

**A study of the influence of Gangsta Rap on
grade 11 male learners in a secondary school in
Chatsworth**

by

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SUPERVISOR'S STATEMENT

This dissertation has been submitted with / without my approval

.....

Professor A. Sheik

.....

Date

DECLARATION

I, Rohith W. Maharaj, declare that this dissertation is my own work and has not been submitted previously for any degree in any university.

Researcher

Date

Supervisor

Date

Acknowledgements.

To Bhagwan Shri Lakshmi Narayan for the strength, mental and physical well-being which enabled me to successfully complete this study.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to two late members of my family:

- My father, Whotho Ramluckan Maharajh, who placed my education above even his own needs.
- My brother Pradeep, who taught me that it is never too late to start studying again.

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ABSTRACT

This research was an investigation into the influence of Gangsta Rap on Grade 11 students at a secondary school. This is an ethnographic study that is based on a hypothesis stemming from my personal observations, spanning a number of years, of especially male learners in this learning community.

The study identified contextual factors which facilitated identity and entry into Gangsta Rap culture and collated data through semi structured interviews as well as respondents replies on a Likert scale. Patterns were subsequently identified and analysis drawn and contextualised within the literature and resources available on Gangsta Rap. It was found that Gangsta Rap reflected the experiences in this stressed socio economic community and expressed the material frustrations and desires of many in the sample group. Moreover, Gangsta Rap was identified as a potentially valuable and authentic teaching and learning resource that needs to be exploited.

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Chapter 1: **Intro and background to the study**

Focus and Purpose of study

At first glance, one would be tempted to ask, “How did the researcher see a connection between Gangsta Rap and the pupils of this community?” This connection is based on a hypothesis, which in turn is based on my observations stemming from eighteen years of being a teacher in this community. It is my hypothesis that since Gangsta Rap is a very popular genre of music in this community, especially amongst the pupils of this particular school, it is perhaps influencing the pupils to some extent. Especially since the social ills- unemployment, poverty, a sense of hopelessness that researchers like Herd (2009) and Rose (1994) engage with, were articulated through Rap music in America- are the very same social ills that plague this community in Chatsworth, South Africa.

The school is situated in Westcliff (Unit 3). The community is poor with a high unemployment rate. There are also other socio-economic problems like drug and alcohol abuse, sexual abuse, physical abuse and single parent families that afflict learners. Many of the learners at this school are living with either a step-father, step-mother, relative or guardian. This school has a high drop-out rate, of students. And of those students who do complete their matric, most obtain menial, low-paying jobs. Those who are employed, generally have a job arranged for them by a family member or a friend. As can be expected, these jobs are unskilled jobs with a paltry salary and in most instances are highly insecure. Layoffs based on demand and economic uncertainty means that these newly hired employees are the first to be retrenched. Compounding this difficulty is the fact that since the "learner" has only a matric certificate; his or her chances of a promotion and a better salary are slim.

Given the complex of socio economic problems, apathy and limited aspirations borne of low self-esteem, opportunities are limited, if not non-existent, and this in turn perpetuates the cycle of unemployment, poverty and all the other related social ills mentioned above. I must also mention that because of the high rate of unemployment and poverty, this area has earned a reputation for prostitution, crime and drug-dealing. Through my readings, I found that this issue resonates with Bourdieu’s concept of Cultural Capital and Habitus.

From my understanding, Bourdieu’s argument is that in order to understand class inequality, one has to look at the economic circumstances of a person. For this purpose he used the idea of “capital”. Capital, according to Bourdieu, referred to the cultural, material and other symbolic goods that a person may possess, and how this influences the success of that person. The influence of this capital creates a “habitus” for an individual. That is- a pattern of behaviour.

This study attempts to understand whether “Gangsta Rap” is in some way responsible for the patterns of behaviour of these pupils, i.e. their habitus.

This information would be useful to - educators, dealing with disinterested pupils, educators dealing with disinterested parents, principals dealing with discipline issues, education department officials and social workers researching or working in this area.

Through my research I want to either confirm or disprove my hypothesis that there is an influence of Gangsta Rap on grade 11 male learners in this school. If there is an influence of Gangsta Rap, then it would help me as a teacher in this community, to understand the pupils better. My understanding of this influence may even allow me to use the message of rappers like (Poor) Righteous Teachers and KRS One. These Rap artists have seen the power of this medium, and have used it to spread a positive message, a message of hope, in their communities. Through an understanding of these pupils, via the key questions, perhaps the same can be done in Chatsworth.

I have chosen to use male learners because they tend to be more vocal, outspoken and eager to demonstrate their "machismo". My choice is based on observations made, that male learners are the perpetrators of "gangsta rap" culture, they are more prone to violent language, violent behaviour and sexist attitudes. Finally, they are the predominant consumers of "gangsta rap" music, its dress code, language, behaviour and attitudes.

There are many reasons why I have chosen grade 11 pupils. Firstly, matric pupils may not have the time since they will be busy with preparations for their final examinations. Secondly, grade 8, 9 and 10 pupils may not be mature or capable enough to articulate their thoughts and opinions as we would expect grade 11 pupils to be able to. Also one would expect their parents to be more protective of them and thus limit, to a greater extent, outside influences. And thirdly, grade 11 learners may be given more freedom and independence which will open them to greater influence to outside stimuli.

Before I continue with this study I should explain what is meant by the term Gangsta Rap.

The definition according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (m-w.com. Retrieved on September 15, 2013) is "Rap music with lyrics explicitly portraying the violence and drug use of urban life and typically expressing hostility towards whites, women and civil authority."

The Encyclopaedia Britannica has a similar definition when it explains that "Gangsta Rap is a form of hip-hop music that became the genres dominant style ..., a reflection and product of the often violent lifestyle of American inner cities afflicted with poverty and the dangers of drug use and drug dealing. The romanticization of the outlaw at the centre of much of gangsta rap appealed to rebellious suburbanites as well as to those who had first- hand experience of the harsh realities of the ghetto."

(Britannica Online Encyclopedia. Global.britannica.com.
Retrieved on September 15, 2013)

I must also point out that many people who listen to rap music, including critics and researchers, use the words "rap", "hip hop" and "Gangsta Rap" interchangeably and synonymously (Davis, 2011, p.4 ; Jones,2009, p. 349; Richardson and Scott, 2002, p.176).

The Key Research Questions are:

1. What is "gangsta rap" culture?
2. How does "gangsta rap" culture manifest itself in male learners in grade 11 at a school in Chatsworth?
3. Why does it manifest itself in grade 11 learners the way it does?

While there are numerous studies on the influence of hip hop and Gangsta Rap in particular, on the youth of many European countries (Bennett, 1999, Androutsopoulos and Scholz, 2003), I could not find any such research on the youth of South Africa, and especially the youth in Chatsworth, the suburb in which I work and have been working for the last twenty years. Perhaps one of the reasons for this is the fact that in Europe, the hip hop culture, of which Gangsta Rap is a sub-genre, has been appropriated by the natives of that particular country. In their appropriation of this musical genre, the European musicians have begun singing about and thus addressing, issues relevant and pertinent to their lived experiences and their environment, rather than merely copying issues that their American counterparts are addressing.

Research has shown that although the hip hop culture has its roots in the inner city ghettos of America, the hip hop base in Europe has some fundamental differences. Firstly the conditions in the ghettos, that form an integral aspect of American Gangsta Rap, does not seem to have an equivalent amongst European artists. (Androutsopoulos and Scholz, 2003). Secondly:

While European rap artists may listen to (and look up to) U.S. Gangsta Rap, their own lyrics are expected to represent their own social environment. If an essential aspect of rap discourse is to reflect "urban lived experience" (Rose, p. 102), than simply copying an imported narrative will clearly not meet the expectations.

(Androutsopoulos and Scholz, 2003, p. 472)

In their research, Androutsopoulos and Scholz found that in Italy and Germany only about 20 percent of rap music is about social issues like discrimination, living conditions and exploitation, while in France the figure is about 50 percent.

In KZN and Durban in particular, limited studies have been conducted on Rap music, and because they are so rare their scope too has been limited. In fact, the only study I could find was by Chimba (2008) which did not look at the influence of Gangsta Rap nor did it look at secondary school male learners. The focus of this study was how Rap performance reinforced or challenged perceptions of race in a post-apartheid South Africa, focusing on the geographical locale of Durban.

While Chimba's study is not directly linked to mine, Chimba though has localized Rap music by looking at how it impacts on adult perceptions of race. Whereas Chimba has looked at adults of all genders and races I however, am looking at school going males, all of whom happen to be of Indian origin. I have not deliberately chosen to study the influence of Gangsta Rap on Indian pupils as you can see from my topic. It so happens that my focus group happens to be a class with only Indian pupils.

The reason why this is so is historical. Chatsworth is an apartheid development that was reserved for Indian occupation. While democratic legislation has broken down these barriers, the reality is that pockets of Chatsworth are still inhabited by a largely Indian population, hence my profile group.

Another study, by Perullo (2005), examined how youth in Tanzania saw rap as a means of empowerment, as a tool to focus attention of the plight of their economic oppression and used it to inform society about their positive and negative lived experiences.

Ever since I started teaching in this community almost 20 years ago, I have been intrigued by the apparent influence of the "gangsta rap" culture amongst male learners in this school. For example, a popular form of music, if not the most popular, amongst the male learners in this school is Gangsta Rap. Photographs taken by these pupils and of these pupils, show them mimicking the hand signs, postures and dress code of the Gangsta Rappers. Graffiti on the walls of the buildings and furniture, scream out the names of their favourite Gangsta Rap songs, albums and groups. It is not uncommon to see desks and walls littered with graffiti making reference to Gangsta Rap, like "N.W.A" (Niggaz With Attitude, a popular Gangsta Rap group), "West Side Gangstas" (reference to the two popular groups of Gangsta Rappers. Those that come from the West Coast of U.S.A as opposed to those who pledge allegiance to the East Coast. This 'turf war' has led to a highly publicized 'beef' between Tupac and Biggie, resulting in both their deaths.) and "Murder was the case" (A popular song by Snoop Dogg from the album with the same name.)

It is possible that through a study of the above issues, we should be able to gain insight into the attitude of these learners towards education and school and thus make some progress towards addressing these problems in this community.

Chapter 2:

Review of related literature

Introduction.

Generally, all popular forms of music has been seen by parents and society as having a negative influence on the youth of that particular time. Even the Beatles and Elvis were seen as a negative influence on the youth of their time. They were, and popular musicians have been, blamed for anti-social, delinquent behavior and negative attitudes.

It is no surprise therefore that the contemporary genre of popular music has also had to undergo intense scrutiny from parents, society and adults in general. Rap music is no different. Critics of this popular genre of music point to the prevalence of violence, misogyny and the glorification of the criminal lifestyle in the lyrics (McLaren, 2000; Parker-Pope, 2007). However, for the purposes of this study, I need to explain the history and different sub-genres of rap music.

Origins of Rap

Rap music first emerged out of the ghettos of America. It was, initially a form of protest against the conditions in the ghettos inhabited by African American youth. It was, and perhaps still is, the only tool for these oppressed inhabitants of the ghettos with which they could explore and critique the touchy issue of race relations and their own experiences as compared to the hegemonic ideologies of the economically powerful, and thus, dominant race.

Rap music highlighted the desperate political, social and economic conditions that the youth in these urban slums found themselves in (Herd, 2009; Rose, 1994). When it first emerged, rap music told of the experiences of these youth and was therefore seen as their voice. In an interview with Gordon Chambers, Sister Souljah, herself a rapper had this to say about KRS One, one of the pioneers of rap:

Hip hop is a blessing because the (Poor) Righteous Teachers, Brand Nubian, and KRS-One have actually been the educational system for Black kids, in place of the so-called educational system that is entirely financed by the American government. And in the absence of the voice of young people in hip hop, we would have even more chaos than we have today.

(in Parmar, 2005, P.108)

If we examined the lyrics to one of the rap songs written by KRS-One, we can see evidence of his attempt at educating society about the harsh social realities, poor economic conditions and lack of opportunities in the inner city ghettos, especially for African American youth. The following is an excerpt from his song “Reality” (Rhymes Equal Actual Life, In The Youth”):

I lived in a spot called Millbrooke Projects
The original Criminal Minded rap topic
With twenty cents in my pocket I saw the light
If you're young gifted and black, you got no rights
Your only true right, is a right to a fight
And not a fair fight, I wake up wonderin who died last night
Everyone and everything is at war
Makin my poetic expression hardcore
I aint afraid to say it, and many can't get with it
At times in my life, I was a welfare recipient
I ate the free cheese, while the church said believe
And went to school everyday, like a goddamn fool

(“R.E.A.L.I.T.Y.,” KRS-One, Jive Records, 1995. In Parmar, 2005).

While others were rapping about “drive by’s” and “hoes”, even a cursory glance at the lyrics of KRS-One’s songs, reveals that his songs deal with a host of issues ranging from criticism of fellow rappers and the media, to government beureaucratic structures like the police and educational institutions. Initially, Rap music was an important alternative to the knowledge and values espoused by the dominant group. This knowledge and these values were in direct contrast to the realities of the marginalized groups. Researchers in this field, have therefore seen rap culture and music as an important site of resistance and struggle. Firstly, because music is universal and an intrinsic part of all cultures throughout the world. Secondly, because of technology, music is easier to share and thus influence, especially with regards to particular styles. It is no surprise, therefore, that even though the origins of rap are in the ghettos of New York, it has been transplanted to all corners of the globe as its popularity has grown. This does not mean that rap is the only musical form of resistance, however, it is the focus of this study.

In his song Edutainment, KRS-One set out to develop a critical social awareness in their audience to the conditions in the ghettos. We can see here the early attempts of rappers to conscientize society and draw attention to the oppression of African American youth in particular, in the ghettos. KRS-One’s lyrics encourage the oppressed people to take control of their lives and their destinies positively in order to achieve success and material wealth. He offers this as an alternative to the popular choices like drugs, violence and gangsterism that were sung about by later Gangsta rappers like Ice Cube and N.W.A, whose lyrics I will look at a little later.

Wake up, shake up, hypocrite look alive
Blastmaster KRS-One will revive
Four or five million still deprived

.....

(“House Nigga’s,” Edutainment, Jive Records, 1990.
www.metrolyrics.com. Retrieved August 2, 2012)

Songs like these are an impassioned plea against and a scathing critique of a repressive system that ignores a marginalized community.

If one looks at the ancient roots of Rap they can be traced back to the African oral tradition (Powell, 1991; Davis, 2011). The idea was to create a discourse of topical and important issues in the form of a story. Because of its purpose, these stories had a point to make. As did the storyteller whose job it was to provide a view not so much to oppose the dominant view, but more to provide a counter balance, to whatever the issue may have been. From the days of slavery, music has always played an important role in the battle of resistance and cultural hegemony, from the spiritual songs of the era of slavery, to the explicit cries of oppression and the reality of the ghettos, music has been used to protest, celebrate and educate. In the modern scenario, the storyteller/rapper would vocalize concerns over anything from lack of opportunity to marginalization and oppression. (Quinn,2000)

Birth of Gangsta Rap

Like all other genres of music, rap music too evolved. Two strains of rap music emerged, soft rap and hard core rap (Powell, 1991). Soft rap, as the name suggests, was not concerned with making a statement, nor did it seek to make a commentary on the plight of the African American in the ghettos of America. It was about having a good time and “living it up”. The closest soft rap came to addressing social issues was perhaps Will Smith’s (aka The Fresh Prince) “Parents Don’t Understand”, which deals with the parent teenager communication problem.

Hard core rap itself has two sub-categories: Political Rap and Gangsta Rap. Political Rap espoused the ideologies of Black nationalism and Black pride similar to those of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X (Powell, 1991).

Gangsta Rap, which is the focus of this study, emerged in the 1980’s on the West Coast of the USA. The term was first used by the rapper Ice Cube from the group NWA in an interview to promote their single “Gangsta Gangsta” from the album “Straight outta Compton” which incidentally became a hit (Quinn, 2000, P.195).

Gangsta Rap thus became popular for cultivating different ways of understanding, representing and analyzing the discourses of the ghettos. We find history repeating itself, unfortunately for Rap music, because with popularity came protest. Tipper Gore, wife of then U.S. Vice President Al Gore, called for regulation of specifically, the rap music industry. Again history repeated itself because this move only served to broaden and increase rap music’s appeal (Perkins, 1996, cited in Davis, 2011). However because of the strength of the rap movement, rap music, its culture and its lyrics came under intense scrutiny from other quarters and it was blamed for the “total disintegration of American civilization” (Riley, 2005).

Depending on the texts and context, one can find both support for and criticism against rap music. Herd (2009) found that although the earlier rap songs had violent lyrics, it was viewed negatively by its target audience. However, there was a gradual change in the attitudes towards violent rap lyrics.

Over time its target audience became more accepting of the violent lyrics. Herd's conjecture was that this change was as a result of the desire for profits by the recording companies as graphic violence and sexuality became a major selling point in this genre. He also suggested that this increase in violence and sexuality in rap music could be viewed as a reflection of the lived experiences of African American males from the inner cities. Thus rap was seen as an experiential antihegemonic protest reflecting social realism making it an authentic voice of resistance to the dominant culture. This also opened up further debate on other related issues, amongst others- the issue of representation, identity creation and cultural incorporation (Quinn, 2000).

Gangsta Rap and Identity Creation

On the issue of identity creation, representation and cultural incorporation, Quinn (2000) explains that popular representation of African Americans in the media, especially film and television, was grossly inaccurate and skewed since tools of propaganda, thought control and bureaucratic structures generally, are in the hands of the dominant group. Rap music, Quinn says, broke this trend. Now we had African Americans representing themselves, telling their own stories that centred around their own experiences. They were not the trusted and loyal sidekick of movies and television, they were not secondary characters in someone else's history, nor was their sole purpose to make the "hero" look good. In this way they were creating their own identity, built on their experiences and based on their culture, history and traditions of oral storytelling referred to earlier in this chapter.

It is for this reason that many fans of rap music claim allegiance to this genre because they believe that they are getting an unadulterated account of ghetto realities (Quinn, 2000).

Murray Forman's article, " 'Represent': Race, Space and Place in Rap Music" (2000), puts forward the idea that rap music is the voice of the youth when he says:

"Rap music presents a case worthy of examination and provides a unique set of contexts for the analyses of public discourses pertaining to youth, race and space." (p. 66).

I understand this to mean that if we are to understand the youth, then we have to listen to what they have to say, and rap music seems to say best what today's youth think and feel.

The findings of this article indicate that the portrayal of violence and misogyny in Gangsta Rap lyrics, serves many purposes including the creation of a social identity and a reputation, and exerting control over those seen as weaker and thus less important. But he takes this idea further by examining how space, represented by the “hood” also shapes the creation of an identity. Loyalty to the “hood” while shaping an identity, is also dependent on the individuals understanding of their environment.

Interestingly, in their article “The emergence of rap Cubano: an historical perspective”, (in “Music, space and Place, Popular music and Cultural Identity” . Hernandez, D.P., & Garofalo, R. (2004), the authors, relate a conversation with a group of Rap musicians in Cuba. Discussing whom the Cuban artists admired and looked up to, the Cubans mentioned amongst others, Ice-T, Snoop etc. When they were told by the authors that these artists were being criticized in the US, the Cubans responded by saying that they were merely appropriating and adapting the styles of these American artists for their own purposes.

They also shared with the authors their belief that rap music should be socially relevant. When they were further questioned as to why they didn’t use local Cuban styles of music, they revealed that they preferred rap as it was “more pure, more of the street”. (p.98/9)

While the authors noted the positive energy and optimism of Cuban rap, they also mentioned that US rap had, before it became commercial, displayed a similar outlook. (p.99)

Rap and Notoriety

Despite the vociferous protestations and criticisms, Gangsta Rap was unapologetic because it described explicitly the reality of the disadvantaged ghetto-dwelling youth, their daily reality of drugs, violence, despair and death. The downside was that it gained notoriety for various reasons, some of which were:

Firstly it glorified the gangsta lifestyle and mentality. Gangsta Rap projects the idea that murder is necessary for survival.

In his song “Ask About Me”, Ice Cube is making a clear statement that it is acceptable to use violence to solve an issue, that on the streets if one is disrespected, one has to respond with violence in order to teach the perpetrator a lesson and more importantly, to regain that respect, even without trying other methods as a first step to resolving the problem. A look at other Gangsta Rap lyrics shows the same idea and philosophy- that violence, and the willingness to use violence are pivotal to gaining respect and establishing a macho identity and reputation. A study by Gubrium and Holstein (1997, cited in Kubrin, 2005), found that:

65 percent of the songs sampled make reference to some aspect of violence and many songs were graphic in their violent depictions.

(Kubrin, 2005, p.375).

