender equality, strengthening self-esteem and fighting against public and private violence on women. As the Foundation explains on its dedicated webpage, the project involved "young women between 14 and 28, coming from Lisbon's peripheral neighborhoods" and who all performed together, on September 10, 2010, in the outdoor amphitheater where they presented the CD they had recorded during the project.[176] Hence, again, hip hop was deployed in order to offer the tools needed to expose domestic violence, labor

175 Original text: "A participação do cidadão no ambiente social é o que define a cidadania. E, acrescentaria: a questão da cidadania deve estar atrelada à participação do ator social e à pluralidadae de seus interesses, na ampliação das oportunidades e na maximização da liberdade individual. É nessa articulação que atores da sociedade civil se metamorfoseiam em intermediadores de interesses políticos, constituindo-se em corresponsáveis pela tradução e transmissão para a dimensão político-institucional das mais diversas reivindicações produzidas no interior do tecido social, contribuindo, dessa forma, para o enraizamento de valores democráticos nas "práticas cotidianas" (Costa, 2002)."

176 Further information on the project is available at https://gulbenkian.pt/project/hip-hop-de-baton-e-hip-hop-pela-paz/.

discrimination, sexual abuse, female genital mutilation, prostitution, among many other delicate issues. As Martins describes:

> different activities were developed within the scope of this project with a view at exchanging experiences between the women involved in the project "Hip Hop de Batom." Film and documentary showings about the importance of women and of hip hop culture, exhibitions and live shows with a special appeal to female artists from the peripheral urban areas or the involvement of the young participants of the group Hip Hop de Batom in seminars about violence against women, these are just a few examples of the initiatives undertaken. One of the results achieved through a course attended by the rappers was the creation of a lyric written by them that spoke about female genital mutilation with the illustration being made by the graffiti artists of the group (Martins 2012, 81).[177]

The undeniable success of the project, which also aims at responding at the condition of invisibility experienced by women within hip hop culture, led to the production of a second, following edition in 2012. All these initiatives show how hip hop can be easily transformed into an effective pedagogical tool that provides one with the means to discover his/her individuality and expression; more importantly, being directed to underprivileged youth living in peripheral areas, they also work as mean to "decentralize the colonizer's view" (Martins 2012) given that these individuals start building their one perspective by shifting the locus of enunciation (Mignolo 2000).

Fundamental to the building of the Portuguese Association mentioned above, the Zulu Nation Brazil has also been a lively cultural and pedagogical engine throughout the years. In fact, it was precisely King Nino Brown – its founder and central figure to the Casa do Hip Hop [Hip Hop House] of Diadema, São Paulo – who nominated Ana Rita Chaves a Zulu Queen and allowed her to spread the Zulu message to Portugal. Moreover, during Nino Brown's administration, the Casa was strictly linked to Zulu's ideals and interventive views. As Leão explains:

> Among the activities offered by the cultural and educational Association Zulu Nation Brazil one can find activities in workshops on the five elements of hip hop where it was highlighted its didactic and pedagogical nature. The youngsters gain knowledge in order to be incorporated as professional art educators in other cultural organizations. Through workshops on rap and breakings, that took place in the Inamar Cultural Center in Diadema, it reached the Canhema

[177] Original: "No âmbito deste projeto, foram desenvolvidas diversas atividades, visando a troca de experiências entre as mulheres envolvidas no projeto "Hip Hop de Batom" Mostras de filmes e documentários sobre a importância da mulher e da cultura hip-hop, exposições e espetáculos ao vivo com especial apelo às mulheres artistas de zonas urbanas periféricas ou a participação das jovens do grupo Hip Hop de Batom em seminários sobre o tema Violência Contra as Mulheres, são exemplos de algumas iniciativas realizadas. E um dos resultados obtidos através de um curso frequentado pelas rappers foi a realização de uma letra escrita pelas integrantes falando da mutilação genital feminina e a ilustração visual feito pela grafiteira do grupo."

> Cultural Center, and thanks to its theatre workshops it introduced and worked with its collection of photos and books about Black and African culture (Leão and Lupati 2018, 431).[178]

Nino Brown's initiatives have definitely left a mark not only in Diadema, but throughout the whole city of São Paulo, as well as in the research I carried out there in 2018. In fact, it was thanks to him that I came in contact with Rose MC, one of the first women in Brazil to embrace rap as a means of expression. In addition to this, as a teacher, Rosângela Ribeiro Rocha - this her birth name – has found in hip hop a strategic tool to communicate and educate her students, as well as a network able to connect youth all around the world. During our conversation that took place in her home in the Vila Matilde district, São Paulo, on May 6, 2018, Rose shared with me not only her experience as a rapper – how she came in contact with the practice and how she developed her skills – but also how deeply this contact had influenced her and enlightened her professionally: in fact, today Rose takes active part to the International Education and Resource Networking (iERN), "a non-profit organization made up of over 30,000 schools and youth organizations in more than 140 countries" founded in 1988, as one can read on their official website.[179]

Being always closely linked to education, what is interesting about her story is that Rose's first rap actually took place during a demonstration in university. As she recalled:

> So I went to university – I studied Fine Arts in São Paulo – and I went to study for my Arts degree. At that time I backed away a little bit, not only form hip hop but from everything, and during the last semester at university, actually the last year, the theatre room started being renovated. And it went on and on, it never ended. We were missing classes and protesting, and they were cutting us down. We floated banners and they took them off because they didn't want the whole university to know and they weren't really keen on solving the problem. So I took a decision: we don't need to attend classes, I decided to make a song. There were many cultural manifestations there, during breaks, in the entrance, the university pulsed art and back then it didn't hold a degree course in Plastic Arts but also in Architecture, for instance, and many other courses. So I created a song, and until then I never thought I could be a rapper. But I wrote a rap to denounce the problem at university (Rose MC, private conversation, 2018).[180]

178 "Dentre as ações propostas pela Associação Cultural e Educacional Zulu Nation Brasil estão as atividades inseridas em oficinas para os cinco elementos do Hip Hop, sendo, em cada uma delas destacado a ação didático de formação pedagógico e profissional. Os jovens adquirem conhecimentos para serem inseridos como profissionais em arte educação e darem seu contributo em outros Centros Culturais. Pelas oficinas de RAP e Breaking, que aconteciam no Centro Cultural Inamar, em Diadema, chegou ao Centro Cultural Canhema e através das oficinas de teatro foi introduzindo e colaborando com o seu acervo de fotos, livros sobre Cultura Negra e africana."