Gangsta Rap also encourages violence as a means of addressing a problem without seeking proper recourse, and as a means of social control as it defined what constituted an offence and how these offences should be addressed. (Kubrin, 2005, p.375)

Secondly, that drug dealing is acceptable in order to survive or even to acquire wealth.

It was once said by a man who couldn't quit
"Dopeman, please, can I have another hit?"
The Dopeman said, "Cluck, I don't give a shit
If your girl kneels down and sucks my dick!"
It all happened and the guy tried to choke her
Nigga living in cash, ain't nothing but a smoker
That's the way it goes, that's the name of the game
Young brother getting over by slingin' caine
Gold around his neck 14 K, has it
Bitches sucking on his dick, 24-7
Plus he's makin' money keepin' the base heads waiting
Rollin 6-4 with the fresh-ass daytons
Livin' in Compton, California, CA
His Uzi up your ass if he don't get paid
Nigga begging for credit, he's knockin' out teeth
Clockin' much dollars on the 1st and 15th kay shizze is a real fuckin' G
Big lot of money, nothing less than a twenty
Yo, you want a five-oh, the Dopeman got plenty
To be a Dopeman, boy, you must qualify
Don't get high, off your own supply!
From a kid to a G, it's all about money
10-piece, 4-10, base pipe comes free
If people out there ain't hip to the fact
If you see somebody gettin' money 4 crack
He's the
.....
Money up to here but unemployed
You keep smoking that rock
And my pocket's getting bigger
Yo, got that 5-0, double-up nigga!
Yeah, high rollin', big money, I'm foldin
Bitch on my tip, for the dick, I'm holdin'
Strong strawberry, jockin' me so early
Hoe, ya wanna hit? Ya gotta get your knees dirty
Well that's my life, that's how it's cut
"Hey Dopeman!" Bitch shut the fuck up!
Gotta make a run, it's a big money deal
Gankers got the fake but you can get the real
From the Dopeman

(N.W.A., "Dopeman", from Straight Outta Compton, 1998, from www.metrolyrics.com. Retrieved August 2, 2012)

Thirdly it advocates sexist and misogynist attitudes towards females.

Lesson 2 : Gently place the balls into the mouth and ..

HAMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMMM..

get it all baby ..

get it all baby ..

get it all baby ..

"what you want me to do with it?"

don't matter just don't bite it

she swallowed it ..

suck this dick for daddy

she swallowed it ..

usin' that lips

she swallowed it ..

it's the world's biggest dick

"what do you want me to do with it?"

don't matter just don't bite it

...

Now what do you expect they're gonna dogg her like a doggy

Thirty minutes later and the windowz all were foggy

And I'm off in my car havin' a fit' 'cause de bitch that I'm with

Sayz no fuckin' on the 1st date shit

Now I'm like - Damn! I wish I was in the bucket

To be with 6 niggaz with the ho' and I can fuck it

So I told de ho' I was with that I'm goin' to de snack bar -

And got de fuck out de car.

Went to the bucket and I looked through the window

It was some niggaz that I knew they let me in yo

And my turn was like next

I could'nt see a face, all I saw was de pussy and the chest

I wanted to see the face, I felt the order

Peep over the seat - OH SHIT! it's the preacher's daughter!

And she's only 14 and a ho'

But the bitch sucks dick like a specialized pro

She looked at me, I was surprised

But was it passin' up the chance of my dick gettin' baptised

I told the bitch to do it quick :

...

And then she won't let go

Because bitches suck nutt out of a dick just like drain-o

Get the last drop, unclogin the pipe

Then the stupid bitch is at that with the same shit the next night

Because she just can't quit

'cause she's addicted, addicted, addicted, addicted

she's addicted, addicted, she's addicted to suck a good dick

"It's the world's biggest dick"
Don't matter just don't bite it
"It's the world's biggest dick"
Don't matter just don't bite it
"What do you want me to do with it?"
Don't matter just don't bite it
She swallowed it .. Get it all baby!
"It's the world's biggest dick"
Don't matter just don't bite it
"It's the world's biggest dick"
Don't matter just don't bite it
"What do you want me to do with it?"
Don't matter just don't bite it
She swallowed it .. Get it all baby!

(N.W.A, "She Swallowed It", from www.metrolyrics.com. Retrieved August 2, 2012)

Women in Gangsta Rap lyrics are often depicted as "hoes" (whores), whose specific function is to satisfy male sexual cravings. It is further suggested in the above lyrics, and Gangsta Rap lyrics in general, that women are willing participants in these acts. (Pinn, 1999, cited in Davis, 2011) though, offers an interesting explanation for this misogyny. The explanation is that these Gangstas aim to subdue and control women in order to assert their manhood. Thus the Gangsta's survival depends on "their women."

Fourthly it encouraged the use of violence (Tatum 1999 p. 342).

Krayzie:
All over the world.
All across the nation. we all across the nation.
Thugs all over the world. all over the world.
All across the nation. we all across the nation.

Krayzie:
Nigga, you ask 'em, they gon' tell you who the thuggish ruggish. they love us.
You haters, I bet you won't say fuck you us to our faces, bitch, and ball up
Your knuckles, 'cause we can work. too many niggas be thinkin' that I won't bomb
Back at ya, thinkin' I'm a rapper-actor. think I won't blast 'em? shit: i'm
Always ready to bomb back on bustas. I got my gun, so test me if you're tryin'
To prove that you ain't scared to die. nigga, what? who the-, who the thugs?
Y'all punk muthafuckas ain't got no nuts. I only be dealin' with real niggas.
Them other niggas--they get their ass put in check when they try to flex and
Disrespect me. and that's when I gotta get even with niggas--retaliation. uh-huh
[uh-huh]. I bet I will see you again, and nigga, your day is gon' come. but,
Man, y'all niggas ain't ready for drama, but I'm a put it on mama. nigga, you
Try run up on me, then I gotta shot your head off. I'm keepin' a gun on me
Daily, 'cause if you got my niggas' roll, then they sure gon' try to take it.

...

Treach:

As far as 50 greatest emcees ever, they gave me 32, like they don't know how
These dirty judge get thirty, do ya? they must be shady, baby, naw just maybe a
Stunt. the greatest producers, and didn't mention kaygee once? the greatest
Groups of all time, stop the crime, sporty, find the shorty fucked up by not
Namin' naughty. pass the mask, the glock, you faggots better stop. blaze the
Page out of 50 of your rock and clock, tryin' to prepare, I'm a fuck you wearin'
Rubber, tell 'em niggas at the mags that I ain't sharin' a cover [uh-uh]. bring
Troops and boots from chrome coupes to hoops, that's us, like namin' emcees and
Boostin' brought the news. run through wussy pussy (...? ...). there's the
Predator, rhymes to better ya, blah! where's the editor? once a year, proof that
They're easy to swallow, and I'll bet you'll have a different view of emceein'
Tomorrow. thugs all over the world!

...

Krayzie:

Now I done been all over the nation, kicked it with real soldiers that's 'bout
They paper. handle me so many of these fakers, had to quickly shake 'em. knew
What I had to do. said, "nigga, look the year is '99." I'm dead serious. about
My business--shit is gettin' ridiculous. they gotta be ready to pop, pop, pop,
Pop the 9 millimeter. keep your weapon next to the pocket that you keep your
Profit in. while we fuckin' with niggas that's naughty, haters look, saw that
Treach and leather face. we comin' to get the riot started.

Treach:

Since I been around the cadaver, gather matters, just wait, see I splattered the
Matter, rat-tat-tat-tat and shoot 'em in shake. see I'm comin' like a rhino.
Pass the fine ho. we fucked in illinois, right outside of chicago. got rhymes
Out the ass, so find the lasso, I can either rap, ride, rush, war, riddle, or
Rastle. leave 'em in line, the ass-whippins with extra clips with my nigga
Krayze bone with some thugged-out shit. to my thugs all over the world!

Krayzie:

All over the world.

All across the nation. we all across the nation.

Thugs all over the world. all over the world.

All across the nation. we all across the nation.

(Krazie Bone, "Thugz All Ova Da World" from www.metrolyrics.com. Retrieved August 2, 2012).

The world of Gangsta Rap and gangsta rappers seems obsessed with the idea of disrespect (dissing), and violence, according to the message of Gangsta Rap, is acceptable in order to avenge disrespect. This violence is used to create a masculine identity and a reputation for toughness thus earning its perpetrator the respect he desires.

Fifth, it encouraged the stereotype of the black male as an insatiable sexual being. (hooks, 1994, cited in Tatum).

Muthafucka, sometimes you feel like a nut
That's what you do
What we got here, uh, check it out
Here's another one, uh, uh
....

Head, head and mo' head
Representing for the bitches
Head, head and mo' head
Check it out, check it out now, what?
Check it out, check it out now
Check it out, check it out now, uh, uh
I got a bitch that suck my dick 'til I nut
Spit it on my gut and slurp that shit back up
Ain't that a slut?
(Hell, yeah)
She even take it in the butt
Fuck for about an hour, now she want a golden shower
You didn't know that we be pissing on hoes, bitch
Luke and Biggie straight shitting on hoes, bitch
Lick your toes bitch, fuck no, you must be crazy

...
Squirt in your face and then I'm swayze
Recognize G, straight up, I can't knock ya
After Big Poppa, fuck all of Junior M.A.F.I.A.
The whole clique, dick sucked, ass licked
Leave your number by the phone, bring your ass on home
I roam in Lexuses and Benzes, the fly way
With the fliest bitch getting head on the highway
My way, deep throat on Luke's boat
When the moon rises, I'm coming in her eyeses
Just the way playas play
Leave it up to me, I get fucked all day

Sucked all day, smoking blunts, counting cheese
Fucking bitches 'til their assholes bleed
What you say, baby?
Sometimes Biggie Smalls like busting nuts
Sometimes Biggie Smalls like getting gut
Sometimes yours truly like busting nuts
Sometimes yours truly like getting guts
I gotta fuck her in the butt snatch

...
(Notorious B.I.G. and Luke Campbell, "Bust a Nut", from www.metrolyrics.com. Retrieved August 2, 2012.)

Sixth is the importance of material possessions.

I don't know what you heard about me
But a bitch can't get a dollar out of me
No Cadillac, no perms, you can't see
That I'm a motherfuckin' P I M P
...

Now shorty, she in the club, she dancin' for dollars
She got a thing for that Gucci, that Fendi, that Prada
That BCBG, Burberry, Dolce and Gabana
She feed them foolish fantasies, they pay her 'cause they wanna

I spit a little G man, and my game got her
A hour later, have that ass up in the Ramada
Them trick niggas in her ear sayin' they think about her
I got the bitch by the bar, tryin' to get a drink up out her

She like my style, she like my smile, she like the way I talk
She from the country, think she like me 'cause I'm from New York
I ain't that nigga tryin' to holla 'cause I want some head
I'm that nigga tryin' to holla 'cause I want some bread

...

I'm 'bout my money you see, girl you can holla at me
If you fuckin' with me, I'm a P I M P
Not what you see on TV, no Cadillac, no greasy
Head full of hair, bitch I'm a P I M P

Come get money with me, if you curious to see
How it feels to be with a P I M P
Roll in the Benz with me, you could watch TV
From the backseat of my V, I'm a P I M P

Girl we could pop some champagne and we could have a ball
We could toast to the good life, girl we could have it all
We could really splurge girl, and tear up the mall
If ever you needed someone, I'm the one you should call
...

I told you fools before, I stay with the tools
I keep a Benz, some rims, and some jewels
I holla at a hoe, till I got a bitch confused
She got on Payless, me I got on gator shoes

I'm shoppin' for chinchillas, in the summer they cheaper
Man this hoe you can have her, when I'm done I ain't gonna keep her
Man, bitches come and go, every nigga pimpin' know
You sayin' it's secret, but you ain't gotta keep it on the low

...

I don't know what you heard about me
But a bitch can't get a dollar out of me
No Cadillac, no perms, you can't see
That I'm a motherfuckin' P I M P

Yeah, in Hollywood they say, there's no b'ness like show b'ness
In the hood they say, there's no b'ness like hoe b'ness, you know
They say I talk a lil' fast, but if you listen a lil' faster
I ain't gotta slow down for you to catch up, bitch! Ha ha ha, yea

(From the album "Get rich or die tryin' ", by 50 Cent. www.metrolyrics.com. Retrieved August 2, 2012.)

Coupled with the importance of material possessions is the belief that "more possessions lead to more happiness" (Chan and Prendergast, 2007, cited in Davis, 2011). A study by the social scientists Bozionelos and Nikolaou (2010, cited in Davis, 2011), found that inhabitants of wealthier countries report being happier than those of poorer countries. However, the same study also found that besides material possessions, happiness was also dependent on mental prosperity. Mental prosperity, according to Davis, refers to being content, not seeking satisfaction and happiness in material possessions and not looking for affirmation of one's self by counting the number of things you own.

Kubrin (2005) also found that possession of material led to a positive self-image and respect from others, a finding supported by Christopher (2007, cited in Davis, 2011). Moody (2011, cited in Davis, 2011), also found that "material wealth equals independence" (P. 8).

This makes Keyes (2005, cited in Davis, 2011), findings all the more significant, because he found that rap music itself became a symbol of success for the youth of the ghettos and further it showed those youth that there was a way out of their situation.

When Dre sang:

Why do I call myself a "nigga," you ask me.
I guess it's just the way the shit has to be.
Back when I was young getting a job was murder.
Fuck flippin burgers, 'cause I deserve a
9-to-5 I can be proud of, that I can speak loud of.
(Niggaz 4 Life, from www.metrolyrics.com. Retrieved August 2, 2012.)

He was highlighting the frustrations and at the same time expressing the sense of hopelessness of the African American youth to whom “respectable” and professional jobs like medicine were closed because of the expenses involved especially since it was almost impossible for African Americans in poor paying jobs to access loans from hesitant banking institutions.

The initial pioneers of Gangsta Rap were, amongst others, NWA (Niggas With Attitude), Ice-T and 2 Live Crew. Examples of Gangsta Rap are “Fuck the Police” (NWA), “Cop Killer” (Ice-T) and “As nasty as They Wanna Be” (2 Live Crew).

I specifically mention these groups as they were among those mentioned in June 1990 at a U.S District Court hearing. At this hearing, the album “As Nasty as They Wanna Be” became the first musical album to be declared obscene by a federal court in the United States of America. (Binder 1993, p. 753). Moreover, the effects of rap music were deemed so negative and such a threat to society, that they were the focus of a congressional hearing in America. (Dyson, 1996)

Studies by Johnson, Jackson and Gatto (1995), on the effects of rap music videos on adolescents, found that male African American youth who were exposed to violent rap videos, that is, Gangsta Rap videos, were more accepting of violent behavior, even against women. However, other research on "gangsta rap" suggests that its influence is both positive and negative. The positives can perhaps be put to good use by interested parties eg. teachers, youth counselors, parents, and the education department. Typical of such research would be the article by Morrell and Duncan-Andrade (2002) entitled "Promoting Academic Literacy with Urban Youth through Engaging Hip-Hop Culture".

Rap and its Violent Links

However, researchers like Jones (2009), Miranda and Claes (2004), Adams and Fuller (2006) have all found a conclusive link between Gangsta Rap and violent attitudes, misogyny and drug abuse. Jones’s study examined the violence in rap videos and he concluded from his study, that “... rap or gangster rap music videos contain some socially questionable content.” (p. 354). He felt that parents especially, and society in general, have cause for concern. Miranda and Claes carried out their study amongst French-Canadian adolescents and stated that “ results indicate that rap music as a whole has significant links to deviant behaviors,...”(p.120). They define” deviant behaviors” as “violence, street gang involvement and mild drug use” (p.120). They explain this by referring to studies done by researchers like Hansen and Raviv (cited in Miranda and Claes) who explain that adolescents are attracted to their favorite artists and fascinated by them enough to imitate them in order to create similar scenarios to those glorified in their favorite songs. Adams and Fuller studied misogynistic lyrics in rap music and cautioned that “ It is imperative that we as a society move beyond the beat and seriously consider the effect that negative imagery produced in misogynistic rap can have on the African American community and society at large” (p.955).

This is supported by other researchers. Wester, Crown, Quatman and Heesacker (1997) found that "Gangsta Rap lyrics significantly increased men's adversarial sexual beliefs." (p.504) They go on to say that "Chronic exposure to sexually violent material may, as in past research, produce more negative attitudes towards women by facilitating the encoding of anti-female messages." (p. 505)

Bias in the Media and Society

Binder (1993) argues that although the lyrics of heavy metal music are just as violent and misogynistic as Gangsta Rap, the media and society react to these two genres differently. Binder argues that the racial profile of the consumers of these two different styles of music influence society's perceptions and reaction to both these styles of music. While the consumers of heavy metal are mainly middle class and white, the consumers of Rap are mainly poor and African American. She explains that media depiction of these two types of music feed on the stereotypes in society. The media has focused on the negative effects of Rap, portraying Black youth as being influenced to perpetrate acts of violence and crime by Rap lyrics, while at the same time portraying white youth as being driven to commit suicide or cause harm to themselves, by heavy metal music. White youth, she says are therefore portrayed as victims while Black youth are the perpetrators.

Rose (1991) felt that African American youth were naturally antagonistic to the institutions that oppressed and exploited them. Besides schools, police and social institutions like banks, which I discuss elsewhere in this chapter, she also examines how popular media constructs an identity of rap and its fan base as a danger to society.

...an element that if allowed to roam about freely will threaten the social order, an element that must be policed. The social construction of rap and rap related violence is fundamentally linked to the social discourse on Black containment and fears of a Black planet. (p. 279)

She goes on to say that the attacks on rap music are to be expected when seen in the context of current sociological discourse which portrays Black influence as a threat to American society and culture and Black youth are portrayed as "co-conspirators in the spread of Black aesthetic and discursive influence" (p. 280). To support her claim she examines the resistance shown by venues to hold rap concerts and the print media's coverage and interpretation of violent incidents at these concerts.

She relates how venue availability for rap concerts has decreased since the stabbing of a 19 year old at a rap concert. She also relates how insurance companies are hesitant to cover rap concerts since national attention was focused on violence related to rap music. However, in the same year 1988, she continues, over 1000 concertgoers were injured at a Michael Jackson concert in Liverpool. Although the incident received media coverage, the response from those in charge of the venue and insurance companies was vastly different. Rose also points out that no particular group was held responsible for the incident.

She adds that media reports portray rap concert violence as signs of “Black cultural disorder” (p. 284), but that this only directs attention away from blatant discrimination and racially motivated efforts by police and institutions like insurance companies.

She concludes that the explanation for the reaction to the incident at the rap concert was “a pre-existing anxiety regarding rap’s core audience, namely Black working-class youth.” (p. 280). This anxiety, she believes, is fed by the media’s coverage and interpretation of these violent incidents, and of course the increasing popularity of rap.

Black youth, Rose posits, are seen as a threat to society and order and events at which they gather, especially in large numbers are viewed with suspicion because there is a loss of control by those in power. As Ice Cube (1990) says “Just think if niggas decided to retaliate?” In his rap “The Nigga You Love to Hate.” She says, therefore, that black youth will always view with hostility, those institutions which encourage this marginalization and containment of Black people.

Guy (2004) supports this notion when he contends that the popular media portrays black identity and culture as being “out of control” (P. 53), thus the need for its eradication. This is perpetuated by the portrayal of rap artists as gangstas and thugs on their compact disk covers suggesting “not only the rebellious black male but also the out-of control and dangerous black male”. These images, he contends then become role models for both African American and White youth to emulate and impersonate.

Feminism and Rap

hooks (1994, cited in Adams and Fuller, 2006) offers a feminist perspective. She maintains that the misogyny, violence and sexism found in Gangsta Rap, is merely a reflection of prevalent social values and mores. From her point of view then Gangsta Rap is not responsible for the creation of violent, misogynistic and sexist attitudes rather it is merely holding up a mirror to those very attitudes that society already has.

hooks ideas are supported by the research of Richardson and Scott (2002) who argue that Gangsta Rap has evolved out of lack of equal opportunity, exploitation and deprivation and have been nurtured by distrust and hopelessness since the ghettos exist as centres of poverty, drug abuse, high school dropout rates, police brutality, drug abuse and violence. They explain that Gangsta Rap offered a way for the artists to express their unhappiness and discontent with their lot in life and their inability and powerlessness to change their situation.

Adams and Fuller maintain that the potential of rap music to influence is tremendous, especially when one considers its popularity and its strong support structure through its record companies and its dominance of the charts and airwaves. Therefore, they caution that society in general, and parents in particular, must be aware of the potential rap has to shape how the youth see themselves and the world especially with regard to relations between the genders. They explain that for many youth who do not have positive role models, the streets, peers and even the mass media become the surrogate role model. And if the message that these impressionable youth are imbibing is negative, then we should not be surprised by their behavior.

This poses a problem, not only for males but females too, because, according to Adams and Fuller, young women could internalize and incorporate these attitudes and eventually come to accept them as normal. Thus even the victims of abuse, both physical and sexual, become desensitized and this degradation, mistreatment and oppression of women, becomes legitimate.

Rap in the Classroom

In their study, Morrell and Duncan-Andrade (2002) examined how Rap could be used in the classroom. They argue that a major hurdle in education is the fact that teachers and students seem to inhabit different worlds, they do not seem to be in tune with one another. Their world view and outlook on life is generally in opposition to the other. If meaningful teaching and learning is to take place, they maintain, teachers need to bridge the gap between their students and themselves. In other words, teachers need to connect with their students. Morrell and Duncan-Andrade believe that in order to connect with, rather than alienate learners, educators should use the culture of the learners, in this case "Gangsta Rap" culture, in order to promote learning. They further argue that if educators are to win the confidence and trust of learners, teachers should learn to speak the language of the learners, and understand their life experiences which emerged from the ghettos and "hoods" of inner city America. Despite the criticism from concerned groups, supporters of this genre maintain that rap music is here to stay since it gives voice to the issues of the disenfranchised and ignored African American youth in present day America, especially since it was created by them for the particular purpose of giving them a voice.

Other researchers like Stovall (2006), and Kobin & Tyson (2006) have also recommended the use of Rap music as therapy in the educational context.

Powell (cited in Morrell and Duncan-Andrade, 2002) echoes similar sentiments when she says that:

“(Rap) emerged from the streets of inner-city neighborhoods as a genuine reflection of the hopes, concerns, and aspirations of urban Black youth in this, the last quarter of the 20th century. Rap is essentially a homemade, street-level musical genre... Rap lyrics concentrate primarily on the contemporary African American experience...”
(P. 88)

It is not difficult, therefore, to understand why many rappers consider themselves to be more than just musicians. Many see themselves as teachers, whose duty it is to raise consciousness and awareness in society about issues pertinent to their specific community. Their criticism of the educational system is that it does not reach many of the marginalized communities and what passes for knowledge is very often propaganda and lies. So in this sense rap music plays the role of counter-knowledge, stemming from their personal experiences and struggles. When one looks at research of this nature it cannot be denied that rap is indeed a voice of liberation and resistance for marginalized youth. It is this reason that makes the study of rap music and its sub-genres all the more important since researchers and society needs to understand this new strand of popular culture and what factors contribute to its ongoing popularity and growth.

If we had to look at rap music from the perspective explained above, then we find a resonance in Freire's, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), where he suggests the idea that in order to help people who have been oppressed one first has to raise their consciousness.

That is to say that the oppressed have to be made aware of their oppression before they can be freed from the very ideologies that oppress them. This is no easy task, however, because:

Firstly, the oppression has assumed a state of normalcy. That is, it has become accepted and normal in the lives of the oppressed, it has become part of their lives.

Secondly, it has been justified by the oppressor. Very often it is official policy, making resistance and opposition all the more difficult.

Freire maintains that education under such a system only serves the purpose of the oppressor, because it entrenches this legalized oppression through its system of education, which is basically a propaganda tool for the oppressor.

This is done through what he has termed "banking". This refers to the act of depositing money (teaching) by the depositor (teacher) into the account (the student). The student in this model of pedagogy is a passive recipient, but Freire argues that such a system dehumanizes the student, therefore he argues for a system of pedagogy that would allow the learner to be a co-creator of knowledge. He believes that both student and teacher should mediate a system of knowledge and an approach to education through mutual cooperation in order to liberate and create a society that both are comfortable with. In describing the role of the educator he states that "The role of the progressive educator, which neither can nor ought to be omitted, in offering her or his 'reading of the world' is to bring out the fact that there are other 'readings of the world', different from the one being offered as the educators own, and at times antagonistic to it" (p. 112). This is in direct contrast to the present system, which he believes is based on cultural invasion, manipulation and conquest.

One criticism of Freire's work is that while it proposes liberation of the masses, it is encoded in the language of academia, out of reach and perhaps beyond the comprehension of the very people it is targeting. Nevertheless, the book was a popular tool in the ideological war between the liberation movement and the apartheid government in South Africa. So much so that it was banned by the apartheid government of the time.

Giroux (1996) states that the present generation of youth is under siege, especially by the popular media, which in turn leads to the creation of what he terms "fugitive cultures", that is, a culture of mistrust and distrust, alienation, apathy, violence and misogyny. He argues that educators and education authorities need to re-consider their stance on popular culture, including music, as a site of knowledge which can then be critiqued, discussed and interrogated so that we can understand the impact of popular culture, on the youth.

To return to Morrell and Duncan-Andrade, they have explained that in order to bridge the gap between the world of disenfranchised and oppressed African American youth from the ghettos, and the world of academia, educators can use Gangsta Rap as literary texts.

Discussion and interrogation of these texts can be used as a stepping stone to then look at contemporary issues affecting youth. This discussion and interrogation could then lead to analysis and understanding of these issues, not only by the youth, but also by their educators and other concerned and interested adults.

A further offshoot of this entire process would be written texts produced by these students and action by all concerned in order to address these issues that affect society in general and them (the youth) in particular.

It is for these reasons that Morrell and Duncan-Andrade believe that Gangsta Rap is a subject worthy of study, because it allows youth to arrive at their own understanding and solutions to issues affecting them through a critical understanding of the message contained in their own youth culture. For this they need to be encouraged to critically examine and question the messages that they are being sent, especially through the media, and in this way they are able to define their own purpose and place in society thus creating for themselves an identity they are comfortable with.

In their research Morrell and Duncan-Andrade drew a comparison between acknowledged poets like Whitman, Donne, Shakespeare and Coleridge and present day rappers like Nas, Public Enemy and Grand Master Flash. Through their research they were able to position hip hop as a genre of poetry, as a voice of a generation addressing issues particular to their time just as Whitman and Donne had done for their generation.

When students in their research group were asked to look at “Manifest” by Refugee Camp and “The Canonization” by Donne, they were able to see and discuss how both texts used the allegory of lovers and love to show the pain that poets can feel for their respective societies.

Studies done by Mahiri and Conner (2003) seem to support the ideas of Morrell and Duncan-Andrade. Students in Mahiri and Conner’s study were given a book to read. This book was actually a compilation of accounts of their lives by two 13 year old boys Jones and Newman in 1997. Both these boys came from troubled backgrounds in the ghettos. Jones was being raised by his grandmother as his mother was mentally unstable. Newman’s father was an alcoholic and his mother was late, so he was being raised by his teenage sisters.

After reading the account of their lives one of the respondents in Mahiri and Conner’s research, Mark, one of the respondents, mentioned that he enjoyed reading this book as he could relate to their situation and experiences.

If this is true for reading, could it not also be true for music? Mahiri and Conner further contend that traditional education will not survive changes in how youth access their information if it does not keep pace with technological innovations and advancements.

As a result, schools will not be able to fulfill their primary purpose of developing the cognitive and social skills of the youth. Especially since the youth have used the hip hop culture, of which Gangsta Rap is a part, to create a space and discourse for themselves, which the traditional education curriculum does not allow them to do. Educators therefore should not ignore or dismiss the significance of popular youth culture represented in this study by Gangsta Rap.

In fact they go as far as asking to what extent the Gangsta Rap culture can and should be incorporated into the education curriculum in order to make the curriculum meaningful and relevant to the youth. It is a question worthy of research that a very popular facet of popular youth culture is not utilized by the education authorities in order to reach the very youth whom education authorities are attempting to reach out to.

Lipsitz (1994) cautions that:

our discussions of youth culture will be incomplete if we fail to locate them (the youth) within the racialized social crisis of our time, but our understanding of that crises will also be incomplete if we fail to learn the lessons that young people are trying to teach through their dance, dress, speech, and visual imaging. (p. 18).

If we do indeed heed the advice of Lipsitz and like-minded researchers, then there are many questions that first need to be addressed. What is Gangsta Rap culture? How is it linked to the school curriculum? And if it is not, how can it be related to the school curriculum?

Baszile (2009) has attempted to address these questions by adopting a three point approach.

Firstly she mentions that it was generally thought that the social alienation that youth experience is as a result of their deprivation, marginalization and poverty. However she adds a new dimension to this issue when she says that we need to also consider how educational structures, like the curriculum amongst other things, has created and maintained that alienation.

This idea is the very basis of Freire' *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (1970) discussed earlier and Baszile uses this to argue that the traditional school curriculum "is under girded by a rigid identity- difference dialectic that works to alienate various groups of young people." (p. 9).

Secondly she explains that the Gangsta Rap culture constitutes a way of knowing and being in the world and this way of knowing reflects the way an entire generation of young people have negotiated a reality of the world, a world that has denied them their basic human rights and opportunities, a world that is cruel and harsh, and a world that doesn't offer much in terms of solving or even addressing their plight.

Thirdly Baszile believes that adult reaction to the alienation and disenfranchisement of the youth has generally been to ignore it, or at best, to use hip hop and other popular forms of youth culture to engage the youth in formal schooling. But these, she says, are merely stop gaps. They are not serious attempts to address the issue, nor are we the teachers and other education authorities, listening to what the hip hop generation is trying to tell us about how the school as an institution, and education as we know and practice it, is actually alienating and disenfranchising the youth. She adds that if we are to create a future for the youth, then we have to either find a relationship or create one if it does not exist, between popular culture and education.

While she has explained her three point approach to understanding the Gangsta Culture and how it can be linked to the school curriculum, Baszile has not tried to develop a hip hop curriculum. Rather, she asks what we as educators can learn from our students and their involvement with the hip hop culture? She then goes on to examine and analyze the school curriculum and the political role it plays in empowering some and disempowering others. In other words she believes that the official school curriculum not only reflects, but also creates identity and that the hip hop culture is a reaction to this defining and structuring of identity by the school curriculum. When seen from this perspective, it would seem then that the appropriation of the hip hop culture by its followers is actually an attempt by them to construct their own identity or an attempt to at least control the construction of their identity.

She goes on to show how critical race theory can be used to examine the role of race in education and in the school curriculum and thus transform those structures and aspects that create and maintain dominant and subordinate racial narratives not only in the classroom, but out of it as well.

Her ideas are built on the research done by Solorzano and Yosso (2002) when they say that:

Critical race theory advances a strategy to foreground and account for the role of race and racism in education and works toward the elimination of racism as part of a larger goal of opposing or eliminating other forms of subordination based on gender, class, sexual orientation, language and national origin... [It] is a framework or set of basic insights, perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that seeks to identify, analyze and transform the structural and cultural aspects of education that maintain subordinate and dominant racial narratives in and out of the classroom. (p. 25).

Baszile has pointed out that the traditional school curriculum is Eurocentric, in both structure and syllabus. I should point out here that as I write this, almost two decades into our democracy and after a decade of OBE (Outcomes Based Education), South African education authorities have finally discarded this system that was essentially based on the British model. A look at the syllabus itself tells a similar story.

The Eurocentric nature of the school curriculum, both creates and supports the superiority of a dominant race and the inferiority of others.

Hence Gangsta Rap has arisen in response to the marginalization, suppression, repression and oppression of certain groups, by and from the traditional school curriculum. In her article she explains how since our school curriculum is Eurocentric, the worldview of even the people that the school curriculum oppresses, becomes Eurocentric. It is only natural for those in control, to see themselves, their history, their culture, their knowledge and their understanding as superior and others as inferior.

And since they are in control their history, culture, knowledge and understanding is acceptable and normal and all others are not. This epistemology or theory of the world is very significant as it shapes not only our understanding of the world, but also our understanding of others and ourselves. Thus this epistemology also becomes ontologically important as it helps shape our understanding of ourselves and others in what constitutes our reality.

This is supported by Guy (2004) who says that the education curriculum is shaped by “representations of blackness in the development and delivery of programs and services” (P.53). He explains that attempts to broaden the school curriculum in order to make it more relevant to the different communities is a difficult task given the perception of blackness and black culture as being dysfunctional and degenerate. This in turn leads to an idolization of everything Eurocentric including its values and culture. Thus the educational curriculum ignores black urban experience and reality. He gives two examples. The first one is the Ebonics debate in an Oakland school. Ebonics is more commonly known as African American Vernacular English (Guy, 1999). The Oakland school board decided to adopt a policy to use Ebonics to reach out and assist in teaching its students English as a home language. This idea was met with much resistance because of the “incorrect view that black English is not a legitimate dialect but an aberrant form of English (Guy, 2004, P.54). The second example he gives comes from Sheard (2001) where welfare policy and its adoption was motivated by media driven perceptions that “welfare recipients are black, lazy, and immoral” (Guy, 2004, P.54).

Rap as an alternative history

Baszile goes on to explain that the Gangsta Rap is actually a form of counterstorytelling. This, she explains, is told from the point of view of the people who have been marginalized and oppressed by the traditional school curriculum. Their stories are told by them, hence the importance of lived experience, so that they can challenge “the universality and often the efficacy of the majoritarian story.” (Baszile, 2009, p.10.)

Gangsta Rap can be seen then as an attempt to reverse Western indoctrination and its associated cultural imperialism, and replace it with an African American value system and world view through the telling of “other” stories and histories.

The importance of counterstories lies in the fact that it uncovers hidden or ignored knowledge and it examines and analyses the role of race in shaping this knowledge. It also examines the relationship between the majoritarian stories and the counterstories itself.

Through a study of this relationship we can perhaps create a connection between education and the Gangsta Rap culture.

Baszile's input on curriculum and critical race theory cannot be ignored as it affords us the opportunity to reexamine the traditional school curriculum and transform it into one that is socially just. It is also important because it makes students look at how academic knowledge and popular culture has a role to play in the creation and formation of their own identities within society and the world.

Researchers like Martinez (1997), stated that an analysis of Gangsta Rap lyrics displayed certain common themes of racism and discrimination, anger, distrust and resistance. Therefore, she says, that Gangsta Rappers were using this musical genre as a form of opposition and protest against their lived experiences and its oppression.

This institutionalized oppression she goes on, began with the invasion of the America's and was entrenched by the invaders in order to cement their dominance over and control of the subjugated people.

As early as 1967 Carmichael and Hamilton(cited in Martinez), articulated the idea of how this institutionalized oppression also led to the political, social and economic domination of African American people.

Institutionalized oppression refers to both government institutions like schools and societal institutions like banks which through their policies legitimize oppression. Educational institutions like schools would legitimize oppression by teaching students how the European invaders were actually helping the "uncivilized heathens and barbarians" and saving them from a life of eternal damnation, how they built roads and schools to uplift the colonized people.

Social institutions like banks would require you to be earning a certain salary in order to qualify for a mortgage, knowing full well that an African American would not be able to get a job that paid him as much as he needed in order to qualify for that loan. In this way social institutions ensured that not only could African Americans not qualify for a loan, but that they also could not own their own homes.

Martinez maintains that it is this institutionalized oppression and discrimination that needs to be addressed since these are the reasons for the emergence of Gangsta Rap, which she views as an oppositional culture that has grown out of government neglect, oppression and inner city poverty.

Rose (1994) has gone as far as linking the 1992 Los Angeles riots to the culture of opposition and resistance encouraged by Gangsta Rap.

Under social conditions in which sustained frontal attacks on powerful groups are strategically unwise or successfully contained, oppressed people use language, dance and music to mock those in power, express rage, and produce fantasies of subversion...[that] quite often serve as the cultural glue that fosters communal resistance. (p. 100)

Using studies like these, researchers and supporters of the rap music genre have suggested that the importance of Gangsta Rap lies in the fact that it is the voice of a large segment of voiceless, disenchanting and disenfranchised African American youth. Researchers like Morrell and Duncan-Andrade believe that the potential for hip hop is limitless if educators are willing to move out of their comfort zones and engage with the world of their students, acknowledge their life experiences and, in this way, connect with them in order to show the relationship between traditional academia and popular modern day culture. It is only when this happens that teaching and learning can become meaningful.

The St. James Encyclopedia of Popular Culture (as cited in Kubrin, 2005) identifies "gangsta rap" as a type of rap music which has received worldwide attention for "its vivid sexist, misogynistic, and homophobic lyrics, as well as its violent depiction of urban ghetto life in America."

Is Rap really a threat?

Many supporters of Gangsta Rap, including many researchers, have coined the phrase "moral panic" to describe society's response and reaction to this phenomenon. The term first found vogue in the 1970s in Britain and it was derived from cultural and sociological research. It was used to describe society's reaction to anything that was deemed abnormal or unreasonable. However, other critics have counter-argued that it is this very "moral panic" that has served as society's safety-valve in order to restore balance in the moral compass of society.

Kirsten Drotner, in his essay "Modernity and Media Panics (cited in Springhall), espouses the idea that the "moral panic" is an expected reaction by adults who see the consumer power of the youth as a threat to their (adults) control over them(youth). By reasserting or attempting to reassert, "normal" values, adults are actually attempting to reassert their authority, hold and control over the youth.

This idea resonates with Bourdieu's (1997), where he explains taste differentiation as a means of control and domination. This taste difference is exacerbated by the "moral panic" of dominant adults, who equate taste with morals and thus create a process of domination and subordination. This is done by those who wield control- economic, political and academic, but especially moral power and control over society, as they then dictate society's reaction to perceived deviance, in this way controlling what is moral, acceptable and in good taste.

These ideas have important repercussions for any study of the youth and their culture as there have been various studies that have already linked "gangsta rap" with violent behaviour, in other parts of the world. This study is an attempt to understand whether the influence that "gangsta rap" seems to have, does indeed exist in the community where the research is taking place.

This brings us to the research done by people like Bennett (1999), who has shown that the global spread, reach and influence of the Gangsta Rap culture and hip hop in

general, has led to it moving away from an exclusively African American form of expression to a global cultural phenomenon.

Gilroy (1993) too, makes similar claims when he says that “black” culture has become a global culture through the popularity and propagation of its styles, music and images to all corners of the world.

Gilroy’s work is especially significant as it examines the Gangsta Rap culture and its role in a global setting. In France and Italy, for example, Gangsta Rap has become a means of discourse on issues like racism and police brutality. While in Ireland local Rap groups rap about problems that affect them locally, but which are a global phenomenon, like the high cost of living and unemployment.

In this way researchers like Bennett and Gilroy show that the universal themes addressed by hip hop and its sub- genre, Gangsta Rap, have made it a global commodity, popular with youth the world over which has led to the creation of what Bennett calls “glocal” culture. (1999, p. 5)

However, some researchers are critical of society for allowing the conditions that initially led to the birth of the "gangsta rap" culture to flourish. While they accept that Gangsta Rap as a genre has also been created for profit, the initial motivation, they believe, has been catharsis. Rappers have seen their music as a means of expressing their discontent and frustration at the apparent hopelessness of their situation. For them rap music is a means to channel their tensions and empower their disenfranchised communities. It gives them a voice, but it also burdens them with the responsibility of being the spokesperson for those powerless and voiceless communities as seen in the lyrics of Public Enemy’s ‘Fight the Power’:

Got to give us what we want
Gotta give us what we need
Our freedom of speech is freedom or death
We got to fight the powers that be
Let me hear you say
Fight the power.

www.metrolyrics.com. Retrieved August 2, 2012.)

Some researchers also believe that it is only natural for this type of music to evolve as a result of America's violent culture. For these researchers then, it is a case of art imitating life, rather than influencing it. For Richardson and Scott (2002), the violence of rap music is a logical and obvious result of America's violent culture that stems from poverty, racism and a lack of opportunity for certain sectors of American society.

These researchers point out that violence in music is not restricted to rap or Gangsta Rap. To substantiate their point they have made reference to songs like “I shot the sheriff” by Eric Clapton (1994), “Pretty Boy Floyd” (1987) by Woody Guthrie, and especially Heavy Metal, which has a mainly White market. They use as an example the song “No Remorse” by Metallica (1983):

Only the strong survive
No one to save the weaker race
We are ready to kill all comers
Like a loaded gun right at your face
(www.metrolyrics.com. Retrieved August 2, 2012.)

They have pointed out that this genre of music is replete with images of violence yet there has been no Congressional hearing to examine and analyse the violence in Heavy Metal music. They ask why it is that these songs are evaluated differently. They point out that when one reads transcripts of Congressional hearings one sees the demonization of rap in isolation, while other equally violent forms of music are ignored. "Calls for censorship appear rooted in the belief that rap music poses a threat to mainstream society and requires containment, while its White counterpart (heavy metal music) warrants mere watchfulness." (p. 182). While Rose (1994), points out that White youth, who happen to be the biggest consumers of Heavy Metal, are portrayed as victims of this corrupting influence, while Black youth are projected as the perpetrators of the violence that is associated with Rap.