179 Further information can be found at https://iearn.org/about.

180 Original: "Aí, eu fui fazer faculdade - eu fiz faculdade de belas artes em São Paulo - e fui estudar para licenciatura em artes. Nesse tempo que tive fora, eu me afastei um pouco, não só do hip hop mas de tudo, e no último semestre da faculdade, o último ano de verdade, a sala de teatro começou uma reforma que não acaba, não acabava, a gente perdendo aulas, e a gente ia reclamar, e eles podavam; a gente colocava cartaz e eles arrancavam, porque eles não queriam que a faculdade inteira soubesse nosso problema, porque eles não estavam muitos afins de resolver. Eu resolvi: a gente está sem aula, eu resolvi fazer uma música. E lá tinha muitas manifestações culturais, no intervalo, na entrada, era uma faculdade que pulsava muita arte, e então não só tinha licenciatura em artes plásticas mas também em

The process of creating the song was quite instinctive to Rose. She had already been in contact with other hip hop followers before entering university – as many other girls, she started doing breakdance and was quite good at it – so she had a plan in mind:

> I went to the Grandes Galerias, I grabbed an instrumental base and I rehearsed. Then I asked to the faculty: can I sing a song of my own authorship during the break? Of course you can! So they gave me a sound system and a microphone. They would have never imagined I was going to make a protest, a denunciation to the faculty. When I started singing nobody managed to take away the microphone from me and the whole university ended up knowing that there was a problem. Two weeks later the theatre room had a floor and we were back having classes. I was very happy, and so my teachers were, and everybody commented: "look what we achieved with rap!" (Rose MC, private conversation, 2018).[181]

Rose's initiative to use rap allowed her to directly protest against the university's negligence and achieve the changes needed. She stood in representation of her peers and claimed everyone's right to have classes. Her charisma and decisiveness merged with rap's intrinsic assertiveness allowed her to give voice to the community of students who were paying the price of that negligence. Also, this positive effect proved to Rose that rap had a lot of potential.

After graduating from university, in fact, Rose began her career as a rapper. She took part to the gatherings at the São Bento metro station and accompanied the culture's evolution through shows, meetings and debates. During these years Rose managed to record songs, take par to live shows, participate to compilations ("Elas por Elas" is one of them) and collaborate with other artists (such as Dina Di for the video of her song "Mente engatilhada"). More importantly, Rose began to see in hip hop its potential as a street culture [cultura de rua] in its most varied forms: "I see [in hip hop] mainly its socio-political dimension, that of being present in the streets, of making a difference, and of seeing the results of the classes you give, seeing that people change because they start looking at hip hop. This is the dimension that fascinates me the most" (Rose 2018).[182] And her view has been translated into action through these years.

arquitetura, tinha outras cursos. Eu fiz uma música e até então nunca pensei em ser uma rapper, eu escrevi um rap para denunciar um problema na faculdade."

181 Original: "Fui nas Grandes Galerias, peguei uma base instrumental, e aí ensaiei e pedi para a faculdade: posso cantar uma música no intervalo, de autoria minha? Pode! Eles me deram som, microfone, mas nunca imaginavam que eu ia faria um protesto, uma denúncia contra a faculdade. E quando eu comecei a cantar ninguém conseguia tirar o microfone e a faculdade inteira ficou sabendo do problema e em duas semanas a sala estava com piso e a gente estava tendo aula. E aí eu fiquei muito feliz, meu professor, todo mundo dizia "olha como nós conseguimos com rap"."

182 "Eu vejo [o hip hop] maiormente como uma parte político-social, de estar nos lugares, de fazer diferença, e de ver os resultados de cursos que você dá, que as pessoas mudam por causa de olhar para o hip hop. Essa é a vertente que mais me encanta no hip hop."

As I said before, among Rose's projects related to rap and its use as a pedagogic tool, one that I found particularly interesting was her participation to the global network built by the iEARN community. In fact, Rose's contribution is precisely that of using rap as a connections between young students all around the world. As she explained:

> I built a project that works like this: it's a rap, and once a year we make a video of a collaborative rap. Here in Brazil I do the instrumental base with the help of a producer friend of mine and I put it on the online forum, so that the teachers can hear it. The first year's participants were from Taiwan, Kenya and Turkey. The students write the lyrics in English and send them here, and we assemble them. I did just the chorus, since I preferred to focus on the production. What they had to do was just record the song and send them to us. […] When I asked them to do the recordings, a conflict began in Kenya and the school closed. They spent three months without classes and they couldn't meet. Since we had a deadline, we decided that I was going to record their lyrics with my voice, respecting the flow and style they had when singing; and when I finished, I sent them the audio so that they could record the dance video. Pakistan also wanted to take part, as well as Canada. They joined just for the dance part. Therefore I come out just in the end of the video. And my students back then took care of the production. It was cool because they all said: the chorus is for us, teacher, the chorus is for us! So when we recorder the chorus they also recorded, and the girls too. This is very nice: the experience of knowing that a young person, on the other hand of the world, is thinking like you. This is very cool. California, Uganda and Brazil took part to the project for the following year (Rose MC 2018).[183]

Each year the iEARN community of teacher gathers in order to discuss the results achieved with their activities, share knowledge and plan future networks. Rose took part to the meeting in Argentina, Puerto Rico and South Africa. Yet, despite her participation to this global project, Rose's connection to hip hop and its pedagogical features is clear also when observing her professional career as a teacher in Brazil. When asked about it she explained that, after working as a teacher for several years, today she is part of a board of education that supervises 122 schools: "here, I take care of hip hop, of the musical part, of the band and of the integral education. So I visit schools and teach courses" [Lá eu cuido de hip hop, da parte musical, de banda, e de educação integral. Então eu faço visitas a escolas e dou cursos; Rose MC 2018].

[183] Original: "Eu fiz um projeto que é assim: é um rap, uma vez por ano a gente faz um vídeo que é um rap colaborativo. Eu aqui no Brasil faço o instrumental, um produtor amigo meu faz, eu coloco no fórum. Os professores ouvem. No primeiro ano foi: Taiwan, Kenya e Turquia. Os três quiseram participar. As crianças escreveram as letras das músicas, todos em inglês e mandaram para cá. Nós montamos a letras, eu fiz só o refrão, porque eu quis ficar com a parte de montagem. Eles tinham que gravar essa música e mandar para a gente. [...] Quando pedi para eles gravarem, o Kenya entrou em conflito e a escola fechou. Eles ficaram 3 meses sem aula, e não tinha como reunir os jovens. Como tinha prazo do projeto, nós decidimos que eu ia gravar com a minha voz a letras deles, tentando respeitar a levada e o jeito que eles estavam cantando; e quando terminou eu mandei para eles com áudio, para eles gravarem as imagens de dança. Aí o Paquistão quis participar e o Canadá também. Eles entraram só na dança. Então nesse vídeo eu só apareço no final. […] E os meus alunos na época fizeram a edição. E é legal porque eles falaram: o refrão é nosso, professora, o refrão é nosso! Quando eles gravaram o refrão, que ficou muito legal, as meninas também gravaram. Elas também gravaram no refrão. […] Isso é muito bacana, que é a experiência de conhecer, saber que um jovem, no outro lado do mundo, tá pensando igual a ele, é muito legal. Eu fiz esse ano. No ano seguinte eu tive California, Uganda e Brasil."