In a study done by Fried (1999), she compared people's perceptions of country music to their perceptions of Rap. Her study was built on the hypothesis that people had a more negative perception of Rap, and Rap thus received more negative criticism, than for example country music. Participants in the study were given violent lyrics to a song; a song which they were made to believe was either Rap or country. The participant's responses supported the hypothesis. When violent lyrics were presented as if it was from a rap song, respondents were more negative in their comments than when they believed it was from a country song.

Fried has discussed her findings in terms of stereotyping and models of racism. She explains that country music, though just as violent, does not receive any criticism, from the very people who criticise Rap music as being violent and a danger to society, its morals and values. Her reasoning is that this skewed criticism is because Rap is seen as Black music and heavy metal as White. (p. 707). Society is concerned that a White fan may destroy a bright future, because of the influence of heavy metal, whereas a Black fan may perpetrate violence and/or crime on someone because of Rap. While there is criticism of both heavy metal and Rap, the subtle difference in the criticism shows Black stereotyping, Fried concludes.

Her conclusions are similar to the findings of Binder (1993) and Rose (1994), referred to above. Field found that "Rap music, ..., is judged through the tainted lens of a Black stereotype." (Field, 1999, p. 707). She feels that society's reaction to Rap is not so much a reaction to the lyrics, rather it is Rap's association with being Black.

Using Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital (1977), Richardson and Scott explain Gangsta Rap's existence within a culture and society that is replete with violence. Congresswoman Maxine Waters (1994) testified at a hearing that we should:

not lose sight of what the real problem is. It is not the words being used. It is the reality they are rapping about. (cited in Richardson and Scott, 2002, p. 186).

Dyson (1996) echoes these sentiments when he points out that “Gangsta Rap’s greatest sin may be that it tells the truth...” . (cited in Richardson and Scott, 2002, p.187)

While parents, teachers and society in general criticize Gangsta Rap music, its greatest enemy may be its own target audience. Dow (1998) explains how a man accused of murdering a police officer defended himself by claiming that he was unable to make a rationale decision because of the lyrics of Tupac’s songs to which he was listening at the time of the incident. Incidentally, his defence was unsuccessful and he was found guilty of murder.

Rap as commercial commodity

Added to the voices of Richardson and Scott are the voices of Adams and Fuller (2006), who point out that we need to be able to “differentiate between the source of misogynistic ideas and the manifestation of such ideology in gangsta rap” (p. 951)

In their article on the misogyny in rap lyrics, they maintain that music, being the powerful force that it is, has the potential to influence choices, decisions and attitudes, especially when it is supported by bureaucratic structures and ideologies as put forward by Baszile earlier in this chapter. Adams and Fuller believe therefore that it is imperative that we give serious thought to the potential that rap music may have in shaping how youth view themselves, the world they inhabit and their place in that world. They caution that for many youth who do not have a positive influence in their lives, outside influences (such as “the hood”, media and peers) become the surrogate.

If what an impressionable youth sees and hears is negative, society should not be surprised to see the youth act accordingly. Young women can internalize these [misogynistic] views, incorporate them into their consciousness, and act out in self-destructive ways.

(Adams and Fuller, 2006, p. 952)

There is also the added danger that young men may also incorporate these sexist attitudes and behaviour into their own lives as this [rap] music could desensitize both young men and women to violence, oppression, exploitation and sexual abuse and even legitimize such attitudes and behaviour.

While they accept that any music is a medium for social expression and a reflection of the environment from which it has evolved, the misogynistic lyrics in especially rap music, they argue, could also encourage and influence violence against women. So besides male on male violence, rap music, they believe, perpetuates the sexist, patriarchal and misogynistic values and in this way further embeds these values in the collective psyche of society resulting in these values becoming normal and mainstream.

Yousman (2003), while not entering the ‘for or against’ fray, has added a further dimension to this debate over rap music. He looks at the concept of what he terms “Blackophilia” (White consumption of popular Black culture) and shows how it is

used by White Americans to address issues of Blackophobia (fear of African Americans). This he feels is the real reason why:

White youth have embraced rap music and hip hop culture in such overwhelming numbers that by some estimates Whites are now the biggest consumers of recordings by rap artists.

(p. 367)

This seems to indicate a shift in attitude by the mainstream from initial rejection to reluctantly accepting, to eventual total acceptance of rap music. In his article, Yousman examines the possible reasons for this eventual acceptance. It could be a desire by the youth to identify with popular music; it could be in order to facilitate their integration into a particular group or to show that they identify with a particular culture and experience. Finally it could be motivated by the impulse to rebel against the mainstream.

Yousman points out that many White youth who ally themselves with the hip hop culture, move beyond the music and adopt the hip hop culture through their clothing and language, and non-verbal expressions. He points to the trend of equating being Black with being “cool”, primarily because it is a different, perhaps even forbidden, culture, and rap music as being a “forbidden fruit”. Hence the fascination of White youth with this form of music.

But, he goes on to add, this acceptance and adoption of Black cultural forms could in itself be a performance. A performance that allows White youth to contain and control their fear towards Blacks whilst hiding behind a veil of adoration. This act of acceptance is, he believes, a continuation of “a manifestation of White supremacy”, because he says this adoption of Black cultural forms does not lead to a conscientizing of society. The exploitation, oppression and abuse of certain sectors of the population continues unabated since no meaningful change has occurred in the plight of the oppressed. He explains this phenomenon as a contradiction of America’s obsession with race by referring to Lott (1995, cited in Yousman, 2003) who himself explained that the White appropriation of African American culture served a dual purpose. On the one hand this appropriation assuaged and soothed the fears that the Whites had of Black males through lampooning, whilst simultaneously giving them an opportunity to act out their fascination with African American culture. Guy (2004) adds that:

This contact, however, is carefully choreographed because the rules of racial engagement make it impossible for whites and blacks to establish genuine long-lasting relationships that extend beyond the bounds of entertainment and play.

(P.51)

The “gratification theory of media” (McQuail, 1984), suggests the idea that consumers of media deliberately search for specific types of stimuli that will satisfy their particular desires and needs. Consumers of this stimuli will do so for the purpose of social intergration.

Yousman contends that although, initially, the white youth who did adopt rap culture may have done so as a sign of rebellion, as the trend gained momentum, it created a

common culture for youth from diverse backgrounds. It therefore became necessary for even White youth to embrace rap culture if they wanted to fit in with their desired peer group. This embrace manifested itself in their adopting not just the fascination with rap music, but also the clothing, language and even the nonverbal expressions, which West (1994), refers to as the “Afro-Americanization of White youth” (p. 121).

He explains that although White youth are avid consumers of African American culture, it is devoid of any sociological implications. He uses this argument to substantiate his claim that Blackophilia among White youth is actually a means to subvert their Blackophobia. He continues his justification with some very telling statistics and arguments. He points to the fact that White youth still resist programmes, like affirmative action, which challenge institutionalized racism as they attempt to redress past imbalances. He also points to the fact that a small, but significant number of White youth who align themselves to White supremacist groups.

Quoting statistics from the Southern Poverty Law Centre (2003), he points out that in 2002, in the U.S.A, there were 708 hate groups, whose membership was made up of mainly young white males. He also quotes a study by Blythe (2000), who found that the sales of recordings by White rock groups inciting racial violence, hatred and White supremacy, rose.

He explains that White youth consumption of rap culture, their resistance to initiatives to redress racial inequalities, like desegregated schools and affirmative action, and their involvement with right-wing hate groups are intrinsically linked and should not be seen as isolated phenomenon, separate from one another. In this way, he believes we can understand more clearly Blackophilia and its link to Blackophobia and how this maintains the status quo of White cultural, political and economic hegemony.

hooks (1992) also makes similar observations that while White youth may find it “cool” to “hang out with” African-American youth, they do not relate this to “unlearning racism” (p.17).

Guy (2004), points out that White knowledge of African American culture is not as a result of direct personal experience or even indirect contact via vicarious experience, rather White conceptions of African American culture are internalized from corporate media which is itself under white control (Guy, 2004). African American culture then becomes a football in the game of profit and loss.

Yousman continues in his rationalisation of American society by explaining that it continues to be a highly, albeit unofficially, segregated one, a society that has reserved its wealth and privileges for one group of people, chosen by race and consigned the others to poverty and misery. He explains how being White serves as a passport to cultural, political and economic power, while being Black is an obstacle to these very same privileges. Quoting statistics from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, he shows that in the last decade 44.6% of Black children grew up in poverty, while amongst White children the figure stood at 18.2%. He also shows a vast discrepancy in the mortality rate between Black and White children, a discrepancy which he

attributes to unequal access to health care and other resources. Therefore the struggle for resources and power remain the same as it was over a century ago. White supremacy still lingers, despite protestations otherwise. Now, however, it is covert, yet, it continues to impact on society culturally, politically and economically.

Yousman's findings are similar to that of Guy (2004, p. 51), because Yousman also mentions that White youth, those who have appropriated Black culture, through Rap amongst other things, and those who have White supremacist leanings, both have very limited actual contact with their African American peers.

hooks (1992), is even more critical of this Black-White relationship. While Yousman describes White youth's fascination and appropriation of Rap as "a manifestation of spectacular consumption" (p. 378), hooks (1992), describes this phenomenon as "eating the other" (p. 21). She explains this as cultural differences being a source of pleasure and titillation for White youth.

Just as Said (1978) explained Western fascination with Eastern and Middle Eastern culture and art for its exotic value, hooks explains that consumption of Rap and other forms of Black culture is merely a way for whites to not only assuage their guilt at centuries of Black oppression, but also to achieve a sense of living life at the edge through their "transgression" of adopting this strange culture. "Spectacular consumption", Yousman explains, is when apparently authentic images of Black lived experiences are offered up to the consumer as a true reflection of the society it purports to represent. On the consumer market, this "authentic image" then becomes more important and significant than the real world that it claims to represent. With regards to rap, to the white youth, it does not matter whether the images are authentic or not, as long as they appear to be authentic. The more brutal the images, the more true to life they are seen as being. He also points out that the images of Blacks that White youth consume, are always associated with violence, misogyny, drugs and crime. This, he states, could be what encourages the violent, misogynistic lyrics in rap, in order to address market demand.

Even when violent and misogynistic Rap is not performed by the typical Black gangsta, it is located within Black masculinity and machismo. Yousman uses the example of Eminem, a white rap artist whose music, about violence, guns, drugs and bitches, has been described as "a celebration of Black maleness" (p. 380).

Yousman contends that White youth are experiencing a crisis of identity. Firstly, their position of superiority is being challenged. Second is the guilt that they may feel for centuries of oppression of Blacks. To these he offers a third option where White youth embrace Black culture, but only at the superficial level, through dress, language and music and the distorted images of ghetto life, sold to them by the White controllers of an industry selling these images, while at the same time holding onto their economic, social and political privileges, refusing to change or challenge the policies that are the very bedrock of racism. He refers to this as "cognitive dissonance" (Festinger, cited in Yousman, 2003, p.282)

It is for this reason that researchers like Gilroy (2000) maintain that it is incorrect to see Rap as revolutionary, because both the perception and the "revolutionary" nature

are artificially constructed. It is his contention that this construction is actually controlled by conservatives in order to create and project the image of lawlessness in Rap music and Black society. Gilroy points to artists like Eminem, 50-Cent and Jay-Z, who are especially popular with White youth, and shows that their messages about the importance of money, possessions and masculinity are the same as those of conservative America.

With regards to “spectacular consumption” in terms of sexuality, Said’s (1978) concept of Orientalism is very relevant. Said argues that the “other” is seen as exotic, intriguing and alluring, while at the same time being viewed as uncivilized, barbaric and primitive thus inferior. It is this very savagery that makes the “other” a target of sexual desire. As early as 1967, Farnon (cited in Yousman), argued that historically, Blackness has been equated with uncontrolled sexuality, by Western society (consider the example of Sarah Baartman).

hooks (1992) has pointed out that this image affects both the Black female and the Black male. Stereotypically, while White females are held up as the epitome of beauty, Black women are not as appealing. However, at the same time, Black women are more freely available sexually and more promiscuous. hooks compares images of women in advertising and women in Rap videos. The world of advertising is dominated by images of White women, who thus become synonymous with beauty. When Black women are used, the women chosen are very often those Black models whose features are closest to White standards. At the same time the Black women used in Rap videos are generally those with “Black” features where they are shown in sexually explicit poses or sexually suggestive dances, while the Rapper sings about “hoes” and “bitches”. In this way, hooks explains, through both verbal and visual coding, the women with “Black” features are projected as desirable and repulsive.

Black men, Yousman goes on to explain, are most often associated with sexuality, which by implication means that they are less intelligent, Rappers such as 50-Cent, often depict themselves shirtless, displaying a toned, muscular torso, usually bloodied and with a weapon. These images produced by the media, are more dehumanizing than sexual, if studied and analysed carefully.

Both Yousman and hooks make a very important point that White consumption of Black culture, or rather, images of Black culture- violence, crime, misogyny and drugs, rather than telling the story of Black lived experience, may instead be entrenching and reinforcing Black stereotypes and simultaneously entrenching and reinforcing White domination because while Whites may consume Rap as a means of rebelling, they do not address the issues that Rap is rebelling against- White domination and Black suffering. Whites who appropriate Black cultural styles can live out a fantasy of rebellion and when it suits them drop this fantasy and adopt their position of privilege again, when it suits them. Researchers like Yousman, Dyson and hooks believes that this undermines the harsh realities of the lived Black experience.

The result is that those Rappers who want to transform society through their critiquing of the injustices and marginalization, are relegated to independent record labels, on the fringes of mainstream, while those that purvey the White stereotypes are the ones rewarded with the multi-million dollar contracts, promotional tours and publicity, and

are thus the most influential.

CONCLUSION

A study of the literature available makes one very clear point. And that is that we cannot conclude with any degree of certainty, that our youth are led to delinquent behaviour because of the influence of violent and explicitly misogynistic hip hop and Gangsta Rap lyrics. Another very important point to consider is that many of the arguments against hip hop may not necessarily be to protect our youth, but to protect the hegemony of those in power. This however does not mean that hip hop has no negative effects on youth. Research will have to be on going in order to study the effects, which because of its continued consumption, itself will be on going.

Chapter 3: **Research Design and Methodology**

Theoretical and conceptual framework

As discussed in the Literature Review, much research has already been done to determine the influence of "Gangsta Rap", on youth. Research suggests that a case could be made both for and against the influence of "Gangsta Rap".

This chapter describes the study's research methodology and includes aims; rationale for research approach employed in the study; research methods and justification; ensuring trustworthiness, data collection procedure (sample and methods); data processing and analysis and potential limitations.

The data collected will be perceptual information which Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) describe as the perceptions of the participants relating to a particular field of enquiry. They further state that perceptual information uncovers and explains how participants experiences relate to and influence the choices and decisions that they make.

My study intends to determine

- 1) What is "Gangsta Rap"?
- 2) Does "Gangsta Rap" influence grade 11 male learners, and if so to what extent?
- 3) Why does it influence grade 11 male learners the way it does?

Ethnography and Qualitative Research

In order for me to explain why I chose ethnographic research, I feel it important to explain what my understanding of ethnographic research is.

There is no single definition of ethnography, nor is there a uniform practise of the ethnographic method since this would contradict the very nature of ethnographic research which lends itself to the practise of adapting and responding to particular situations in the research field. It is for this reason that ethnography is perhaps the most widely used and most important qualitative method of enquiry into social and cultural phenomena.

Ethnography is understood to be an attempt at generating data in order to enhance the knowledge and understanding of the researcher on a particular issue. This knowledge is generated via interviews, participant observation and other qualitative techniques of data collection. The emic perspective or "insider's point of view" is what generates this knowledge and ultimately understanding of the culture of the participant. In ethnographic research, the researcher has to allow critical categories and meanings to emerge from the encounter with his or her participants, rather than impose them.

Through this close exploration of several data sources, an ethnographic understanding is developed. The encounter or interview will, through the process of asking specific, yet open-ended questions provide what could be called "targeted data".

This data will then serve as a foundation on which the ethnographer will create a frame of analysis. There are many interview styles. Each ethnographer will use his or her individual approach. However, the emphasis is on the participant to answer to his or her satisfaction, without being limited by the researcher's pre-determined choices.

Ethnographic research should produce descriptions of culture and context that are real. Therefore it has to be natural and observational in order to allow the participants to provide these real descriptions. The nature of ethnographic study leads the researcher to engage with the participants in their lives and to ask questions so that information could be acquired. In order to do this the researcher has to observe a range of subjects. These may include the behaviour of an individual, patterns of belief and environmental conditions.

My research is motivated by my observations, over a number of years, of pupils in this particular school; it is for this reason that the study will be ethnographic. Ethnographic study is a research design that is qualitative in nature within which observation plays a pivotal role. Ethnographic study methodology consists of two research strategies: participant observation and non-participant observation. While in the latter strategy, the researcher does not interact with his or her participants but rather observes from a distance without getting personally involved, the former strategy is much more complex because the researcher is deeply involved with his or her participants thus it may sometimes be difficult for the researcher to detach himself or herself from the research and its participants.

Participant observation, though, involves: observing the participants within their natural environment, observing and participating and interacting with the group in their everyday lives, rituals and ceremonies, learning their code in order to understand them and their actions and finally establishing and maintaining a direct relationship with the participants.

In this regard, Gobo (2008) advises that: "ethnographers should focus on three aspects constantly and simultaneously present in social scenes: social structures, the common-sense interpretations/explanations given by participants in their talk, and the context of the action." (p. 162)

The ethnographic researcher aims to explore and understand a group through understanding their knowledge and systems of meanings that guide that particular group, and to give a detailed account of the participant's normal, everyday life. The purpose of the detailed account is to see the participants' behaviour on their terms and from their perspective, not from the researcher's. On this issue Bogdan and Taylor (1975) are of the opinion that:

The phenomenologist views human behaviour as a product of how people interpret their world. The task of the phenomenologist, and for us, the qualitative methodologists, is to capture this process of interpretation. In order to grasp the meanings of a person's behaviour, *the phenomenologist attempts to see things from that person's point of view.*

(p. 13-14, emphasis in original)

With regard to the need for detailed (thick) description, Cresswell and Miller (2000) explain it thus:

The purpose of a thick description is that it creates verisimilitude, statements that produce for the readers the feeling that they have experienced, or could experience, the events being described in the study.”

(p. 128/9)

The purpose of a “thick description” is not only to give the reader a clearer picture, but also to demonstrate that the research and the researchers' account is valid and credible.

It also helps take the ethnographic researcher beyond observation to his or her final destination- understanding, because it is this “thick description” that will eventually produce meaning of the action.

The term “qualitative” is used to distinguish this research from the more statistically motivated or “quantitative” research. This is necessary because although they both are used in research, qualitative research differs in some key areas:

- the focus is on the process rather than the outcome
- the researcher is the main research instrument in the process
- the research process is inductive and thus leads to the formation of new hypothesis and theories
- the research is conducted in the participants' natural setting
- the participants' perspective (emic view) is most important
- the participants perspective requires in-depth description of events
- the emphasis is on understanding events rather than explaining them

(Babbie, Mouton, Vorster & Prozesky, 2001)

This study is premised on an interpretive paradigm. Cohen *et al* (2011) maintain that the central endeavour in the context of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience. They further express the notion that an interpretivist paradigm rests on a subjectivist, interactionist and socially constructed ontology. They also assert that interpretive perspective is underpinned by an epistemology that recognizes multiple realities and the importance of understanding a situation through the eyes of the participants.

Cohen *et al* (2011) elaborate on the notion by stating that purposive sampling puts emphasis on the uniqueness of the phenomenon, group or individuals in question who only represent themselves and nothing or nobody else. They further argue that the purpose is not to generalise but to present unique cases that have their intrinsic value. Oliver (2008) states that, in terms of a purposive sample, a researcher identifies certain respondents as being potentially able to provide significant data on the research subject.

Although it was initially used in the field of socio-cultural anthropology, qualitative research has become popular in other fields of social sciences that are concerned with the study of ethnic groups, people, their composition, characteristics and welfare, for example Communication. It is often used to gather data on societies and cultures. The collection of data is mainly done through observation, questionnaires and interviews, especially because the aim of ethnography is to understand and describe the nature of those who are being studied. However, to ensure that all the contents of the interview are gathered, and that it is later available for analysis, my interviews will be taped.

Grounded Theory

Since my hypothesis is based solely on my observations of learner behaviour at school, it is obvious then that I will have to collect data and thereafter develop a theory based on that information. It therefore becomes necessary to use Grounded Theory, in order to come to an understanding which will enable me to develop a theory. This means that the theory will develop and emerge from the data. It follows then that this study will operate within the interpretive paradigm.

Grounded theory developed from the work of Charles Cooley and George Mead. They were concerned with the two opposing views of Psychologism, which assumes that human behaviour can be explained by genetics and logic, and Sociologism, which looks at behaviour as being influenced by society, its norms and values. Therefore, according to Sociologism, one cannot distinguish between the individual and social groups since one's identity grows out of a relationship with other people or a group.

In grounded theory, the researcher is expected to enter into the world of the subject, to observe, in this case his, environment and his reaction to that environment. This data should then be interpreted, analysed and described in order to develop a theory which encompasses concepts of "self, language, social setting and social object". (Schwandt 1994, p124)

The reason for using this theory is that it will allow me to understand my subjects, the environment in which they operate and why they operate the way they do. Grounded theory coupled with an ethnographic study, will allow the participants to tell their own story, from their perspective, in their own words, all the while remaining the focal point of the study. Any other theory will try to explain the behaviour of the subjects from the perspective of that particular theory.

The danger here is that it will impose its limitations and definitions on the subject and could result in me trying to fit a square peg into a round hole for we cannot ignore Spradley's advice: "Rather than studying people, ethnography means learning from people." (1979, p. 3) This is possible only because it offers an opportunity for the collection of "thick" first-hand accounts of data.

Semi- Structured Interviews

Before I conduct the interview, it will be confirmed that the participants listen to "Gangsta Rap", that they are male learners at this particular school and that they are in grade 11, then only will they be eligible for the interview.

In order for me to afford the participants as much freedom as they may need in order for them to comfortably answer the questions that are posed to them, it is essential for me to choose a venue which they are familiar with in order for them to feel at ease. Also the correct choice of venue will allow the participants to feel some degree of control over this interview process. De Vos *et. al* (2011) contend that the participants of an interview should be considered the experts of that particular subject and therefore need to be given maximum opportunity to relate their stories.

Because I will be using grounded theory, I will have to allow the subjects narrative to drive the collection of data. This means that as the researcher, I will have to be in the background guiding the direction of the interview. Obviously there will have to be parameters within which the subject will relate his experiences. These parameters will be the data collection questions- Why do they listen to "gangsta rap"? What is it about this music that appeals to them? How do they identify with this type of music? Why do they identify with this type of music? Do they see a link/ connection between the issues dealt with in the music and their lives and experiences?

In an ethnographic study, the interview is the most important tool for the collection of data and the researcher becomes the instrument of data collection. Spradley (1979) explains the interview as a "series of friendly conversations". These conversations, however, must be guided by a very specific research agenda. These friendly conversations will allow the researcher to "discover categories of meanings in a culture" (Spradley), since the manner in which the interviewer and the interview is able to elicit and tease out responses from the participants, will directly impact on the quality of the data that is collected. Hence, while maintaining control, I will have to be flexible enough to respond to verbal and non-verbal cues in the participants' responses. Generally, the interview begins with open-ended questions which will eventually narrow to focus on themes that start to emerge. The interview, as a method of data collection, is unique in that it allows for the development of a level of intimacy between interviewer and participant that other data collection methods do not. This is a boon for the interviewer as this intimacy will only serve to encourage the participant to reveal information that he would not otherwise have disclosed.

While both Boyd and Lowenberg advocate the mutual sharing of information, ideas and opinions between interviewer and participant, other researchers are critical of the contamination of the data. While some researchers go as far as encouraging the interviewer to share personal experience in order to encourage a hesitant participant (Patterson & Bramadat, 1992), there is another school of thought that believes that the researcher should not become personally involved as it raises ethical issues.

However it must be pointed out that any ethnographic research will at the very basic level raise ethical issues. The most elementary one being: Was everything that was reported by the researcher, actually said? Did everything revealed by the participant actually happen to him?

Another criticism of qualitative research and the interview is that it is unscientific. It is, critics say, merely a collection of personal impressions, opinions and anecdotes. All of which are highly subjective. Further criticism is that the interview, because of its personal nature, lacks generalizability. While the interview may provide lots of information, it is so focused and specialized that it may not be possible to use it anywhere else. This is linked to another criticism- that of reproducibility. Because of its highly personal and focused nature, the data gleaned from an interview and the results, cannot be reproduced by another researcher. In fact, a different researcher could use the same data and come to an entirely different set of conclusions and results. However Cresswell and Miller (2000), explain that:

Rich description also enables readers to make decisions about the applicability of the findings to other settings or similar contexts.
(p. 129)

Mays and Pope (1995) have attempted to address these concerns and have made some suggestions. Firstly, they have made it explicitly clear that in social science and ethnographic research, it is not possible to be purely objective. How then can the reader ascertain the credibility of the observer's report? Mays and Pope suggest that the reader should ask a set of questions: "how well does this analysis explain why people behave in the way they do; how comprehensible would this explanation be to a thoughtful participant in the setting; and how well does the explanation it advances cohere with what we already know?" (p. 111) The final suggestion they make is that the account generated by this research should allow another person to function in that same setting. That is to say that the descriptions should be rich and vivid enough for another researcher to be able to undergo the same experience as the original researcher.

The use of Grounded theory, in my study offers a response to the issue of objectivity. Under the strict guidelines of grounded theory, the findings of the research have to be rendered in such a manner that they can be recognised by the participants. This will be done by keeping a thorough recording of their thoughts, ideas, actions and words. At the same time, this account will be more structured than their own account. Another reason for choosing grounded theory is that if a more rigid theory had to be used, then this could very likely restrain the participants from discussing and explaining their

actions and this will eventually hamper my understanding of the social action I am observing.

Research design and methodology

The motivation behind grounded theory was to allow the data to create a theory, in other words, grounding the theory in data. This theory evolves during the process of research, collection of data and analysis of that data. The researcher using this approach does not collect all the data and then start analysing and theorizing. This, however, does not mean that I will be "shooting in the dark". Rather, I will be testing a hypothesis or hunch to see the validity of my hypothesis.

The theory that develops from this study will then be used to understand both the hypothesis and the phenomenon. Goulding (1999) believes that "a theory is a set of relationships that offer a plausible explanation of the phenomenon under study." (p. 7) Although people like Corbin and Strauss have written extensively on grounded theory and its procedure, I have found Christina Goulding easier to understand and I am therefore using the procedure outlined in her paper: Grounded Theory: some reflections on paradigm, procedures and misconceptions (1999). She has divided the process into four steps.

1. The identification of an area of interest and data collection.

This process will be based on the following methods of data collection- interviews, observations, focus groups and personal accounts. I have chosen to use male learners because they tend to be more vocal, outspoken and eager to demonstrate their "machismo". My hypothesis is based on my observations made at the school I am based in, that they are the perpetrators of "gangsta rap" culture, they are more prone to violent language, violent behaviour and sexist attitudes. Finally, they are the predominant consumers of "gangsta rap" music, its dress code, language, behaviour and attitudes.

I have chosen grade 11 pupils for various reasons. Firstly it is expected that matric pupils will not have the time since they will be preparing for their final examinations. Secondly, grade 8, 9 and 10 pupils may not be mature or capable enough to articulate their ideas, thoughts and opinions as we would expect grade 11 pupils to be able to. Also at their age one would expect their parents to be more protective of them and thus limit, to a greater extent, outside influences. And thirdly, as grade 11 learners they may be given more freedom and independence which will open them to greater influence to outside stimuli.

Interviews will be conducted at school, during breaks and after school if required. While the interview will not be too rigid, it will be conducted as discussed under the sub-heading Semi-Structured Interviews.

The school I have chosen has a total population of 285 learners in grade 11, 180 of whom are male. Considering the advice of Cohen, Manion & Morrison, that "too large a sample might become too unwieldy and too small a sample might be

unrepresentative" (p. 145), and considering the constraints of time, money and support, my target research population is one class. This class has 17 boys. Although there are girls in this class, I have explained above, my reasons for choosing boys only.

2. Interpreting the data and further data collection.

The data will be analysed for all possible interpretations, as it is being collected. This data would then be coded into units of meaning. In order to do this, I will need to transcribe the interview and then begin a line by line analysis in order to identify words or phrases that links the subjects account to the research topic. In order to document my impressions, I will make notes immediately after collecting data, from which I will attempt a process of generalization in order to find common themes and traits.

3. Theoretical sampling.

According to Goulding, sampling is not pre- determined; rather it is directed by the emerging theory. But as theory starts to develop and concepts are identified, the net of subjects, places and experiences will have to be widened in order to strengthen the findings. I will then simultaneously collect; code and analyse data in order to decide what data to collect next and where to find it, so that a theory can be developed as further data is collected.

I will look for emerging themes and patterns by comparing incidents from the data with other incidents that belong to the same category. I will then be able to identify and explore their similarities and differences. This will then guide further data collection. The relationship between these incidents will then have to be explained giving rise to concepts.

4. Concept and category development.

The concepts that develop out of the theoretical sampling need to be understood in terms of their interrelationships since they explain a certain aspect of behaviour and examine the motivation for this behaviour. I will have to be able to justify these concepts as this will form the basis of my theory. This theory will then be written and integrated with other existing theories in order to show its relevance. Although Goulding does discuss problems relating to grounded theory, for the purposes of this study however, while taking cognisance of them, I will not be discussing them here.

Limitations of the study

Before conducting the interviews proper, I decided to carry out a dry run. My reason for this was to see what difficulties I would encounter and try to avoid them. One of the problems I expected to face was the problem of a boisterous bunch of grade 11 boys shouting above each other in order to get their point across. This would lead to some pupils not being heard, and thus some potentially important point or points

being missed. The second problem was that if a pupil was not heard, he could also misconstrue it as a deliberate attempt to ignore his point of view or idea and could lead to him not volunteering any further information.

The third problem that I expected to face was the pupil's self-consciousness. Knowing these pupils, from my constant interaction with them, I was concerned with them being hesitant to offer their thoughts because of the fear of ridicule from their peers.

However, I could not assume that these would be real problems, I had to test it out, hence the dry run. Unfortunately, these fears were not unfounded and I found it difficult to stop the students talking above each other. Secondly, I found it difficult to get some of the students talking. Even probing did not elicit a response in some cases. In fact, I found myself talking much more than them.

Finally, the expected fear of ridicule proved all too real, as one pupil found himself on the receiving end of the rest of the class when he remarked that listening to Gangsta Rap "calmed" him and "helped me sleep." Because of the difficulty of getting them to talk without inhibitions amongst their peers, I had to use the one-on-one interview method. This I found to be much more beneficial, to both the participant, and to me. The participant could talk much more openly, without fear of ridicule, and I was able to glean much more information than I could from the focus group interviews as I could give the individual participant my undivided attention.

Another problem which I experienced, and for which I was totally unprepared, was the constant interruption- by the school cleaners, pupils and even sometimes the school siren!

I could not expect the students/participants to stay in after school in order to afford me an interview as they were eager, as all pupils are, to rush home. I also could not ask the pupils to come to school early as they had commitments at home. So the interviews had to be conducted when both the participants and I had a free period.

I had to use the free period because it would have been just as unfair to ask the student to give up his break. On two occasions this coincided with the school cleaner wanting to clean the class room. This forced us to conduct the interview outdoors as I could not get a vacant classroom at such short notice, nor could I impose on another teacher who might have had an empty classroom. Conducting the interview outside meant that I was at the mercy of other pupils, who did not have classes, and were making the most of that free time with joyous exuberance.

I was also at the mercy of the elements and noisy traffic, which made it difficult sometimes to hear the participants. The problem with the noise only manifested itself during the transcription of the interviews where, although I heard the participant's response during the interview, on listening to the recording I found some parts to be inaudible.

I also could not stop pupils coming to me to hand in assignments; bring notices, ask for assistance or just to say hello. On other occasions I found that the siren sounded before I could conclude the interview. Wherever it was possible, we continued the interview; this was especially when we ran into the break. For this I must thank my

participants. However, there were times when the interview had to be stopped and continued at a later stage. This undoubtedly affected the flow of the interview because it would have broken the participant's train of thought, but on the positive side it would have given them time to crystalize their thoughts on the topic.

Initially I planned to interview the class as a focus group, and from there select two students for an in depth one-on-one interview. This was duly done, I interviewed the class and the two individual participants.

However, after reviewing the data collected from the focus group interview, I found the data to be lacking in certain important respects.

Firstly, because the participants were hesitant I found that at times I was talking more than them. Secondly some students were too withdrawn, for various reasons, and I found it difficult to get them to talk freely and openly. Finally, those participants who were willing to talk were so eager that they could not stop themselves talking over one another. As a result I could not explore many of the points, ideas and opinions and I fear I may have lost some valuable data in that exercise.

It is for the reasons listed above that I was compelled to review my data collection method and rely, in the main, on one-on-one interviews. However it would have served no purpose interviewing the two initial participants in the one-on-one interviews again. I may have been able to elicit new information from them, but there was also the danger that they would have rehearsed their responses. Therefore in their case, I kept their original interview transcripts and did not re-interview them. Of the remaining participants, by the time of the interviews one participant had passed away in a freak accident. I was eventually left with sixteen participants.

Conclusion

In concluding, I must point out that I am well aware of the potential hazard of personal experience and bias. However, ethnographic research does not mean that the ethnographic researcher should forget his or her own story. Rather the researcher must keep this story in mind constantly so that the researcher is not blinded to the issue of research.

Chapter 4: **Data presentation and discussion**

Interview Tools

In this chapter I present the data sourced from the participants via interviews conducted with them. This data will be used in conjunction with the questionnaires that the respondents were required to fill out. Together these will form my primary source of data for interpretive analysis.

The sub-headings for this chapter come from the interview transcripts of the participants, and will be used as themes to group the information.

In order to preserve the authenticity of the study, to try in no matter how small or insignificant a manner, I have chosen to transcribe the interview with the participants as they have said them, the pronunciation, the hesitancy, the incorrect grammar is all there, because I am interested in what they have to say, not so much the manner or grammar in which they say it. The other reason for going with the original language and not correcting any errors, was to maintain the integrity and authenticity of their accounts, in order to avoid the corruption that ensues from interpreting and transcribing into conventional English. What we now have is a verbatim transcription of the interviews without interference from the researcher.

The questionnaire that I have drawn up is made up of eight statements. The statements are:

- a. I identify with Gangsta Rap music.
- b. I listen to Gangsta Rap.
- c. There is nothing wrong with the way women are portrayed in Gangsta Rap.
- d. I enjoy Gangsta Rap because of the swearing.
- e. I listen to Gangsta Rap because of the violent lyrics.
- f. I listen to Gangsta Rap because of the sexual lyrics.
- g. I listen to Gangsta Rap because I like the lifestyle.
- h. Gangsta Rap attracts me because of its drug culture.

The questionnaires used the Likert's scale, of 1-5 with 1 being the least and 5 being the most. The Likert scale is most commonly used in questionnaires in order to scale participant's responses in a survey. When participants respond to a survey questionnaire, what they are actually doing is articulating the level to which they agree or disagree with a set of statements. Thus the Likert's scale captures and reveals the participants intensity for a given statement by looking at either the positive or negative response of the participants.

Sometimes researchers allow the participants to either agree or disagree or neither agree nor disagree with a particular statement. However, this would not have worked in this research project since the statements were not based on the participants agreeing or disagreeing. For the purposes of this study it was already established that all the participants were familiar with Gangsta Rap and listen to it or had listened to it at some stage or the other. The purpose of this study is to examine, analyze and understand the extent to which they listen to Gangsta Rap and the extent of the influence of Gangsta Rap, on them. It is for these reasons that I did not offer the

option of agreeing or disagreeing nor did I offer the option of neither agreeing nor disagreeing. I understand that there may be criticism of forcing a choice on the participants, however, for the purposes of this study, any other option would have called into question the validity and reliability of the data or would have led to the researcher and the research losing its focus.

Another criticism of the Likert scale is that the data could be distorted. This distortion could occur for various reasons. Participants may display central tendency bias, that is, they may not want to categorize their responses as being extremely lenient nor extremely forceful and may therefore go the safe route and stick with the average. There is also the danger that participants may feel more comfortable and secure agreeing with the presented statements (acquiescence bias). They may also attempt to show themselves in a favourable light or they may not be entirely up front and honest with regard to certain information, eg. statement f: I listen to Gangsta Rap because of the sexual lyrics.

Pupils may be hesitant to indicate honestly the intensity of their feelings on this issue as they may feel embarrassed. However, this could be cleared up through the individual interviews, where the participant could be asked to explain his response.

I will first provide the statistics looking at the number of participants and their choices. I will then go on to examine and analyze the individual responses for each statement. The analysis should expose any patterns and or common themes.

For the analysis of this questionnaire, I began by looking at the responses to the first two statements- "I identify with Gangsta Rap music", and "I listen to Gangsta Rap". These statements served as my foundation because they gave me an indication of the extent to which Gangsta Rap may have influenced the participant and the extent to which it may have influenced him depending on how much he listened to it.

Interestingly, of the eight participants who indicated level 5 for statement a, nine of them indicated level 5 for statement b as well. This would immediately seem to indicate that the more the participants listened to Gangsta Rap, the more they identified with it. Also, the more they identified with Gangsta Rap, the more they listened to it.

I will begin the analysis of the data collected by looking at each statement individually. I will then look at the levels indicated by the participants for each statement and the number of responses for that level. I will begin by listing them from highest to lowest, that is: those levels which had the most responses going down to those that had the least responses.

For statement a, of the initial 16 participants, 8 participants chose level 5, 3 participants chose level 3, 2 participants chose level 4, 2 chose level 1 and 1 chose level 2.

For statement b, 9 participants chose level 5, 3 chose level 2, 2 chose level 4, 1 chose level 3 and 1 chose level 1.

For statement c, 10 participants chose level 1, 3 chose level 2, 2 chose level 3 and 1 chose level 5.

Statement d, 6 participants chose scale 1, 5 chose level 2, 3 chose level 3 and 2 chose level 5.

Statement e, 6 participants chose level 3, 5 chose level 1, 3 chose level 2 and 2 chose level 5.

For statement f, 10 participants chose level 1, 4 chose level 2, 1 chose level 3 and 1 chose level 5.

For statement g, 9 chose level 5, 3 chose level 1, 2 chose level 2, 1 chose level 3 and 1 chose level 4.

For statement h, 12 participants chose level 1, 2 chose level 5, 1 chose level 3 and 1 chose level 4.

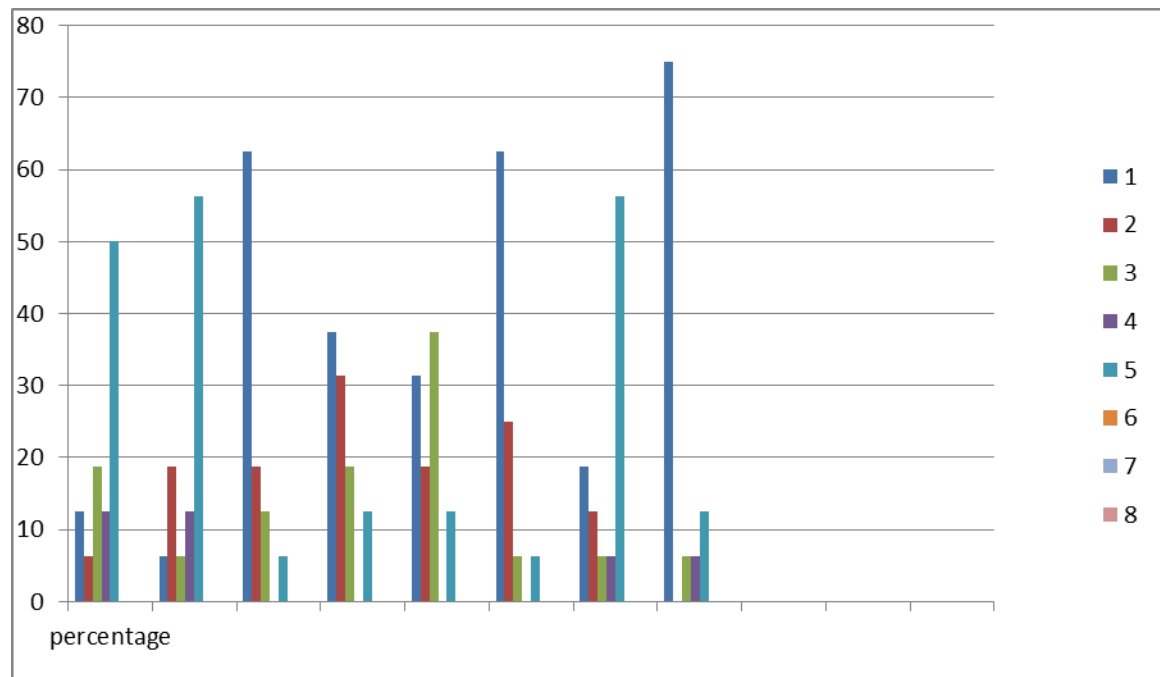
The diagram below indicates the above figures as percentage.