Therefore I took the opportunity to ask Rose if hip hop was frequently deployed in schools as a pedagogic tool. Her answer was quite promising:

> Yes, something that I noticed and that made me happy is that today in Brazil people are trying to focus on integral education, not just on stretching out the timetable and putting there anything, but the importance for the students to fully learn. We offer over 40 choices, in order for them to study communication, ecology, etc., and one of them is hip hop. I thought it was really cool when I saw that they made a decree, that they made regulations and they chose the areas that needed to be explored, and one of these was hip hop. And there's another thing I thought was really cool which is the Academia Estudantes de Letras, a project they have where the students take part to soirées, and many creations emerge from there. And then they move to hip hop. (Rose MC 2018).[184]

The fact that hip hop is also present transversally through other educational activities, and not only through direct workshops is a promising thing to Rose. In fact, back in the situation was very different and having hip hop in school wasn't a common thing. Times are changing, as well as hip hop's reception by those who maybe know it less, and who have been more keen to having a negative perception of it. Again, this is also thanks to those who have believed in its potential since the beginning. Rose explained this clearly:

> So something I am understanding is that in schools in São Paulo, which are the ones I know better, hip hop is a field, they schools are open to it. Because, for instance, when I taught in 1994/1995 and I took hip hop to the schools, they made a big scandal of it. There was resistance, some teachers didn't accept it, so I had to work in order for the teachers to know what hip hop was so that they could understand the students. My idea has always been this one. Today, hip hop has spread well, it has propagated. But during that time, when I was using hip hop, there were professors who argued with me. And then when they heard people saying "see, it changes lives!" they changed their mind (Rose MC 2018).[185]

The fact that hip hop has changed people lives is undeniable, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to prove the opposite. Experiences such as the one showed through the actions of the non-governmental association Diálogo e Acção, as well as the ones lived personally by Rose MC's as a

184 Original: "Sim, uma coisa que eu vi, que eu fiquei bem feliz, é que hoje a gente, eles estão tentando no Brasil fazer educação integral, não só esticar o horário e colocar qualquer coisa, mas que o aluno aprenda na integralidade. Eles têm 40 possibilidade que eles dão para a pessoa trabalhar comunicação, ecologia, etc., e um deles é o hip hop. Eu achei muito legal quando eu vi que tem uma portaria, que eles são regidos, eles tem os territórios que eles vão trabalhar, e um dos territórios é o hip hop. E tem uma outra coisa que acho legal que é que a Academia Estudantes de Letras, que é um projeto que eles têm e nesse projetos os alunos participam muito de sarau, e ali surgem muitas criações. Ele vão para o lado do hip hop."

185 "Então uma coisa que eu estou percebendo é que nas escolas, talvez em São Paulo porque eu conheço mais, o hip hop é uma vertente, tem abertura. Porque, por exemplo, quando eu lecionava, em 1994/1995, que eu levei o hip hop, foi escândalo nas escolas. Teve resistência, tinha professor que não aceitava, então eu fiz um trabalho de fazer os professores conhecerem o que era o hip hop para entender o aluno. Minha ideia sempre foi essa. Hoje está bem divulgado, difundido. Mas durante um tempo, quando eu fui levar o hip hop tinha professor que brigava comigo. E aí quando eles assistiam as pessoas falando "vê que ele transforma vidas", eles mudavam o olhar."

teacher and a hip hop activist show precisely this: that when adopted as a pedagogical tool, hip hop can be very effective and leave a strong impact in people lives, while also offering its features to education as a non-canonical way to spread values and knowledge. More importantly, this shows how hip hop - conceived as a space where identity is built and symbolic and material processes are negotiated – can work as a bridge between popular culture and education and be understood as a "pedagogy of the youths" [pedagogia das juventudes; Weihmüller, Siqueira and Silva 2017].

5.3. "Women rappers should have their own shelf in the global store of rap music": Lívia Cruz and rap as a feminist tool

Unlike most women taking part to hip hop culture during its early years, Lívia Cruz, who represents what we can consider rap's "new school" of artists, did not start as a break-dancer. In fact, as she explained during our chat – that took place in São Paulo, on April 30, 2018 - her first step towards rap came in response of her deep love for words: "I am very passionate about words, about writing; so I think that this was the first glimpse we exchanged, without knowing what it was supposed to become in the future" (Lívia Cruz, private conversation, 2018).[186] Born in Recife in 1985, Lívia grew up immersed in an environment where music, dance and culture as a whole were on a daily agenda. As a teenager, her writing skills were already showing up. In this sense, Lívia's testimony reminded me of Capicua's and Telma TVon's experiences: both Portuguese artist were driven by their passion for writing and both identified this as their initial step towards rap. Hence, this allows me to establish a connection between writing rap lyrics and writing poems or prose, and more in general to consider rap a suitable tool for women to express themselves creatively, while also working as a strategy of resistance and affirmation.

Again, being part of a younger generation, especially when compared to Rose MC or Sharylaine, by the time Lívia Cruz started approaching music, rap had already achieved some visibility within Brazilian media. Yet, there was still some confusion and a negative stigma around it. What Lívia identified as the second crucial step in her approach to the practice is precisely the fact the she had the opportunity to hear rap music on the radio, yet without know it was actually that:

[186] Original: "Eu sou apaixonada pela palavra, pela escrita; e aí, acho que esse foi o primeiro olhar que a gente trocou, sem mesmo saber o que era para ser lá na frente."

> When I was a teenager […] I already listened to rap on the radio, without knowing it was rap because the presenters called it "international pop music" in the 1990s. One could hear MC Hammer or Salt N Pepa, stuff like that: "so this was the international pop music session!" They didn't call it rap. Rap was for thugs, right? So you couldn't mention on the radio that you were playing rap (Lívia Cruz, private conversation, 2018).[187]

In Brazil, the negative stigma around rap is something that has been accompanying the practice almost since its beginnings. As I mentioned in Chapter 4, after an initial phase where hip hop culture was practiced in the streets and mainly through its performative element, that is, dance, rap started to pave its way among the young participants of that time and soon became a national phenomenon. Due to its harsh, truthful lyrics and the great success of the "gangsta style" all around the country, rap soon acquired a negative reputation, or more precisely it soon began depicted among the media and the public opinion as a practice that promoted a "thug" lifestyle. Lívia's words then did not surprise me too much and actually confirmed the situation described here above.

Another fundamental step towards the building of a true interest towards rap was listening to Gabriel o Pensador. According to what she shared with me:

> Then I listened to Gabriel o Pensador. In a funny way, too: one day, when I went out with my mum to a giant store, I liked the cover of his album. My mum always bought me records. So I told her: "Can I take this one?" And I listened to it. Back then, rap was still very didactic. The lyrics spoke a lot about what rap and hip hop were. So this was the first time it was officially presented to me. By Gabriel o Pensador, who taught me the ABC of rhythm and poetry, of hip hop's four elements. From that moment on, I started researching and buying journals (Lívia Cruz, private conversation, 2018).[188]

As I have mentioned in Chapter 2, Gabriel o Pensador's works as a rapper played a crucial role also for the development of hip hop culture in Portugal (Contador & Ferreria 1996). Speaking as someone who had been directly affected by it, Lívia's perspective on the role Gabriel o Pensador played in Brazil were interesting: to her, he was able to "take rap into people's houses", meaning that he managed to break the barriers and stigmas around the practice and reach a wider, socially

187 "Quando adolescente, eu já escrevia - desde que eu aprendi a escrever eu já escrevia -, eu já ouvia rap no rádio, sem saber quer era rap, porque os apresentadores chamavam de "música pop internacional", nos anos 90. Se ouvia o MC Hammer, ou Salt N Pepa, algumas coisas assim, "esse foi o bloco de música pop internacional", não se chamava rap. Rap é coisa de bandido, né. Você não pode falar na rádio que você tá tocando rap."