Diagram A

level	1	2	3	4	5			
statement								
a	12.5	6.25	18.8	12.5	50			
b	6.25	18.8	6.25	12.5	56.3			
c	62.5	18.8	12.5	0	6.25			
d	37.5	31.3	18.8	0	12.5			
e	31.3	18.8	37.5	0	12.5			
f	62.5	25	6.25	0	6.25			
g	18.8	12.5	6.25	6.25	56.3			
h	75	0	6.25	6.25	12.5			

The figures given above are represented as a graph below in Diagram B.

Diagram B



The Real OG’s (Original Gangsters), Habitus and Cultural Capital

(The term Original Gangstas was originally used by Ice Cube and Ice T, two members of the Gangsta Rap group NWA in keeping with their image of being gangsters.)

The first participant that I will look at is participant 14.

For statement a, I identify with Gangsta Rap music, this participant indicated level 5, the highest level on the scale.

During the individual interview participant 14 was asked about his choice of music other than Gangsta Rap. He mentioned that he listened to R’n B and House as well and that he listened to it because it (R’n B and House):

relaxes you, keeps you in a nice mood.

With regards to R’n B and house he further stated that:

You’re always happy... there’s no need to be angry.

When he was questioned as to why he did not include Gangsta Rap with R’n B and House, he responded:

That's (Gangsta Rap is) to make you like angry, *more* angry (emphasis in interview).

In the Literature Review we examined how many researchers into Rap music found that it was the voice of anger which stemmed from unhappiness, a sense of hopelessness and disillusionment (Forman, 2000; Richardson and Scott, 2002; Miranda and Claes, 2004; Adams and Fuller, 2006; Jones, 2009) .

For statement b, I listen to Gangsta Rap, participant 14 indicated level 5, the highest level. During the interview when he was asked to explain this choice, his response was

... it (Gangsta Rap) makes you, like you wanna do that (What they are singing about). You feel like you would like to do that... you wanna be angry like how they are.

Further questioning as to why he would choose to be angry elicited this explanation

... my parents are putting a lot of pressure on me..., if I don't do good this year, then next year they're taking me out of school. I might go stay with my father and go work.

For statement c, There is nothing wrong with the way women are portrayed in Gangsta Rap, this participant indicated level three. As pointed out in the introduction to this chapter, when I discussed my use of the Likert scale, I mentioned one of the criticisms of this response scale- Central tendency bias where a participant may try to play safe and choose the middle ground, however such criticism will not hold true here. In the literature review, we have seen many researchers already conclude that Gangsta Rap treats women as objects to be used for the sexual gratification of men, so that is already a given. What we are now trying to establish is to what extent this participant agrees with that point. This will give us an indication of what for the participant may be a "normal" attitude to women and the way they are portrayed in Gangsta Rap, compared to the way society may feel about the portrayal of women in Gangsta Rap.

As mentioned above we have already established society's attitude to the portrayal of women in Gangsta Rap as misogynistic and sexist (Richardson, J.W. & Scott, K. A. 2002; Adams, T.M., & Fuller, D.B. 2006; Davis, 2011), let us now examine the participants' attitude. Had the participant chosen 1 on the scale, it would have indicated that he agreed with the statement to the lowest extent, had he chosen 5, it would have indicated that he agreed with the statement to the greatest extent allowed by the research instrument.

Firstly his choice is interesting because he feels, irrespective of the extent, that there is nothing wrong with the way women are portrayed in Gangsta Rap. Adams and Fuller (2006) explain how such sexist and misogynistic attitudes are internalized and eventually accepted as normal by those who listen to it regularly. This explanation by Adams and Fuller is borne out by the participants' responses to the other statements.

For statement d, “I enjoy Gangsta Rap because of the swearing” the participant indicated level 3, for statements e and g, “I listen to Gangsta Rap because of the violent lyrics” and “I listen to Gangsta Rap because I like the lifestyle” the participant indicated level 5 and for statement h, “Gangsta Rap attracts me because of its drug culture”, the participant indicated level 4.

It would seem that this participant is heavily into Gangsta Rap and its sub-cultures as indicated by the extreme responses to four of the eight statements. When this participant was asked:

...do you identify with, do you see things in common in Gangsta Rap and the things that happen in your life?

His response was:

...like how they (rappers) used to talk about the killings and driveby's, murders and all, we should also experience the same thing. *So that's why we, like, our lifestyle, is similar to theirs. (Italics mine)*

He went on to describe how a local gang, the Dre Boys, named after the rapper Dr Dre, was a constant feature outside his house.

And the Dre Boys they should, they was outside my house everyday. They should park there. Non-stop. So like most of the things, like driveby's and shootings, murders and all, most of it like we saw.

(The Dre Boys were led by two brothers, one was killed in a driveby, the other is in prison for murder. Both were pupils of mine.)

While driveby's may not necessarily be a Gangsta Rap phenomenon only, it was nevertheless made famous by the feud between two equally famous Gangsta Rappers- Tupac and Notorious B.I.G. Both died violently in driveby's as a result of their feud. When questioned about using violence to solve problems and why he and his friends didn't try other solutions, his reply was:

We were used to that way now. If something is wrong you must fight.

When asked where he learnt this from his answer was:

...I was always taught that.

Interviewer: Who taught you?

Participant: No one, I learnt it on my own.

Interviewer: Where did you learn it from?

Participant: Sir, on the streets. Everyone, watching everyone. Someone one swear someone, straight away they wanna fight. That's how we learnt it now, someone swear you, you must fight.

According to Kubrin (2005),

Gangsta Rap also encourages violence as a means of addressing a problem without seeking proper recourse, and as a means of social control. (p.375)

In order to assert their authority and machismo violence is the only solution for the Gangsta Rappers. It seems that the same is true for this participant as well.

While the participant explicitly mentioned that he didn't learn his behaviour and attitudes from Gangsta Rap, it is possible that the people he learnt it from had indeed learnt it from Gangsta Rap.

When asked about the activities he and his friends engaged in:

Interviewer: And when you're talking about smoking, you're talking about drugs as well?

Participant: Only zol (marijuana)sir.

Interviewer: Zol. Sugars (Tic)? No? Any other hard drugs?

Participant: Should try.

Interviewer: Like what?

Participant: Buttons (mandrax), coke...pills and all.

The only statement for which this participant indicated level 1 was statement f, "I listen to Gangsta Rap because of the sexual lyrics." As discussed earlier, there could be various explanations for this. It could be that the participant is being entirely honest and that he really doesn't listen to Gangsta Rap because of the sexual lyrics. Or it could be that the participant does listen to Gangsta Rap for the sexual lyrics, but is embarrassed to say so.

The next participant I will be looking at is participant 13. He too indicated level 5 for statements a and b. When he was questioned about his responses for these statements he said:

I like the sound of the music. The beat.

Interviewer: Does it make you feel in a particular way?

Participant: Certain songs make you feel not so right.

Interviewer: For example?

Participant: Like Hardcore Rap. That aggravates people.

Interviewer: ... does it aggravate you?

Participant: Ya, it makes me angry, talk about killing people...

Interestingly, when he was asked about the violence, drugs etc in his neighbourhood, this candidate said that he had not witnessed these things. But he did mention that when he was with his friends and they were listening to Gangsta Rap they would get violent. When he was asked to explain he said:

Because of the gangsterism in all the music.

Interviewer: So you're saying that they're (his friends) doing it (violence) because of the music they're listening to?

Participant: Ya, they want to be like how the other people are in America.

In his questionnaire for statements d, e and f the participant indicated level 3, which could be seen as “playing it safe” or it could be seen as an endorsement to an extent of the swearing, violence and sexual lyrics in Gangsta Rap. His responses indicates to me that he accepts that swearing and violent and sexual lyrics are part of Gangsta Rap music, the only point of contention is the extent to which he relates and identifies with it. Even though he has not chosen the maximum level for these statements, level 3 would still be considered high, especially if we look at the statements again.

Statement d, I enjoy Gangsta Rap because of the swearing, the participant indicated level 3, if this had to be translated into a percentage it would be 60%. During the course of my informal discussions with the participant he indicated to me that he does not read, even casually. He remarked also that the only time he wrote was for his school work. As his English teacher I know that he does not hand in homework regularly. For the four tasks set by the Department of Education for the fourth term, he had handed in one, which he had not done himself. It is clear then that most of his communication would be verbal, not written. Since he is not a regular reader, his vocabulary would therefore depend on what he hears, not what he reads. During the interview when he was asked:

Interviewer: How often do you listen to it (Gangsta Rap)?

Participant: Everyday

And seeing that he had already indicated level 5 for the statement, I listen to Gangsta Rap; we can assume that he is picking up his vocabulary from Gangsta Rap lyrics.

Talking about the violence he said:

The same thing (violence) goes around, it goes around in a chain.

Interviewer: So haven't they (friends) seen what you're talking about, the chain, and said let's stop it?

Participant: They see, but they don't wanna stop it. They like the lifestyle.

For statement g, I listen to Gangsta Rap because I like the lifestyle, this participant indicated level 5. When he was asked why he continued joining these friends, who he admitted were violent, he said:

... I like my friends.

While he sees “the chain” or the cycle of violence and its associated tendencies of gangsterism, misogyny and drugs he seems unable to extricate himself from that cycle because:

... I like my friends.

Loyalty to the crew, gang or group and the “hood” (neighbourhood) is another interesting facet in the makeup of the Gangsta identity. Murray Forman in his article, "Represent': Race, Space and Place in Rap Music" (2000), has explained how the “hood”, what he refers to as space, and loyalty to that ‘hood’ plays a pivotal role in the creation of individual identity.

In this article Forman argues that even if we are not aware of it, our friends and our environment shapes who we are, how we think, how we act and even what we believe. So participant 14 and participant 13 are imbibing the values they see around them, the values displayed by their friends even though they may be unaware of it.

In order to better understand this I will have to look at Bourdieu’s concept of field and habitus. For Bourdieu a field was any social space that was structured by its own set of rules. This field was therefore independent to a large degree from the wider social structure.

Habitus can be explained as an acquired and permanent set of attitudes, ideas, perceptions, thoughts, actions, beliefs and rules. Bourdieu believed that the individual develops this habitus as a result of his experiences and the conditions he is subjected to, since the field placed certain expectations on the individual in order for him to be accepted as a member of that field.

Explaining this concept Bourdieu says:

... agents who occupy similar positions and who, being placed in similar conditions... have every likelihood of having similar dispositions and interests and therefore of producing similar practises and adopting similar stances.

(Bourdieu quoted in Wilkes, 1990: 114)

Having internalised and absorbed these rules of the field he inhabits, it becomes his own set of attitudes, ideas, perceptions, thoughts, actions, beliefs and rules. In this way a doxic relationship forms between the individual and his field.

Doxa, according to Bourdieu, refers to unconscious, fundamental beliefs and values which are learned and become so deeply a part of the individual psyche that they are accepted as self-evident, universal truths. These truths in turn affect the thoughts and actions of an individual within a specific field. More importantly this leads to individuals with a common set of doxa which are the product of similar circumstances and conditions coming together to form a group or in the context of this study, a crew. This crew and their habitus is seen as distinct from another group and their circumstances or habitus.

At this point I would like to go back to my interview with participant 14. When we were discussing his belief that: **if something is wrong you must fight**, I asked him whether he learnt this from Gangsta Rap, which was the music he listened to most, his reply was:

No sir, not the music.

Interviewer: ...you learnt from ...

Participant: The surroundings, our surroundings, ya, that's how, from our surroundings.

When he was asked whether these fights were about drugs, his response was:

No. That's same like you know like beefs. Like say we from 3B now, and like no one must come from 3A or unit 10, you know to tell us things and all.

Interviewer: Why would that affect you, if somebody from unit 10 came and told you something?

Participant: It'll be like uhh... embarrassing and disrespectful. You coming in someone else's turf and having your own ways.

For Bourdieu habitus is pivotal in generating the actions and practises that make up the social life of an individual. To put it succinctly, an individual is created by his or her environment and in turn the environment is created by the individuals that make up that environment.

Murray Forman (2000) too, shows how the "hood" serves to create an identity and a reputation. This creation of identity and reputation then becomes a tool for exerting power and control over those seen as weaker. Loyalty to the "hood", then becomes an important facet of identity creation.

Coming back to participant 13, for the final statement, Gangsta Rap attracts me because of its drug culture, this participant indicated level 1. While it could be argued that drugs are an integral part of the Gangsta Rap culture and therefore the participant is not being honest or is to some extent involved with drugs, I am not aware of any drug use by this participant. During the course of the interview he did not give me the indication that he was using drugs, although he did reveal that a few of his friends did take drugs.

"Spectacular Consumption"

The next participant I will be looking at is participant 12. As I mentioned earlier, in this batch, all participants indicated level five for the first two statements.

For statements a and b this participant also indicated level 5. For statements d, e and f, this participant indicated level 2. For statement h: Gangsta Rap attracts me because of its drug culture, this participant indicated level 1. For statement g: I listen to Gangsta Rap because I like the lifestyle, this participant indicated level 5. For statement c: There is nothing wrong with the way women are portrayed in Gangsta Rap, this participant indicated level 2.

I am looking at these two statements together because Yousman uses the phrase "spectacular consumption" (p.378) to explain the fascination that many white youth have for what they perceive to be authentic Black culture. It is perhaps, the same fascination that fuels interest in Gangsta Rap culture, in the participants of this study.

If we look at this participant's choice for statement g: I listen to Gangsta Rap because I like the lifestyle, he indicated level 5. For statement h: Gangsta Rap attracts me because of its drug culture, the participant indicated level 1. In my discussion with this participant he indicated that he did not use hard drugs, but that he did smoke cigarettes.

It would seem from his replies that this participant fits the profile that Yousman was referring to when he spoke of "spectacular consumption".

During the interview, when he was asked:

So what do you get from this music?

Participant 12 replied:

**Participant: I don't get anything. It's just that when you listen to certain of the songs, it makes you think about, you see, our, they days and life and life in our days now, the rough life and the easy life...
...we living the hard life, they're also living the hard life.**

Participant 8 indicated level 1 for statements c, e, f and h. For statement d: I enjoy Gangsta Rap because of the swearing, he indicated level 3. For statement g: I listen to Gangsta Rap because I like the lifestyle, however, he indicated level 5.

However, during our interview, he mentioned that although he listened to Tupac, he did not listen to all his songs because:

Some songs he sings doesn't make sense to me, they're just swearing.

But in the questionnaire he indicated level 3 for this statement. Since the interview and the filling in of the questionnaire happened about a week apart, I can only put it down to the fact that his taste may have changed.

He was then asked to explain what he found in those songs that he listened to and his explanation was:

It's like... in the song Tupac tells us how he grew up and what his mother did for him... He says he appreciates that... So that's like a meaning to his mother.

He then goes on to explain his home environment and the problems he encounters there. He was then asked if there was a particular time when he listened to Gangsta Rap. To which he replied:

...like if I'm with my friends... and we're all having a good time... and they wanna listen to that song, then I'll sing it with them.

A point to note is that all of these participants who indicated level 5 for statements a and b, also indicated level 5 for statement 7, I listen to Gangsta Rap because I like the

lifestyle, even if they did not like the swearing or the violent or sexual lyrics and drug culture of Gangsta Rap music.

Participant 6 indicated level 1 for statements c, d, e, f and h. He indicated level 5 for statement g. When he was asked to explain his affinity for Gangsta Rap, he explained that:

He (Tupac) rap about gangsta ways, him doing drugs- selling drugs, smoking drugs. He wants to kill certain people because this clique, now, they don't respect him. He wants to kill them. Ya , like that. But I stopped listening to rap music.

Interviewer: To rap music or specifically Gangsta Rap?

Participant: Specifically Gangsta Rap.

....

Interviewer: ... How did you come to this change in your way of thinking? (To stop listening to Gangsta Rap).

Participant: ... why should we listen to this music and get angry, to this type of music. Then we wanna fight after listening to this music. This music here it's not... it's not right. It's taking us nowhere.

...

I'm seeing how the children are doing all those things (suicide, Satanism) listening to this music, wanna do all that things there.

....

Interviewer: But how would Gangsta Rap make you want to hurt yourself?

Participant: ... make you angry, when you listen to the swear words there, makes you, see now, if you, maybe a month ago one boy swore you,... and you listening to this music now, you listening to this music there that's gonna aggravate the problem. It's gonna make you lose your mind. It's gonna make you say hey let's go for this fella. Listen to all the words that he's saying.

As this participant has explained, he stopped listening to Gangsta Rap because for him there is a clear and definite link between Gangsta Rap and violence, it makes him angry and makes him want to fight as it inculcates an attitude similar to that expressed by participant 14. For participant 6, as for participant 14, Gangsta Rap is closely linked to violence. Participant 14 also indicated:

Now, I listen to lot like R'n B.

“Dissing” and the creation of a macho identity

Participant 14's explanation for not listening to as much Gangsta Rap as he previously did and listening to more R'n B was that Gangsta Rap made him angry while R'n B “relaxes you.”

Participant 6 was emphatic about the point that he did not listen to Gangsta Rap anymore, mentioning it twice in the first two minutes of our conversation. He also admitted to being scared by what he saw as a link between Gangsta Rap and violence.

As he explains:

You couldn't diss (disrespect) me and now you listening to all those things there (Gangsta Rap) ... Even though you finished talk about it (the problem). After you listen to the Gangsta music you still, you'll wanna be like them- wanna do what they do.... What he say in the music.

I mentioned that the issue of “dissing” seemed to be very important to him and the class as this had also come up in the class interview. Participant 6 explained that it had a lot to do with respect and image. If someone disrespected you and you did nothing about it, it would lead to you being disrespected by everyone else and it would also lead to you losing your image.

We then went on to a discussion of image and identity and how image is maintained and identity created. He explained that for a boy in that school to have a good image or to be popular, you had to join a certain group of boys. When I asked him how one would identify these boys he said:

All the boys who... bunk, smoke, do drugs, all that stuff.

Interviewer: Their school work, performance in school, academic achievements?

Participant: Naaaww. That doesn't matter. To be cool that doesn't matter.

I then asked him about the drugs that these boys get involved in and he replied:

Rock, buttons, cocaine, zol.

These are expensive drugs and thus an expensive habit so I asked him where the money came from in order for him to support this habit. He said that they used their spending money or they gambled in order to make enough money to buy drugs.

Later in the interview he revealed that he also did drugs, rock and cocaine. He also revealed that the people he did drugs with were older than him; some of them were employed and provided the money to buy the drugs. So I asked him if they hadn't dissuaded him from joining them in order to protect him and keep him away from this lifestyle. His answer was no.

Again I want to go back to participant 14 who also indicated that he learnt his habits from his environment. That is, the people he joined and the people of his community.

In the questionnaire participant 6 indicated that he was not attracted to Gangsta Rap because of the swearing, the violent, sexual lyrics, nor was it because of the drug culture. He indicated that he listened to Gangsta Rap because he liked the lifestyle.

It might seem contradictory that while he did admit to using hard drugs, he indicated that he was not attracted to Gangsta Rap because of the drug culture. Perhaps it is true that he was not attracted by it. As he indicated earlier, he did drugs because the “cool” boys he joined in school did drugs, and the adults he joined outside school also did drugs.

When I asked him about the adults he joined:

And did they ever.... Give you an indication that they knew what they were doing was wrong.

He replied:

Naaaww.

So having established, in chapter two, that drugs are an integral part of the Gangsta Rap scene, how can I explain his answer for statement h.

It could be that he was never attracted to Gangsta Rap because of the drug culture, because he was already doing drugs. From his reply above it would seem that he did not, at that time, see anything wrong with drug taking as it was an acceptable practise. So even though he was attracted to the Gangsta Rap lifestyle, it was for other reasons.

Perhaps the other reasons can be found in our discussion. For example when he was asked about his girlfriend, he said that they had broken up because her parents did not like him, they saw him as a: **bad boy**.

Interviewer: Did they know any of your bad habits?

Participant: No they didn't know.

Interviewer: So how did they decide that you are a bad boy?

Participant: Sir, the way I carry myself. They can see that. The way I talk to my friends. The way I dress. All of that.

Interviewer: How do you dress?

Participant: Sir, you know this... jeans and takkies and...

Interviewer: But isn't that normal?

.....

Participant: But the way we dress now, with caps and all of those things...

Interviewer: Where did this style of dressing come from? Where did you get the inspiration to dress like this, with the caps and things?

Participant: From music videos.

Interviewer: Particular music videos, particular musicians?

Participant: Tupac or Biggie.

....

Participant: Ya, because you see them wearing it, so it's like a must for us.

It is apparent that there are other points to consider when we look at Gangsta Rap and its possible reasons for attracting its audience, like the dress for example.