188 "Aí eu escutei Gabriel o Pensador. De um jeito engraçado também: eu gostei da capa do disco, quando fui passear com a minha mãe numa loja megagigante, e ela sempre me comprou disco também, e aí falei "posso levar esse aqui", e ouvi. Naquela época o rap nacional era muito didático ainda, você falava muito nas letras o que era o rap, o que era o hip hop. Então esse foi o meu primeiro contato apresentado oficialmente. Com Gabriel o Pensador, ensinando ABC do ritmo e poesia, dos quatro elementos do hip hop. A partir daí eu comecei a pesquisar e comprar revistas."

heterogeneous, public. Yet, legitimation is a delicate dynamic and it involves many factors. This becomes even more evident by comparing the different reception experienced by Black artists and white, middle class performers – such as Gabriel o Pensador was back then. Unfortunately, ethnicity and class still undermine an artist's career and success, inside and outside Brazil. And when it comes to women, gender also plays a role.

Lívia's true steps as a rapper started around 2003, when she moved to Rio de Janeiro and began integrating a collective called "Brutal Crew", with whom she recorded her first track. Since then, she has never stopped, having released three albums as a solo artist (*Muito mais amor*, 2013; *Livre*, 2018; *Lívia Cruz no Estúdio Showlivre*, 2019) and an extensive series of singles ("#Tamotransandodefato," 2017; "Outono," 2017; "Tranquila," 2017; "Ordem na classe," 2017; "Eu tava lá," 2017; "Minha propria lei," 2017; "Prêmio de Guerra," 2018, among many others). Also, with 131.000 followers on youtube, she is also known for her videos and her "bate papos" [chats] available online. Hence, Lívia's use of her visibility is central to the considerations I am offering here, and is strictly connected to the conversation we had last year. In fact, most of our exchange developed around one of her major themes, perceivable not only through her lyrics but also in her videos: women's visibility, their struggles and more in general feminism as an ideological posture.

If on the one hand Lívia acknowledges that it took her some time to actually embrace a fully feminist perspective, on the other hand, once embraced, it is undeniable that today she defends, promotes and collaborates with various women from Brazil's rap scene and she constantly reinforces her position.[189] During our conversation, in fact, she addressed male domination as one of the main frustrations experienced by women not only within hip hop, but more generally within society:

> [There are always more men] even when we go to play for a show specifically by women, which is a way that women doing music have to empower each other and to guarantee that the audience's space is safe – because there's this too. […] It's not just about the amount of women who make it to the market, it's not just this. When you play for a show there are mostly men above the stage and in the audience. Women do not feel do go near it, or when they leave their house. And often they don't even leave their house. So when we organize an event with women only in order to ensure that the space is safe, both for us and for them, it is very unlikely that we'll have a female sound technician. Or a female stage assembler. Unlikely we will have a woman working on the lights. Even when we make a big effort to take up the

[189] In 2015, for instance, Lívia took part to the all-women project *Rap das Minas* [Girls' Rap] with rappers Lurdes da Luz, MC Gra, Karol de Souza and DJ Typá. The project also became a documentary, *O Rap delas*, directed by Gabriel Alexandre, which is available online.

space safely, spaces still belong to men. We still depend on men, and this concerns the professional spaces, it's not just within hip hop, society works like this (Lívia Cruz, personal conversation, 2018).[190]

As a matter of fact, men still own most of the spaces and roles within hip hop culture. This situation leads to the fact that they also end up being central figures when it comes to deciding which women make it to success and which don't (Allucci, Valencio and Allucci 2016). It is precisely in this sense that gender becomes a discriminatory element, as much as ethnicity and class. And this situation is also one of the main reasons why women, and especially women in rap, embrace a feminist ideology.

Throughout its history and evolution, rap has become a powerful feminist tool in the hands of women. As Chepp (2015) explains with regards to the relationship between Black Feminism and North American third-wave female rappers, these latter ones often "use comedy to deconstruct myths of phallic power" (559) articulating both womanhood and sexuality; in other words, they explore (Black) feminism through music and challenge dominant culture narratives by reframing discussions around gender and female sexuality. Scholars have been extensively addressing the relationship between Black feminism and hip hop, especially in the past years: Pough (2004), for instance, provided her reading of the contemporary hip hop feminist discourse by arguing that in today's digital era Black women engage in a digital wreck in order to resist dominance and offer models of subversive rhetoric; Richardson (2013) argues that in the hands of young Black women, hip hop becomes a tool to resist and subvert the traditional perception of sexuality; Cooper (2013) shows how, in the first decade of the 21st century, Black women's feminist production shifted from rap to literature; again Chepp (2015) analyses how women showcase a series of discursive strategies among which there is claiming respectability through irreverence. Among the numerous postulates proposed, what is relevant to the consideration I am proposing here is that, this ongoing dialogue between hip hop culture and contemporary feminist movements led scholars such as Joan Morgan (1999) to coin and promote the term "hip hop feminist", recognizing that in the hand of

190 "[Tem mais homens] até quando a gente vai fazer um show específico de mulheres, que é um meio de se fortalecer entre as mulheres que fazem a música, bem como de garantir que o espaço do público também seja seguro - porque também tem isso. [...] Não é somente a quantidade de mulheres que tem acesso ao mercado, [...] não é só isso. É quando você faz um show, e majoritariamente tem homens em cima do palco, majoritariamente tem homens no público. As mulheres não se sentem seguras nem de chegar perto, quando elas saem das suas casas. Porque muitas vezes nem saem das suas casas. Então quando a gente faz um evento só de mulheres para garantir que esse espaço seja seguro, tanto para nós quanto para elas, dificilmente a gente vai ter uma técnica de som. Dificilmente a gente vai ter uma montadora de palco. Dificilmente vai ter uma mulher na luz. Ainda quando a gente faz um grande esforço para que a gente consiga ocupar o lugar com segurança, os espaços ainda são dos homens. A gente ainda depende dos homens. é do espaço profissional, não é dentro do hip hop, a sociedade ainda é assim."

female rappers the two ideologies merge into a common struggle and in the building of gender identities.

Despite the fact that Lívia Cruz is not Black, her works, beliefs and attitudes still fit most of the considerations exposed above. As many other women, her approach to feminism was gradual:

> I wasn't familiar with Feminist Studies when I started. I already lived in a house where my mum was the head of the household, she always worked and never depended on a man. Quite the opposite: men have always got in the way of our lives. I came in contact with Radical Chic, the comic strips. It was a comic strip, a sort of page on a women's magazine that advised about the best shoes, the best lipstick, but there was also Radical Chic saying funny things like: "I am not even going there, today I am doing epilation", or something like that. I also remember of icons such as Madonna speaking about sex. But it was very outrageous. I had this information in my daily life, but not in a feminist way. I knew about March 8 and I had access to information, I did grow up in an ignorant environment. I studied some stuff, but didn't have access to those specific studies. I think that [feminism] is something you build through your life (Lívia Cruz, private converasation, 2018).[191]

In a woman's life, feminism builds up slowly and through direct life experience. Despite the fact that this cannot be generalized to all women – there are chauvinist women too, or women who unconsciously reproduce macho culture – during these years of research I have both found out this myself and thank to the conversations I had with the different rappers, who all shared with me their own evolution towards becoming conscious about the importance of standing as feminists. To Lívia, rap is a fundamental mean of expression and a means to expose and comprehend central notions such as empowerment, deconstruction and sorority, allowing other women as well to become more familiar with them.

Hence, while debating about feminism and her experience as a woman, Lívia and I also discussed women's position within rap. More specifically, we discussed if we could actually talk about the existence of a proper movement of female rappers. In this sense, my question was meant to understand, through the experience of someone who lives this directly, if today women are slowly conquering their own space amidst all the men. Lívia answered as follows:

[191] "Eu não tinha familiaridade com estudos do feminismo quando eu comecei. Eu já vivia numa casa onde minha mãe era chefe de família, e sempre trabalhou, nunca dependeu de homem. Ao contrário, os homens sempre atrapalharam muito nossas vidas desde sempre. Eu tinha acesso à tirinhas do Radical Chic. Era uma tirinha, um quadrinho, tipo uma página feminina duma revista, que ensinava o melhor sapato, o melhor batom, mas tinha lá a Radical Chic falando alguma coisa engraçada: "não tou nem aí, hoje não me vou nem depilar," sei lá. Mas eu lembro de pequenos ícones: a Madonna falando de sexo. Mas era muito escandaloso [...]. Tinha essas informações no meu dia a dia, mas não tinha o feminismo. Sabia do 8 de março. Eu fui uma pessoa que tive acesso à informação, não fui uma pessoa dum ambiente ignorante. Estudei algumas coisas, mas não tinha acesso a esses estudos específicos. Eu acho que [o feminismo] é uma construção de uma vida."

> It makes sense, yes, and I understood this recently. As an artist, I would not like to be on a different shelf, as if I were a gluten-free product. But today - it's like when you organize an event just with women – we need to be on that different shelf - and it is hard enough to achieve the condition of being on the shelf – because if they put us in the common shelf we would continue being almost invisible. Let's say, there are a lot of similar products. Everything sounds alike today, but this is another matter. What I am trying to say is that in the [music] market, in order for someone to buy my product, he has to find me amidst 100, 200 men. So a shelf for female rappers needs to exist, as much for the person who is interested in them for some reason as for the need to level out [the situation], for a more equal path, women rappers should have their own shelf, otherwise we remain unseen (Lívia Cruz, private conversation, 2018).[192]

Women need to have their own, prominent space in order to achieve visibility and to avoid struggling against male hegemony. This also explains the necessity to identify them as a category, that of "female rappers": not as a means to divide or differentiate, but as a way to valorize and distinguish their works and allow them to achieve more visibility. The present work stands precisely in this line: my interest towards women's contributions has never been moved by the intention of separating their works from the ones by men in terms of value, impact and importance; it has been motivated by the necessity to contribute to the building of a space where the plethora of female voices and experiences can be acknowledged as representative and exemplar, thus giving them the same treatment that has been given, throughout time, to the contributions and experiences offered by men.

As far a sLívia Cruz is concerned, her ideological posture as well as her various projects, all work in the direction I have mentioned above: that of establishing and defending a space for women. Lívia has also frequently addressed macho culture, racism and women's invisibility not only in her lyrics but also in her videos. As an example of this, one of her latest videos approaches precisely women's visibility in rap: Lívia argues that due to the fact that her latest album, *Livre* [Free, 2018], did not achieve certain media resonance, most people thought that she had vanished ("sumir" in Portuguese) or disappeared from the music scene; she then lists the series of singles that anticipated and accompanied the album's release ("Prémio de Guerra", "É fake, é óbvio", "Só pra

192 Original: "Faz sentido, sim, porque…eu aprendi isso inclusive há pouco tempo. Eu como artista, eu não gostaria de estar numa prateleira diferente. Como se eu fosse um produto sem glúten. Mas, hoje, é igual quando você faz um evento só de mulheres: é preciso estar nessa prateleira porque se me colocarem, mesmo alcançando o estado de estar na prateleira que já é uma dificuldade, e me colocarem na prateleira comum, eu continuo quase que invisível. Porque são muitos produtos similares, digamos. Mas o pior é que é tudo muito parecido agora, mas essa é outra discussão. O que estou querendo dizer é que no mercado, para alguém comprar o meu produto, ele vai ter que me enxergar no meio de 100/200 homens. [...] A prateleira do rap feminino é necessária, porque se a pessoa por alguma motivo se interessar, tanto pelo discurso quanto pelo diferente, tanto pela necessidade de nivelar, por um caminho mais igualitário, [...] a prateleira do rap feminino precisa existir porque se não a gente não é vista."

provocar", "Conto de fadas") as a proof that she never stopped working and people's misperception is nothing but the consequence of an attempt to invisibilize her work. Lívia's position is very clear: not only she denounces the tendency shown by Brazilian media to restrict the list of rappers in the country to just a few names, but she also reminds her public that there are many powerful, independent women out there rapping as much as men – such as Flora Matos, Tamiyou, Aika, Thai Flow, for instance.

In my opinion, the lack of visibility given by the media to Lívia's last album is somehow a consequence of a "scandal" that involved her in 2018: after posting a video with Bárbara Sweet where they commented videos by rappers DK and Lorde through sexist observations – in fact, the comments were made with irony and the idea was to reproduce what men do with women – she was harshly accused of racism and forced to take some time off both from the music scene and videomaking.[193] When I met Lívia, she was in the middle of this situation and she preferred not to linger on these facts. Yet, I still believe that she struggled to get back on track and to build a strong response to what can be considered a big misunderstanding.

After a rush period, then, Lívia came back with the single "Prémio de Guerra" and later the abovementioned album *Livre*, both strong proofs of her strength as an artist and as a woman. Today, despite the media's resistance, Lívia shows us how feminism can be strongly articulated through rap and how these rappers are firm, conscious references. More importantly, Lívia's attitude is just an example of new school female rappers: Karol Conká, Drik Barbosa, Flora Matos, Lay, and many others do not hide behind men but stand strong on that "shelf" of female artists that is needed to highlight their works.

5.4 Building a community of women from the hip hop scene in Brazil: *Perifeminas I* and *Perifeminas II*

When I met rapper Lívia Cruz in São Paulo in May 2018, one of my first questions during our conversation was: "Have women always been part of hip hop culture?" Today, looking back, this question seems obvious and rhetorical, but at that time I was in the initial phase of my research in Brazil and I felt I needed to ask everything I could, regardless its obviousness. Lívia's answer was as simple as it was enlightening: "Of course women have always been part of hip hop: women have always been part of society!" (Lívia Cruz, private conversation, 2018). I remember looking up

[193] More information on the scandal can be found at https://www.buzzfeed.com/br/ramosaline/rappers-racismo-feminismo.

at Lívia and thinking that she had just shown me the most transparent and elementary truth. Also, as a researcher, and as a woman myself, I was clearly showing how information could be misleading and how easy it was to fall into the most basic mistakes. Women are part of cultural practices as much as men, despite the attention we draw to them, because women are part of the world as men and take equally part to its evolution. But then, why do we still need to ask obvious questions about them?