One last point with regards to this participant is that he did mention during our discussion that after a particularly horrifying drug experience:

... that afternoon when my friends were going they asked me if I'm coming ,I said naaww, I'm not coming. He's saying yaa, howa see you acting like a girl. But they never use that term, I'm just using that term.

This is the only participant who made this point, that his friends ridiculed him when he refused to join them in another session of drug taking.

I will now look at participant 15. While he said that he identified with Gangsta Rap music and he listened to it to the highest intensity on the Likert's scale, he too indicated that he did not listen to it because of the swearing, violent lyrics, the sexual lyrics or its drug culture, but because he liked the lifestyle. (This participant indicated level 5 for statement g and level 1 for statements d, f and h.)

When he was asked how often he listened to Gangsta Rap, he replied that he did not listen to it that often and that he only listened to certain songs. This would explain why he indicated level 5 for statement b, I listen to Gangsta Rap. While he did not listen to the really hardcore Gangsta Rap, the songs that he did listen to, he listened to often.

He mentioned that he liked artists like Tupac and the song "Changes". When he was asked to explain the choice of song, he mentioned that it was not vulgar. While it may be true that this song is not vulgar, it does reveal that this participant sees a link between vulgarity and Gangsta Rap music. There are other participants who also see a link between Gangsta Rap and vulgarity.

For example participant 8 mentioned in our discussion that he was very particular about which songs he listened to because:

... they're just swearing.

Later we will look at others, like participant 5, who also mentioned that while he listened to Rap, he did not listen to Gangsta Rap because:

... the theme of the songs, they (Gangsta Rappers) swear, filthy words ... very violent.

And participant 9, who does not listen to Gangsta Rap anymore because it is less hardcore.

Interviewer: So because there's not much swearing, you don't like it anymore?

Participant: Ya, it's not..., plus, the music there like, it hypes you up, like.

During the discussion with the class, the same candidate said:

When I hear the swearing and all, I get excited. ... I get angry.

To continue with participant 15, he said that he chose to listen to certain songs because they had meaning. When he was asked to explain what he liked about the song, "Changes" by Tupac, he said:

Talks about changing the future, how life is about. The wrong they do, the ways to do it. ...

It's from somebody that's experienced in gangsterism. So he's putting it in words for us not to do it.

Even though this song is also about gangsterism and its associated evils, according to this participant, it has a positive message. When he was asked to explain why he needed Tupac to tell him this, why he wouldn't listen to his religious leader who says the same thing, he said:

Not all Gangsta music is ... Satanic.

Participant 15 seems to have side-stepped the statement, because he does not answer, rather, he tries to justify his choice of music. It also seems to be that this participant sees a difference between Gangsta Rap and other types of Rap, whereas many researchers use the terms Gangsta Rap, Hip-Hop and Rap interchangeably, as discussed in the introduction to chapter two.

Nevertheless an interesting point is made. When he says that "not all Gangsta music is satanic" he reveals an underlying belief that some Gangsta music is satanic. I have not come across any evidence in my readings to corroborate this claim, nor has any of the research I have looked at in my Literature Review mentioned any links between Gangsta Rap and Satanism.

The discussion then moved on to his friends. Participant 15 mentioned that his friends listen to Gangsta Rap and that it impacts on their behaviour because he said:

They get more vulgar, they wanna... if there's a problem..., if there's a problem, they'll wanna like... you know, like ... fight. Take out a knife ... or ... some ... object.

...

Interviewer: And their behaviour and attitude you say is different...

Participant: ... because of the music. They only listen to Gangsta Rap.

While he indicated that he did not like the swearing, the sexual lyrics and the drug culture associated with Gangsta Rap, he did indicate level 3 for statement e, I listen to Gangsta Rap because of the violent lyrics and level 5 for statement g, I listen to Gangsta Rap because I like the lifestyle. He also indicated level 1 for statement c, There is nothing wrong with the way women are portrayed in Gangsta Rap.

Participant 4 is a confusing one to analyse and understand because while he indicated level 1 for the statement b, I listen to Gangsta Rap, he indicated level 5 for the first statement, I identify with Gangsta Rap music. In fact, for all his other statements, he indicated level 1.

During our discussion he said that he did not listen to hardcore rap (Gangsta Rap) because:

Too much violence, sex, vulgar languages ... usage of drugs, I don't listen to it.

Interviewer: So what's wrong with the things these rappers sing about? Drugs, sex etc, isn't that real life? Don't you witness it in your life?

Participant: I do but, they trying to say we must also pick up the life they're living and get influenced by what they're doing and stuff like that. They're influencing us...

Interviewer: How are they...?

Participant: Like they talk about killing and violence and when people listen to it, they'll think why can't I be the same like him and they'll try to do it.

Interviewer: Do you know of people who've done that, who've tried to be like the rappers?

Participant: Yes, plenty.

While the participant has not actually used the words, he seems to be making the point that Yousman (2003) makes when he says that violence, drugs and misogyny in Gangsta Rap is projected as "a celebration of (Black) maleness" (p. 380). It is glamourised and valourised, an idea that has also been articulated by other participants in this study, some of whom I have discussed earlier.

Researchers too, like Hansen and Raviv (cited in Miranda and Claes, 2004.), explain that teenagers are fascinated by the artists they admire, to such an extent that they will imitate their heroes who are glorified and whose actions are glorified in their (teenagers') favourite songs.

While participant 4 may have a valid point, supported by research, that Gangsta Rap does influence violent, misogynistic tendencies and does glamourise drug usage, he himself is proof that this is not always the case.

While participant 10 indicated identification with and listening to Gangsta Rap at level 5, for statement c, he also indicated level 5. So he felt that there was nothing misogynistic or sexist in Gangsta Rap music.

For statements d and h he indicated level 1. For statement e, violent lyrics, he indicated level 3. For statement f, sexual lyrics, he indicated level 2. For statement h, Gangsta Raps' drug culture, he indicated level 1. However, for statement g, I listen to Gangsta Rap because I like the lifestyle, like 8 other participants (50%), he too indicated level 5.

Blackophilia

It would seem that for many of these participants, listening to Gangsta Rap would be a way of displaying their masculinity, as argued by researchers like Yousman (2003). It could also be seen in terms of what Yousman calls "Blackophilia" (White consumption of popular Black culture, in the American context).

Yousman has given three possible explanations for this phenomenon he calls "Blackophilia". Firstly, it could be a desire by the youth to identify with a fad or fashion, in this case Gangsta Rap. Secondly, it could be a desire to show that they

identify with a certain lifestyle or culture. Thirdly it could simply be a way of rebelling against the mainstream and asserting their individuality and identity.

Both Yousman and hooks (1992) have made the important point that those who appropriate Black culture or rather perceived Black culture as perpetuated by Gangsta Rap music and its accompanying videos, are not doing so in order to address Black issues, whatever they may be. Rather, these people are merely living out a fantasy of rebellion which they can drop whenever it suits them. The choice of level 5 for statement g by 9 out of sixteen participants coupled with the fact that for statements d, e, f and h the number of students who indicated level 1 were 6, 5, 10 and 12 respectively. In terms of percentage 37.5 percent of the participants indicated level 1 for statement d. 31.25 percent for statement e. 62.5 for statement f and g. 75 percent for statement h. This means that the main ingredients of Gangsta Rap and its culture, namely violence, sex and misogyny and drugs are not the main reason why these boys listen to Gangsta Rap. The main reason would seem to be, as argued by both Yousman and hooks, and borne out by the participants answers for statement 7 (56.25 percent indicating level 5), is their fascination with the apparent Gangsta lifestyle as popularised by Gangsta Rap music.

Their struggle is our struggle

We will now turn our attention to the remaining eight participants in this study. As I indicated earlier I grouped the participants according to the level of which they answered the first two statements. This was done because the first two statements were designed to give me an indication of just how important Gangsta Rap was to the participant and how often he listened to it.

These participants did not indicate level 5 for both these statements, although two did indicate level 5 for the second statement. This made it very difficult to understand their responses and even more difficult to find a pattern in their responses.

Participant 7, like others in this sub-group, also indicated level 4 for statements a and b. It should not surprise anyone then that for statement c, he indicated level 3. For statements c, f and h he indicated level 1 and for statement e he indicated level 3. For statement g he indicated level 5. It seems contradictory that while liking the lifestyle, he does not like the aspects like violence, swearing and the sexual lyrics that make up the lifestyle. Also, although indicating level 1 for statement h, he did reveal to me during our conversations that he has a drug problem which has been going on for about three years.

Participant 2 indicated level 4 for statement a, but level 5 for statement b. This means that while he listens to Gangsta Rap at the highest level, he does not identify with it as much as he listens to it. Later during the interview, when he was asked why he listened to Gangsta Rap, his response was:

Sir, the music... is similar to how we... similar to what you see in your everyday life.

Interviewer: And what are those things?

Participant: ... they talk about drugs, abuse of women ...

Interviewer: Are you seeing those things in your everyday life?

Participant: Some of it, sir.

Interviewer: Which parts?

Participant: (Silence) ...

Interviewer: both drugs and ...

Participant: Yes sir.

Interviewer: So this drug problem... how big is it?

Participant: Sir it's big in Chatsworth.

Interviewer: Why do you think that is so?

Participant: Because more and more people are getting hooked on drugs...

And it's taking over their lives, forcing them to stay on the streets.

They fight with their family, their loved ones. They only care about the drug and that is why it's taking over their lives.

So while in the questionnaire, for the statement, I identify with Gangsta Rap music, he indicated level 4, during our conversations, his answers seem to indicate that there is a much higher level at which he identifies with Gangsta Rap and he has even explained why – because he sees the effect it is having on people. Perhaps this could be explained by the time lapse between the interview and the questionnaire and a change in opinion, perspective, feelings or attitude. Or it could be that the participant had difficulty in understanding the statements and how the questionnaire worked.

For statement c, there is nothing wrong with the way women are portrayed in Gangsta Rap, this participant indicated level 2. However, in one of our conversations he had this to say:

Interviewer: Ok. Abuse of women, you say that you hear about that in Gangsta Rap music as well.

Participant: Yes sir.

Interviewer: You see that in the world around you, in the community you live in?

Participant: Yes sir, you do see it.

For statement d, I enjoy Gangsta Rap because of the swearing, this participant indicated level 2. For statement e, I listen to Gangsta Rap because of the violent lyrics, he indicated level 1. For statement f, I listen to Gangsta Rap because of the sexual lyrics, he indicated level 2. For statement h, Gangsta Rap attracts me because of its drug culture, he indicated level 1. For statement g, I listen to Gangsta Rap because I like the lifestyle, he indicated level 4.

While this participant does not fall into the 56.25 percent category, who indicated level 5 for this statement, his choice is however quite similar and close. Perhaps he too has a fascination for the Gangsta Rap culture and is involved only at a superficial level. That is, he listens to it but is not influenced to become involved in any of the related activities.

Participant 5 was equally difficult to analyse. During our conversations when he was asked whether he listened to Gangsta Rap he replied quite emphatically:

No, not at all.

Interviewer: Why not?

Participant: I don't like it.

Interviewer: What don't you like about it?

Participant: The theme of the song, they swear filthy words, ... very violent.

While in the questionnaire, for statement a, I identify with Gangsta Rap music, he did indeed indicate the lowest level, concurring with what he mentioned in the interview, for the very next statement, I listen to Gangsta Rap, he indicated level 5.

I suspect that this participant misunderstood the questionnaire because for statements d to h, he also indicated level 5.

Further on in the interview he was adamant that:

The words are too open, like, they use too violent words when they're making the song.

Participant 5, interestingly chose of his own free will not to listen to Gangsta Rap, while he did state that he listened to Hip-Hop and other genres of popular music.

We then spoke about his friends and the music that they listened to:

Participant: Ya, I do have friends who listen to Gangsta Rap music.

Interviewer: Do you think it influences them in a negative way, a bad way?

Participant: Ya, the way that they see it, like it's good for them, they like it and it uhhh, as I said, it takes them in a different mood like ...

When they are listening to this Gangsta Rap music, they feel that they're proud of themselves, that there's no one like them. Ya, they like start to show off with their attitude...

Interviewer: But it doesn't get them into trouble, they just put on an act, show off.

Participant: Ya, but then if they're messing with the wrong people like and acting faulty, it can lead to violence.

The point made by participant 5: **It takes them in a different mood**, echoes what was said by participant 14. When he was asked why he did not listen to Gangsta Rap anymore, participant 14 replied:

That's to make you like angry, more angry.

Participant 9, during the class interview, was asked:

Why do you listen to Gangsta Rap?

Participant: It hypes me up.

Interviewer: How?

Participant: When I hear the swearing and all, I get excited.

Interviewer: You get excited?

Participant: I get angry.

A point which he repeated during our individual conversations.

Interviewer: You don't like it (Gangsta Rap) anymore?

Participant: Ya, it's not, plus that music there like, it hypes you up like.

Interviewer: Hypes you to do what?

Participant: Like fighting, you know, when you hear the swearing, you wanna swear and ... you wanna go and fight and all.

When participant 8 was discussing how Gangsta Rap influenced his friends, he said:

It influences them in mostly bad ways. Like with me now, I only go for the meaning of the song.

This point was also brought out by participant 2 and participant 14, in the class interview.

Interviewer: What about the words?

Participant 2: Sir, see they use words when they describe how they feel and how they living and what they're going through. They tell you, they can also manipulate other rap artists by their music.

Interviewer: How?

Participant 2: By rapping about them.

Participant 14: Sir, like you made a song for someone else and if you use it in a bad way, then they'll make the same like that for you.

Interviewer: Oh, like if you "diss" somebody.

Participant 14: It's a "beef".

Interviewer: Ok, I see, so it's (Gangsta Rap) also used to get back at people.

Participant 14: Ya, you cause wars, gang wars. (These pupils could and most probably were referring to the feud between Tupac and Notorious B.I.G. This feud tore the Gangsta Rap industry into two camps- The East Side and the West side and lead to the eventual death of both these musicians).

....

Interviewer: And when you are with your friends and you're listening to this music, it doesn't motivate you to go and do something like that?

Participant 14: Your mind, you start thinking differently.

Interviewer: How?

Participant 14: You like want to fight with anyone you see. You always want to behave faulty.

Participant 13 also referred to violence in Gangsta Rap and its influence on his friends.

Participant: They interfere with people for nothing ... they cause a problem, just to show that they can do something and another person can't do nothing to them...

Interviewer: And what happens when they meet up with someone else who feels the same way?

Participant: Then they cause a problem...

Although the participant has not used the word, it would be logical to assume that he is talking about machismo and the male ego. Tatum (1999) explained how Gangsta Rap is fixated with this issue of disrespect. She goes on to show how Gangsta Rap popularises the idea that it is acceptable to use violence in order to avenge disrespect. Furthermore this violence creates for its perpetrator a macho identity and earns him respect from his peers and the environment.

We will now look at participant 16. During our discussions, he mentioned that he did not listen to Gangsta Rap that much. For statement a, I identify with Gangsta Rap music, this participant indicated level 3. However, for statement b, I listen to Gangsta Rap, he only indicated 2. I would have expected that he would listen to Gangsta Rap commensurate to his identifying with it. In discussion he was asked to explain why he did not listen to Gangsta Rap as much as he listened to other genres of music. His response was:

Gangsta is mostly, you know- chillin' with your friends and all. That's when you listen to Gangsta.

Interviewer: Why is that?

Participant: Gangsta is not for relaxing. When you relaxing you listen to cool music, Gangsta is not cool music.

Later he says he listens to 50Cent when he is with friends, even though he does not listen to Gangsta Rap that much. We then talk about the lyrics of 50Cents' songs.

Interviewer: Ok so when you're with your friends and you're listening to this music and the swearing, how does it make you feel?

Participant: Make you feel like a Gangster... You feel, hey, make you in a hype mode or something.

Interviewer: Hyped?

Participant: Ya....

Interviewer: How does it hype you?

Participant: It make you, gives you like a..., it puts you in a... like a mode like you wanna fight and do all the stupid things when you listen to all that music.

He is not the first, nor is he the only participant to see a connection between Gangsta

Rap and being “hyped”. Participant 14 (in the class interviews), speaking about how Gangsta Rap affects its audience says:

... you start thinking differently... you like want to fight with anyone you see. You always want to behave faulty.

Participant 9, again in the class discussion, when asked:

Interviewer: What is it about Gangsta Rap that makes you like it?

Replies:

Full of violence.

When the class is further questioned about the violence, driveby’s and drugs in Gangsta Rap being far removed from their lives, participant 16 replies:

We got driveby’s and drugs.

Participant 14 interjects with:

But it’s similar to the way they live.

Interviewer: How is it similar?

Participant 9: We had driveby’s here.

Participant 14: See the way like how we was growing up here, killings, driveby’s, drugs and all. Now where they grew up is like all the same.

Interviewer: When we have driveby’s here, what’s the reason for it?

Participant 14: Gangs.

Interviewer: And what’s the reason for gangs having a beef with one another?

Two participants (9 and 14) reply simultaneously:

Drugs.

The conversation with participant 16 then moves on to the messages in Gangsta Rap.

Interviewer: So generally, these rappers who sing about violence, sex etc., they’re not giving you positive messages?

Participant: No.

Interviewer: Are they all negative?

Participant: Ya.

Interviewer: Like what?

Participant: How to treat girls...

Interviewer: How are they saying you must treat the girls?

Participant: Treat them like bitches... like that.

This would seem to contradict his reaction for statement c, There is nothing wrong with the way women are portrayed in Gangsta Rap, where he indicated level 1.

This means that he felt this statement to be least true. It could also be that he has not understood the statement clearly. This too could be because the statement requires clarification.

When it came to understanding why he listened to Gangsta Rap, for violent lyrics he indicated level 3, for sexual lyrics he indicated level 2 and for liking the lifestyle he indicated level 1. Surprisingly, for statement h, Gangsta Rap attracts me because of its drug culture he indicated level 5. It is difficult to understand how while not liking the lifestyle, he is at the same time attracted to Gangsta Rap because of its drug culture.

Participant 3 was only one of two participants who indicated level 1 for statement a, the other being participant 5. The reason I did not look at them together was because I had difficulty in analysing the responses that participant 5 gave in the questionnaire, as I explained previously. His responses gave me the impression that he had not understood the questionnaire, for this reason I looked at him together with the others who gave me the same impression.

Participant 3 identified with Gangsta Rap at level 1, the least. He listens to Gangsta Rap at level 2. For statements c, d, e, and h, he indicated level 1. For statement b he indicated level 2.

This is supported by his responses in our discussions when he indicated that he listened to Gangsta Rap:

Very rarely.

Interviewer: Why is it very rarely, it's quite a popular...

Participant: It's, it's too violent

...

Swearing and all. My mother always told me not to listen to music like that.

...

Interviewer: Is there anything else about Gangsta Rap that makes you say it is bad?

Participant: It's disrespectful to women, it creates, eeehhh, bad tension between people, stuff like that.

Interviewer: So how is it disrespectful to women?

Participant: It's the way they regard women. The way they class them as hoes, bitches, things like that.

....

Participant: The only type of Rap music I listen to is old Rap... no swearing, nothing.

Gangsta Rap and profit

At this point I was expecting and hoping to hear the names of KRS 1, (Poor) Righteous Teachers, Brand Nubian etc. Unfortunately when I asked him to name some of the artists he listened to, the name he mentioned was Vanilla Ice. On being probed further about his knowledge about people like KRS 1, he hadn't heard of them.

In chapter 2, under the sub-heading Rap as commercial commodity, I have discussed the different, not necessarily differing, views of the way in which Rap is projected by the media in society. Researchers like McQuail (1984), hooks (1992), Gilroy (2000), Yousman (2003), Guy (2004) and Rose (1994), have all given their perspectives on media bias in the reporting of Rap music.

McQuail refers to “gratification theory of media”. He says that those who listen to Gangsta Rap “deliberately search for specific types of stimuli that will satisfy their particular desires and needs.” By this he means that people who listen to Gangsta Rap do so because they want violence, misogyny and sex, and this is what the record company executives give them. Guy says that white youth’s consumption of Gangsta Rap culture is not through first-hand experience; rather it is an idea that is sold to them by record companies and corporate media that is itself white controlled or white dominated.

Guy points to the fact that while white youth are the greatest consumers of Gangsta Rap in America, the membership to white supremacist groups, by the youth, have also increased. In this way the oppression of Black society, these researchers maintain, is perpetuated by its largest consumer population and the corporate executives for whom Gangsta Rap is just a source of profit.

It is for this reason, they say, that record executives reward those Gangsta Rap artists who perpetuate this Black stereotype, with contracts, fame and publicity, while those who wish to transform and educate society are ignored.