Unfortunately, what I realized in these years conducting research on female rappers, when it comes to women, being "present" does not correspond to being "seen" or being "taken into consideration." Actually, this situation does not regard exclusively hip hop culture. Many examples could perfectly prove this: from sports to science and technology, or looking at the entertainment industry and popular culture as a whole, not only women are underrepresented, but most importantly and most alarmingly they are "not culturally associated with such inherent gifts of genius" that are usually naturally attributed to me (Meyer, Cimpian & Leslie 2015).[194] In addition to this and probably as a consequence of it, women-related matters seem constantly off the global list: issues related to maternity, domestic violence, period pain or birth control are too often discarded as "not relevant" or as side problems when compared to much more important matters. In other words, women's concerns are still not considered "everyone's" concerns.

As a matter of fact, hegemonic, heteronormative masculinity still rules the world in its most varied domains and women experience daily struggles to have access to basic human rights such as self-determination, freedom and equality. As if this wasn't enough, they also strive to be part of cultural production and, more importantly, to be recognized as cultural producers. This issue, in fact, is particularly relevant to my research since it has been focused on female rappers from Portugal and Brazil, two distinct cultural and social realities that share a common feature: the fact that women, and Black women in particular, suffer of the most harsh marginalization. What I also understood is that the unbalanced scenario that I registered when studying hip hop culture is nothing more than a representation of what happens within society. As far as Brazil is concerned,

> the combination of racism with sexism produces on Black women a sort of social asphyxia, with negative repercussions upon all the dimensions of life, that manifest through emotional afterpains that damage their mental health and lower

[194] The authors actually discuss gender disparity in fields such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics and conclude that "women are underrepresented in fields whose practitioners consistently endorse the idea that success rests on brilliance" and "this is because women are often stereotyped as lacking the same sort of innate intelligence as men, and thus women will be discouraged from participating in fields to the extent that these fields are perceived as requiring this type of intelligence." Full article is available at https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.00235/full

> their self-esteem; through a life expectancy of five years less than white women; through lower rates of marriage; and mainly through their confinement in the least prestigious and least remunerated jobs (Carneiro 2011, 127-128).[195]

In terms of job access and remuneration, the situation described by Sueli Carneiro translates into the fact that Black women earn half of what white women do, and four times less than white men and they fill the most vulnerable jobs among which are freelancers, workers without signed labor, and family and domestic workers (Carneiro 2011). This vacuum in terms of human and labor rights seems to stand in the line of what Arnaldo Xavier described as the "matriarchy of misery" [o matriarcado da miséria], this is, the historic condition of exclusion, discrimination and social rejection experienced by Black women. However, the expression also seems to underline the central role of these women in terms of resistance and leadership within the underprivileged communities they are part of.

Being also strictly linked to the urban peripheral communities and to the building of Black subjects and their cultural identity, hip hop as a cultural, social and political phenomenon has positively affected the visibility, the increasing self-esteem and the building of a less stigmatized self-perception of Afro-Brazilian, underprivileged youth (Martins 2013). As I mentioned in Chapter 4, the process of empowerment of a Brazilian, Black collectivity, however, had started before the emergence of hip hop culture in spaces of sociability that today are considered precursors of this practice: the 1970s *bailes blacks* [black parties], entertainment venues that were also political spaces where Black identities were discussed and negotiated, and daily racial discrimination was suspended (Félix 2005: 18). From its early steps in the mid-1980s in the African-Brazilian communities of São Paulo, and later Rio de Janeiro, Brazilian hip hop has spread throughout the country and grown into a national phenomenon that today can count with more the 40 years of history and evolution from an underground, peripheral practice into a mass mediatic fact.

By the 1990s the interest directed towards hip hop had grown exponentially not only within the academic arena but also among record companies and the public in general. Yet, most of the material produced from those years on, focuses on its features as a youth social movement (Andrade 1996; Silva 1998), or on its ideological and political role within the Black movement (Félix 2000). The study of hip hop has indeed been approached from the perspective of a collective

[195] Original: "A conjugação do racismo com o sexismo produz sobre as mulheres negras umas espécie de asfixia social com desdobramentos negativos sobre todas as dimensões da vida, que se manifestam em sequelas emocionais com danos à saúde mental e rebaixamento da autoestima; em uma expectativa de vida menor, em cinco anos, em relação à das mulheres brancas; em um menor índice de casamentos; e sobretudo no confinamento nas ocupações de menos prestígio e remuneração."

action (Dayrell 2002) or as "street culture" [cultura de rua] given that youth strongly strived for the re-appropriation of urban public spaces through collective artistic actions (Lourenço 2001); finally, it has also been analysed as a practice of resistance against power and social hierarchies (Santos 2002). Agreeing with all these interpretations, I still do not understand while these studies do not mention women as active participants nor they look at them as pioneer voices, equally reliable to understand the culture's evolution. Moreover, this attitude towards women has no foundation on reality. As Lima (2005) explains:

> Between 1991and 1994, rappers started integrated the phonographic market […]. The independent phonographic circuit produced a considerable number of compilations and, although limited, female presence can be observed in the vinyl records **Movimento Hip Hop** (Rhythm & Blues, 1993), **Rappers Irmãos** (GP Records, 1993) and **Algo a Dizer** (Zimbabwe, 1993), where Rubia, Luna and Lady Rap's voices, respectively, can be heard. **Elas por elas** (Kaskatas, 1994) was the first compilations where the voices off emale rappers such as Rose MC and Danny Dieis exclusively echo, yet this is the vinyl record that closes the cycle of rap compilations (Lima 2005, 26-27).[196]

More importantly, before the release of the works mentioned above, the presence and participation of female rappers and former break-dancers Sharylaine and Rose MC – for instance - has been registered and acknowledged by the whole hip hop community since the culture's early years at the São Bento station. I explain the lack of attention towards these works as an effort in maintaining the unquestioned and unbalanced order of things, or in other words, to preserve masculine domination – a term I am borrowing from Pierre Bourdieu. Also, given that gender is a cultural construction as well as the roles and social functions associated with it, attempts to challenge this order are often obstructed. This also helps explaining the lack of space and visibility conferred to those women who did not chose to occupy the spaces and positions that are traditionally given to them, such as rappers do. Also, by focusing on themes such as violence, women's rights and women's daily struggles, these women use rap to denounce hegemonic masculinity and how patriarchal power structures and gender oppression still permeate our societies.

Yet, bearing in mind the failures and fault of the past, I believe that we should attempt to focus on positive present-day achievements but more importantly on today's attempts to subvert

196 Original: "No período de 91-94, os rappers começaram a integrar-se ao mercado fonográfico. [...] O circuito fonográfico independente produziu um número considerável de coletâneas e, ainda que tímida, a presença feminina é notada nos vinis **Movimento Hip Hop** (Rhythm & Blues, 1993), **Rappers Irmãos** (GP Records, 1993) e **Algo a Dizer** (Zimbabwe, 1993), onde as vozes de Rúbia, Luna e Lady Rap respectivamente podem ser ouvidas. **Elas por elas** (Kaskatas, 1994) foi a primeira coletânea onde ecoam somente vozes de rappers femininas como as de Rose MC e Danny Dieis, porém é este o vinil que encerra o ciclo das coletâneas de rap."

this well-known rationale. Women - and Black women in particular – are increasingly owning their voices and joining forces to fight and deconstruct gender and ethnical prejudice and offer alternative references and narratives where resistance, raw honesty, self-determination and willpower function as key elements in the building of their own community. In this sense, despite being male centered, hip hop culture in Brazil has also worked as a driving force in empowering women. Similar to a domino's effect, since the culture's early steps women have increasingly gained confidence and independence, finding in rap, breakdance and graffiti their personal means of expression and denunciation. As an example of this, the books *Perifeminas I* (2013) and *Perifeminas II* (2014) are two interesting, multifaceted projects organized and produced by the Frente Nacional de Mulheres no Hip Hop (FNMH2).

Founded by eight hip hop female collectives in 2010 in the aftermath of the I Forum de Hip Hop no Feminino, the Frente has the specific goal of breaking down barriers, spreading culture and pursuing impartial gender policies. A year later, in 2011 - when the II Forum de Hip Hop no Feminino also took place - the Frente had already gained representatives from 15 states and since then it has been consistently working towards the promotion of cultural and social actions specifically directed to women and strongly connected to hip hop culture. Among these, the Frente organizes annual meetings with cultural and artistic activities. The two collections of testimonies mentioned above come as a result of the network and community built through these years of hard work. Both books, in fact, assemble short essays, poems, drawings and accounts by women, all somehow connected to hip hop culture, all celebrating it.

Playing with the words "periferia" and "minas" in order to create a third word loaded with meaning, *Perifeminas I* can be seen as "a scream immortalized on paper" [um grito eternizado em páginas; 1], borrowing the expression from Lunna's preface, or an attempt to tell hip hop's history - or, as the heading says, "our history" [nossa história] - exclusively through the lens of those women who have experienced it. According to the description of the book available on the website of the independent editor LiteraRua

> The proposal of making a book with women from the scene came from Jô Maloupas, member of the rap group Odisseias das Flores, during a meeting of a Frente Nacional de Mulheres no Hip Hop. A project was drafted where 63 women (from 11 states) were given the possibility of taking part of this collection.[197]

[197] Original "A proposta de fazer um livro com mulheres da cena surgiu de Jô Maloupas, integrante do grupo de rap Odisséia das Flores, em uma reunião da Frente Nacional de Mulheres no Hip Hop. Foi elaborado um projeto em que 63 mulheres (de 11 estados) foram contempladas com a possibilidade de participar desta compilação. Full review can be read on http://www.literarua.com.br/livro/perifeminas-i-nossa-historia.

The diversity and unconventionality of the texts in terms of format does not affect the severity of the matters that they address: from negritude to class struggle, feminism, self-determination and education, each author in her peculiar way offers her insight and account on how hip hop has changed her life and has empowered her, also thanks to the difficulties they overcame. In this regard, the book earns added value for finally putting the reader in direct contact with the struggles faced by women for being part of a predominantly chauvinist culture. As MC Regina explains: "I started in hip hop in the 1990s. […] I faced major difficulties for being a woman, because back then the movement was thoroughly machist, the guys thought that women shouldn't sing rap" (17).[198] Back in the 1990s, the struggle was also connected to being isolated and not knowing other women sharing the same passion and goals, as Vera Veronika states, or to being relegated to side roles. As described by Giordana Graffiteira:

> When these women autonomously embrace the desire to produce culture, they encounter an artistic and technical casting, and a male working standard, that force them to adapt to what they find ready. Emancipated or not, their spaces are lovingly assigned within the scene, by the side, as accessories (39).[199]

While exposing and addressing the limits of hip hop culture, the book also offers a wide panorama of the successes achieved by these women during their careers and encourages us to recognize their leadership skills and their resourcefulness. The texts, in fact, are filled with information about women's contributions as artists, activists, founders of collectives, producers, mothers and thinkers. By telling their stories, these women also share a deep preoccupation, that of being a positive, empowering example for their female peers:

> We, women who play different roles in society, are the main transformation within the Hip Hop Movement, we fight every day for a space and this isn't different in Hip Hop, but you must remain strong! […] Strong women, let's share and empower all women who, in their own way, want and can have a prominent space! (58).[200]

198 Original: "Iniciei no hip hop na década de 1990. […] Enfrentei grandes dificuldades por ser mulher, pois nessa época o movimento era completamente machista, os caras achavam que as mulheres não deveriam cantar Rap."

199 "Quando essas mulheres encaram autonomamente o desejo de produzir cultura, encontram um casting artístico, técnico e um padrão de trabalho masculino, que as obrigam a se adequar ao que encontram pronto. Emancipadas ou não, têm lugares carinhosamente marcados na cena, ao lado, como coadjuvantes."

200 Original: "Nós mulheres, que praticamos diversos papéis na sociedade, somos a principal transformação dentro do Movimento Hip Hop, lutamos todos os dias por um espaço e no Hip Hop não é diferente, mas continuem firmes! […] Mulheres de fibra, vamos compartilhar e fortalecer todas as mulheres que do seu jeito querem e podem ter um lugar de destaque!" (Ita Black)

In addition to this, the book's introduction offers a brief history of women in hip hop that sets the tone of the whole collection. Here, many questions find their answers: not only women have always been part of hip hop culture, but their participation was diversified since the beginning [a participação da mulher no começo foi plural; 6]. Women such as Kika, Baby and Renata were part of Jabaquara Breakers and Back Spin, two of the earliest breakdance crews in the history of Brazilian hip hop; Sharylaine founded the first known female group, Rap Girls, and was the first woman to record a (political) track, in 1989; Lady Rap, Ieda Hils, Rubia, Rose MC, Swee Lee, Vera Veronika, Malu Viana, and Dina Di among many others, finally find mention and recognition for being pioneer figures. With regards to the latter, the book is dedicated to her memory: probably the most influential and forceful woman within Brazilian rap, as well as the first truly successful one, she sadly and suddenly passed away after contracting a hospital infection when giving birth in 2010 leaving behind a series of powerful albums.

While the more than 60 women who wrote the texts that compose *Perifeminas I* came exclusively from Brazil, in *Perifeminas II* the Frente opened its "frontiers" to women, hip hop lovers from around the world. Continuing in the line of the first book, this second project still clearly shows its added value: the polyphony of the texts that compose it. Here, in fact, alongside the Brazilian authors, we find testimonies from women coming from Denmark, Kurdistan, Chile, France, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, the United States, Israel, and Cuba, all sharing and celebrating the fact that "they found in hip hop a way to face life's challenges" (FNMH2 2014). Again, the reader is moved by the raw honesty, enthusiasm and a variety of voices. Also, he/she has the opportunity not only to "meet" a younger generation of women linked to hip hop – most works are by women in their twenties; among these rapper Lunna's daughter –, but also to acknowledge the extent to which the range of women's participation to hip hop culture has expanded within a global dimension. In this sense, I believe that *Perifeminas II* illustrates how women are globally emancipating from traditional stigmas, while they are also joining forces in defense of their own *locus of enunciation* (Ribeiro 2017), a space that has consistently been silenced but that today is increasingly gaining visibility thanks to their consistent and continuing acts of resistance.

Again, this second volume is used as a platform to denounce not only women's daily struggles, but also to underpin controversial matters, such as social hierarchies, class marginalization, drug abuse, gender and sexual prejudice, while reinforcing antiracism and Black feminism. Furthermore, in view of the style of the texts and the subjects covered, both *Perifeminas I*

and *Perifeminas II* draw close towards the body of works that build up contemporary Brazilian marginal literature [Literatura marginal]: even though a considerable number of texts does not fall into the category of fiction, most of them still depict life in the *periferia*, that is, living conditions that are mainly characterized by discrimination and injustice. Similarly to these authors, these "marginal" women claim the right to speak for themselves, showing full awareness when it comes to using the most varied literary expressions to convey their experience directly, using language as an antimetaphorical tool, in other words with no filters nor the bending of an external eye. In this sense, Ramos (2016) identifies three main features for these projects: the fact that they are means of representation, representativeness and knowledge for and about women in hop hop.

Bearing all this in mind, then, *Perifeminas I* and *Perifeminas II* represent undeniable proofs not only of the scope of women's participation to hip hop culture, in its multiple dimensions, but also of the national and transnational network that they have developed through it. As Tanya L. Saunders describes in her text:

> I work so that when other people like myself, Black women, queer, […] can see someone to reflect them. Because there are so few of us doing this work […], who are challenging the way that our centers of intellectual thought are colonized, I feel it is important for us to work together, across national boundaries, to create more space of us to represent ourselves – and we can do this through Hip Hop (FNMH2 2015, 87).

Therefore, these self-organized projects display how women conceive themselves as a group and work together in the definition of their community and collective identity – as peripheral, as Black, as resilient. In this sense, and in conclusion to the considerations here presented, I see in both books fundamental, indispensable evidences: women's contributions to cultural practices are essential to understand how their actions are always political and social acts of resistance to the centrifugal forces plied by male hegemony, patriarchy, racism and violence. They also prove that they do not seek for authorization but simply join forces in the revindication of their own space of legitimation.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Studying women is challenging. Not only because the information available it often hidden behind layers and layers of studies were men are considered everybody's representants, but also – and more importantly – because, with their stories and experiences, in the case of rappers with their lyrics women defy what we know and often do not question. With the present work, then, I aimed at responding to two main concerns: the first was the urge to buil a space where the voices of women rappers could be heard and discussed as equally valuable as men's; the second was to deconstruct those dominant narratives that sponsor hegemonic masculinity, while also confronting the patriarchal and racist structures and ideologies that sustain and permeate contemporary Western societies. Thus, the unbalanced scenario that I registered when studying hip hop culture, is nothing more than a representation of what happens within society. As far as Brazil is concerned, for instance, racism and sexism have extremely damaging repercussions on women, particularly on Black women, that end up being relegated to the least prestigious and least remunerated job (Carneiro 2011). In terms of job access and remuneration, the situation described by Sueli Carneiro translates into the fact that Black women earn half of what white women do, and four times less than white men and they fill the most vulnerable jobs among which are freelancers, workers without signed labor, and family and domestic workers (Carneiro 2011). This vacuum in terms of human and labor rights seems to stand in the line of what Arnaldo Xavier described as the "matriarchy of misery" [o matriarcado da miséria], this is, the historic condition of exclusion, discrimination and social rejection experienced by Black women. However, the expression also seems to underline the central role of these women in terms of resistance and leadership within the underprivileged communities they are part of.

The situation doesn't change much when we observe the Portuguese reality: women of African descent or origins are still living in the margins of the social, economic and political sphere. They occupy the poorest sections of today's society and suffer of constant invisibilisation. As I have said throughout my work, Portugal is still struggling with the building of a true democracy, and with the resignification of a (questionable) past. Ideologies such as lusotropicalism, racism and patriarchy still permeate its institutions and affect the lives and futures of its non-white citizens.

In this sense, by observing how women rappers have been received either in Portugal or Brazil, I realized that their marginalization was and is linked to the fact that these women undertake untraditional paths, careers and roles, while also openly and proudly defending their right to speak and access to positions of power – or in other words, their right to operate through self-

determination. According to Meyers (2002), the owning – and our understanding – of women's self-determination is crucial to the process of affirmation of women's agency: "self-determination […] is best understood as an ongoing process of exercising a repertoire of agentic skills — skills that enable individuals to construct their own self-portraits and self-narratives and that thereby enable them to take charge of their lives" (Meyers 2002, 4). The reconceptualization of self-determination has led to the development of the "feminist voice theory" (Meyers 2002). The theory draws upon the idea that, to women, both speaking one's own voice and leading one's own life become priceless, and this is because most of the time their experiences are represented according to culturally rooted narratives and conventions that dislocate them and offer distorted versions of them. Again, as Meyers explains: "what motivates feminist voice theory is the fact that women are systematically denied the opportunity to discover themselves for themselves, to interpret themselves as they think fit, and to live their lives according to their own lights" (16). Thus, by promoting women's self-determination I aim at contributing to expand their agency and empowerment, while also revealing how socio-cultural inequalities inhibit women's skills. Following on from these considerations, I believe that rap made by women cooperates to the building of a space where female agents can speak for themselves and build a space of emancipation and mutual empowerment, while also proving their entrepreneurial skills.

As far as global rap is concerned, in fact, throughout history women have constantly and consistently given their contributions and made efforts to build their own careers, overcoming social and cultural constraints. As I said before, becoming a rapper most of the time means being determined to achieve space and recognition in a male dominated field where women suffer of minor representation, while also being able to overcome the prejudice suffered for not embodying traditional female roles. Furthermore, women in rap also struggle against objectification and marginalization: in terms of lyrical and image production, they are frequently depicted as mere sexual bodies to the mercy of men's desire and power, while in terms of music production they are often relegated to background roles, that is, to singing in choruses. With regard to this, Morgan (2004) considers that Black women have become almost invisible within rap and Hunter (2011) argues that their objectification within rap is due to white consumers. As I mentioned, this faith is particularly evident when we observe the careers of female artists coming from post-colonial countries, where not only the public, but more importantly the institutions, are still anchored to a questionable and controversial past.

Yet, the works and achievements by women in rap, and Black women in particular, are fundamental proofs not only of women's entrepreneurial abilities but also of the urge to build a space where they can give voice to their experiences, without these being mediated by men. Hence,

especially in rap, women's contribution and participation is more than a musical matter: it's also about resistance against a wide range of dominant discourses. As a woman, and particularly a Black woman, achieving a career in rap has a deeper meaning: it means overcoming historical and socio-cultural barriers, while making a political statement and contributing to the feminist and womanist cause. With the regards to this, Isoke (2013) explains how hip hop as a whole works as "a source of empowerment for women of color" since "through hip hop women are able to boldly and unapologetically lay claim to the male dominated public sphere" (Isoke 2013, 122). In this sense, Chepp (2015) argues that female MCs use irreverence to claim respectability.

Feminism, womanism, militancy and resistance as a whole, then, are the threads that run through the lives and lyrics of the rappers I met. Their strength, determination and unapologetic attitude were definitely other ones. Their voices are both irreverent and enlightening, and very, very loud. I hope that my work allows you to hear them more and to question the time and space you are living in, while also understanding the extent to which racism and patriarchy are poisoning virus that need to be addressed, deconstructed and eventually defeated.

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