Perhaps this is the reason why when these pupils state that they don’t listen to Gangsta Rap because of its violence, misogyny and drug culture, they are unaware that there is another side to Rap music.

When we discussed the impact Gangsta Rap has on his friends, who listen to Gangsta Rap regularly, participant 3 made the following observations about their behaviour.

Interviewer: Do you think it (Gangsta Rap) affects them negatively?

Participant: (Laughs) Ya.

...

Interviewer: Can you relate some experience perhaps?

Participant: No, when they’re listening to it, they wanna try the things they’re rapping about. You know like disrespect women... makes them wanna do the things that , say for instance, Tupac did. Have guns..., do illegal stuff, sell drugs. Stuff like that.

Participant 9 in the class discussions mentioned that he did not listen to Gangsta Rap anymore

Interviewer: You don’t like it (Gangsta Rap) anymore?

Participant: Ya, it’s not, plus that music there like, it hypes you up like.

We can understand then why he indicated either 1 or 2 for all the statements. For statements a, b, d, e and g he indicated level 2. For statements c, f and h, he indicated level 1.

During our one-on-one discussions, I had the opportunity to probe further, as to why he did not listen to Gangsta Rap anymore. When I asked him why he listened to Gangsta Rap he replied:

We watched the movies, saw how they're living, so we listened to the music.

Interviewer: So what was so good about how they lived that you wanted to listen to their music?

Participant: Struggle.

His remark is similar to that of participant 12, who in the class discussion, mentioned that he listened to Gangsta Rap because it spoke about:

... the rough life.

Participant 12 also mentioned during our individual discussions that:

...we living the hard life, they're also living the hard life.

Participant 14 also echoed similar sentiments:

So that's why we, like, our lifestyle, is similar to theirs.

When participant 9 was asked to elaborate on the struggle he is experiencing, he mentioned that his struggle was to pass grade 11. He did not mention unemployment or the fear of not getting a job or any such fears. His fear was on the more immediate present. We also spoke about any other reasons for him identifying with Gangsta Rap besides the struggle, whether drugs or violence also played a role. He stated that while he did not identify with the drugs, he did identify with the violence.

However, the violence he would engage in was not drug related but because of football.

Participant 1 also stopped listening to Gangsta Rap. The explanation he gave was:

.... It's like, how can I say, ... when you get involved in a fight like and you listen to the music it like motivates you to do the wrong things.

Interviewer: How did you see the connection between fighting and the music?

Participant: Like how the Gangsta Rappers, similar like how our problems are to them.

Interviewer: What problems are those?

Participant: ...Like jealousy amongst friends, women.

Interviewer: But all of us have that problem.

...

Participant: But in that song when they're saying something about your problems, it makes you think and you wanna...

Interviewer: So if you did not listen to this music would the problem be solved?

Participant: I wouldn't say, be solved, but it will be less harm to others... maybe by talking to them you can prevent the problem. By listening to the music you wanna use violence...

We see here that this participant also makes the point that violence is the first option when it comes to solving problems, an attitude that he too attributes to the influence of Gangsta Rap.

His fears seem genuine when he says:

If you put your mind to it, if you're really tired of doing what you're doing and you really sit back and think, all the wrong, you can change it.... If you choose not to listen and carry on with that Gangsta life you won't come right. Eventually you'll be six feet under or behind bars.

However, when one looks at the questionnaire, it is difficult to establish a pattern, because while he says the things he says in our discussions, he still indicates level 3 for statement a, level 4 for statement b and level 2 for statement d. For statement c, he indicates level 1, for statement e, he indicates level 3, for statement f, he indicates level 1, for statement g, he indicates level 2, but for statement h, he indicates level 3. One would have expected that for statements e and h, he would have indicated a lower level.

With regards to his friends, participant 1 remarked that they still listen to this music. He said also:

They don't have a dream or ambition in life. So they just carrying on with the flow, how everyday comes.

Interviewer: So you think ambition is important if you want to get out of that lifestyle?

Participant: Ambition, ya, if you set your mind to it and you think by doing drugs and all it won't get me there... you can make it if you give it up and stop joining all the wrong friends.

Quinn (2000) believes that Gangsta Rap is an important tool as it highlights the frustrations and the sense of hopelessness of African American youth for whom "respectable", professional jobs were closed because of the expenses involved. It is the same sentiments echoed by some of the participants in this study, the hopelessness of their situation. That no matter how hard they study and no matter how well they perform, it all comes to nought, firstly because of affirmative action and secondly, because of their lack of finance.

As I write this a local newspaper, The Post (9-13 January 2013) has as their cover story "TOO LITTLE SPACE" with the by-line "Medical students look overseas as quotas squeeze out many top academics". The second lead story on the front page carries the heading "No place for 'Indian' medics this year".

As to their lack of finance, I have discussed in the introduction the poverty and socio-economic problems and the high unemployment rate in this community. I also explained that those few who are employed are in low-paying, unskilled and thus insecure jobs, that do not afford them the opportunity for upward mobility, nor does it allow them the luxury of furthering their education. This perhaps to some extent explains their apathy and limited aspirations. Of course there could be other reasons, but they are not within the ambit of this study.

The final participant for this study is participant 11. For the first two statements this participant indicated level 3. For statements c, d, and e he indicated level 2. For statements f, g, and h, he indicated level 1.

So he identifies and listens to Gangsta Rap to quite a degree, statistically speaking 60 percent. When he was questioned as to what attracted him to Gangsta Rap, his reply was:

Friends, sir.

This participant then listens to Gangsta Rap in order to fit into the group that he has chosen to join, similar to participant 13, who joins his chosen group of friends, even though he admits that they are violent, because he “likes his friends”. Forman (2000) has detailed how important space is for the creation of an individual identity. Forman explains how loyalty to the “hood” and the “crew” is pivotal in shaping the individual identity. Which as Bourdieu explains becomes “Habitus” as I have already discussed above.

Chapter 5: **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Introduction

An ethnographic study is a process of deliberate enquiry which is guided by a particular point of view. It is not a reporting process which is guided by particular set of techniques. The ethnographer generates experiences and accounts of those experiences through the process of enquiry, which in turn enables him or her to understand that particular field better by enabling him or her to understand patterns of behavior in social situations.

Bearing this in mind we must also understand that in order to establish and understand patterns of behaviour the researcher will need more than a two or three week study. Some ethnographic studies have spanned years. While my study was motivated by over fifteen years of observation of the field that I worked in, the actual research period was approximately four months. Secondly, my sample was the male pupils from one grade eleven class.

The school in which I conducted my research has seven grade eleven classes, with a total of two hundred and eighty nine pupils at grade eleven level. While I am not certain as to the gender split of these pupils, if we assume that they are made up of an equal number of males and females then that gives us roughly one hundred and forty four males. I have chosen as my sample the male pupils of one class, the reasons for which I have explained in chapter three, the total number of male pupils in this class is seventeen. During the course of the year one pupil passed away, which left me with a sample of sixteen pupils. In percentage terms that gives me 11.11 percent of the grade eleven male pupils. It would be gross irresponsibility on the part of the researcher to assume that he or she can draw conclusions from such a short ethnographic study, especially one that has an 11.11 percent sample population.

Areas for further research

Having pointed out the limitations of this study, I will therefore begin this chapter by first looking at areas for further research. In order to get a fuller picture of the lives of these participants greater observation will have to be carried out over a longer period, observation that is done as much out of school as is done within the school as a field. While I have observed these participants outside of school, it has not been done in a formal, rigorous manner under strict research conditions; it has been very informal and incidental.

Another reason for conducting research over a longer period is to enable the researcher to interview a greater number of participants. In order to produce thicker descriptions and greater understanding the researcher will have to involve more participants, to afford them the opportunity to tell their stories, this will necessitate more time being spent in the field. Researchers may also want to look at the impact of Gangsta Rap not just on grade eleven learners and not just on male learners, if we are to get a clearer picture of the influence of Gangsta Rap on society as a whole and not just one sector of society.

Key Findings

For me the most telling aspect of this study was the point made by a substantial number of pupils that they did not listen to Gangsta Rap anymore. By implication they had listened to it previously. So what was the reason for them not listening to it anymore? Many said that they did not like the way Gangsta Rap was influencing them and the negative impact it was having on their lives, Participant 9 said that it made him go out and fight, because it hyped him up.

Others said that they listened to Gangsta Rap because it was about life, a life that they identified with. Participant 14 said that the killings, drive by's and drugs the rapper's sing about are the same things that they see in their community.

Participant 7 claimed that the gang fights were about respect. A study by Gubrium and Holstein (cited in Kubrin 2005) found that Gangsta Rap and Gangsta Rappers were obsessed with "dissing" and violence.

Studies of this genre of music are replete with conclusions that link violence and committing of criminal activities with self-image, the creation of a social identity and earning respect.

Anderson (1999) in his book explained that respect formed a fundamental part of a person's self-esteem. And the most popular method used to earn this respect was violence especially since an individual's public persona had to show that he had a violent streak, which he was willing to use.

Wilkinson (2001) also found that many youth deliberately initiated fights and got into altercations with the sole intention of building up a violent image so that they may earn respect from their peers and the community. Wilkinson's study in inner city New York concluded that in these communities violence was commonly thought to be the "most critical resource for achieving status among those who participate in street culture." (p. 243)

Participant 6 mentioned that many people who died, died as a result of flaunting their wealth. A point supported by a study done by Chan and Prendergrast (cited in Davis, 2011).

Participant 12 feels that there are many similarities between the lives they lead and what the rappers rap about when he says:

Ya, we're living the hard life; they're also living the hard life.

There are numerous references in the interviews, to the similarity between the lifestyle and the socio-economic problems of the world inhabited by the Gangsta Rappers, and the world of these pupils and as participant 16 points out:

When you see it every day, you get influenced by it.

Then you have others like Participant 5, who does not listen to Gangsta Rap at all because he felt that the language was filthy, misogynistic and violent. Although he did not actually use these words, he did express these sentiments.

So we can see then that in this research group those pupils who do listen to Gangsta Rap listen to it because they identify with the genre in some way or the other. The reasons given for identifying with this genre ranged from the literal, that is- enjoying the swearing and violent lyrics, the lifestyle portrayed by the music, its drug culture, to much deeper - identifying with the struggle, hardship, lack of employment, lack of opportunities, lack of resources and lack of finance that is the mainstay of much Gangsta Rap lyrics. Participant 12 mentions:

Sir, like, if we want something and all, we don't get it like straight away like that there, we have to make our own money, or time by time get money, save up and then buy things. ...It's not like we just gonna get the money straight like that...

It is the same participant who during the class interview said that one of the reasons he listened to Gangsta Rap was because he identified with the “**rough life**” that these rappers sang about. Every participant mentioned at some stage that there was a link between Gangsta Rap and their “bad habits”, whether it was bunking school in order to look cool or resorting to violence in order to resolve an issue, all saw a link, however tentative, between their lifestyle and Gangsta Rap.

However, we must also concede that there could be other explanations for this behavior. Pupils could merely be looking for a scapegoat, someone or something on which they can hang the burden of responsibility, for their actions. Given “the bad rap”, the negative media coverage and biased reporting that was examined in chapter 2, and bad publicity that Gangsta Rap has, one must admit that it is a convenient scapegoat.

It must be acknowledged that these accounts from students are original and authentic narratives that give insight into their worldviews and the contextual challenges which they face on an ongoing basis. Their world is shaped by socio economic drivers and the gangsta rap culture may very likely be a form of escapism.

We must acknowledge also, issues of identity and the role Gangsta rap plays in glamourizing this lifestyle so much so that those who listen to it regularly identify with to varying degrees.

We see then that Gangsta Rap is not only music. It espouses certain values that for it are normal and acceptable thus it can be seen as a culture. But more importantly are the values it espouses.

One of these values is sex. In the code that permeates Gangsta Rap culture, sex is an important sign of social status. The more women a man has, even if the relationship is not sexual as long as the community believes it is, the more popular that man

becomes. The consequence of this is that women become objects, to be acquired, trophies to be won.

It is indeed rare to find critics who have something positive to say about Gangsta Rap and its culture. However, there are many who agree that Gangsta Rap articulates the discontent of young Black Americans, who are disillusioned by what they perceive as their systematic marginalization from American mainstream. So in that sense there is a positive. That Gangsta Rap is able to be the voice for those who feel that they are voiceless, Gangsta Rap informs the “haves” about issues that plague the “have nots.”

Recommendations

That Gangsta Rap plays a huge role in the lives of these pupils; I believe has been established via this study.

The research landscape is replete with studies advocating the use of rap in order to educate our youth and equip them with life skills. Morrell and Duncan-Andrade (2002), Stovall (2006) and Kobin and Tyson (2006) all recommend the use of rap music in the educational context since it is a reflection of the hopes and struggles, aspirations and concerns of the youth. However, in order to achieve this education, we have to concientize pupils that there is more to Rap music than “ho’s, bitches, dissing and drugs”. Rap music exists beyond just this mundane level. The road forward, for educators and the education system, is to harness this influential genre of popular music and use it in a positive manner. We need to make all those involved in education, at every level, aware of rappers like KRS-One, Grand Nubian and Poor Righteous Teachers, rappers who through their lyrics, have tried to educate society and thus bring about improvement in the lives of the oppressed and voiceless masses.

This difficulty however, is made all the more complex because the first step down this path will be to fight media bias and separate Rap music from the stigmas attached to it. Secondly, the orthodox attitudes of educators and administrators towards Rap music, the same attitudes that plagued The Beatles and Elvis, will have to be addressed. Their fears will have to be allayed, so that they may become willing partners in this endeavor. Finally, methods and strategies for putting this influence to better use, need to be found. Therein I believe, lies the challenge for the present day educator and the present education system.

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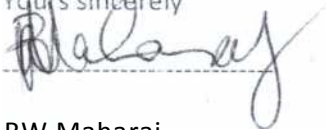
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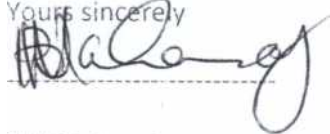
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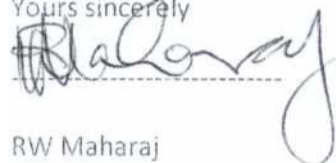
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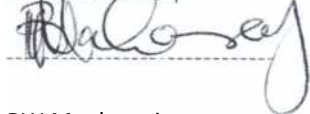
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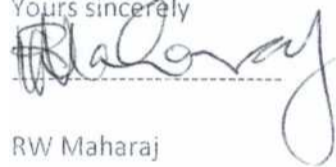
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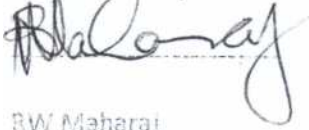
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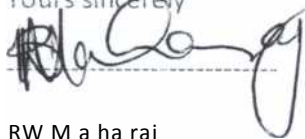
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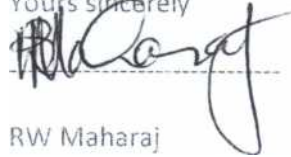
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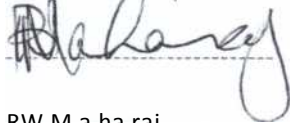
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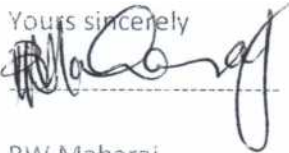
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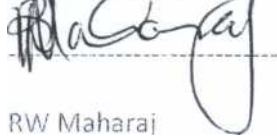
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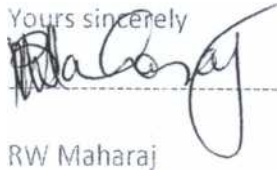
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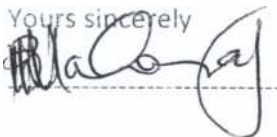
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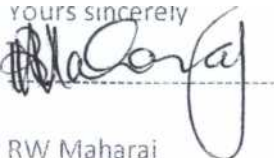
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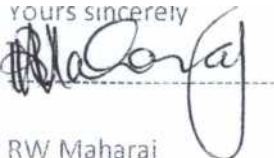
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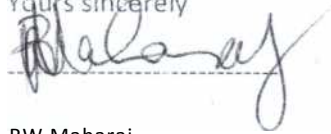
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Interview Schedule

1. Do you listen to Gangsta Rap?
2. Why do/don't you listen to Gangsta Rap?
3. Is there anything in this music that you identify with?
4. How do you react to the criticism of Gangsta Rap?

Transcription- Class (1)

Interviewer (I): How many of you listen to Gangsta Rap? Rap music? 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9. L you don't, 10,11,12, you do. Those of you who listen to Gangsta Rap, why do you listen to Gangsta Rap? What do you like about it?

L: Nice beat.

K: Makes you sleep.

I: But if it's beaty, how will it make you sleep?

K: No, when you listen to the words...

I: and what is it about the words, they're telling you nice things?

K: No, like the rough life...

I: Sorry!

K: The rough life. (laughter)

L: And that makes you sleep?

N: I donno who listens to Gangsta Rap to sleep. (inaudible) The R 'n B can make you sleep. Gangsta? (laughter) (inaudible)

I: But, if I for example asked you "How do you study?" Say for example you R, and you will tell me you have to have music, right? That's if you study (laughter) Right! When you study, do you like to listen to music? No. (nods). You like it to be absolutely silent? (nods) So you don't listen to any music while you 're studying? (nods) When do you listen to music? (inaudible response).

I: Loudly.

R: Free time.

I: In your free time. And what type of music do you listen to?

R: Mostly R 'n B.

I: What's so good about Gangsta Rap? I'm asking because I see that all of you listen to Gangsta Rap. (A pupil comes to the door and the teacher/interviewer addresses them: "Not now I'm very busy." He then comes back to the class.)

I notice that all of you listen to Gangsta Rap. What's so good about the music that you all listen to it? I know K was saying "rough life." What about the rough life?

A: It teaches you about the rough life.

I: It teaches you , how?

A: Sir, the way they singing it, it's how, the way they was brought up.

I: Uh huh

A: On the streets. How they had to hustle to get money and all.

I: People, you're going to have to talk loudly because I can't hear you, right. All right, come forward, come forward. Sit around here. The reason I'm asking, you can sit here as well, you don't have to sit so far. N come closer, come closer. The reason I'm asking is because from what little I know about Rap, they talk about the rough life, the tough life etc. Is it music that you can identify with? I mean, when you hear them talking about "rough life", no jobs etc. is it something you see in your own life? Is that the reason you listen to it?

Pupil: No

I: No. So what is the reason? Nino, why do you listen to rap, Gangsta Rap?

N: It hypes me up.

I: It hypes you up. How?

N: When I hear the swearing and all, I get excited.

I: You get excited.

N: I get angry.

I: You get angry. You think that's a good way of hyping you up? Do you like being angry?

N: Naww, I don't listen to Gangsta anymore.

I: You don't listen to Gangsta anymore. But you used to. Or you still do...

N: I got the music,...

I: Uh huh

N: ... but mostly House.

I: Ok. The gangsta music that you did listen to, uhhh, who were some of the artists?

N: Dr Dre, Snoop...

I: Mmm

N: (indistinct) Easy E, Dizzy D.

Pupil: What about Pac?

N: Tupac, Biggie, 50 cent.

I: And what's so good about them that you used to listen to them?

Silence

I: What about them made you listen to them?

Silence

I: It made you angry, you said. You got hyped up. Why did you feel the need to be made angry?

Silence

I: Did you enjoy being angry?

N: Ya, for the moment. You know. When you want to fight and all, you just listen to the music (indistinct).

I: So you used to listen to the music before you go and fight?

N: (laughs) No. When we think about fighting.

I: And did it influence you to go out and fight with somebody or to, uhh, rebel against your parents maybe.

N: Ya. (Indistinct) Yes.

I: It did. Why?

Silence

I: But don't, do you think, if you didn't listen to this music, you would backchat to your parents, you would rebel against them?

Silence

I: No. M. You didn't?

M: (Nods)

I: But are you in a position to tell your parents, for example, if you don't want to do something, you're able to tell them. So you don't need to listen to Gangsta Rap?

M: I listen to it because I like listening to it.

I: You like it.

M: I like the words.

I: Uh huh. What about the words?

M: Sir, see they use words when they describe how they feel and how they living, and what they're going through. They tell you, they can also manipulate other rap artists by their music.

I: How?

M: About rapping about them.

I: Example?

Silence

I: So that I understand what you're saying.

A: Sir, like you made a song for someone else.

I: Mm mm.

A: And if you use it in a bad way, then they'll make the same like for you.

I: Oh, like if you "diss" somebody.

A: It's a beef.

I: Ok, I see, so it's also used to get back at people.

A: Ya. You cause fights (indistinct), wars, gang wars.

I: How many of you belong to cliques or gangs or groups? You have a group of friends whom you hang out with. You won't hang out with other people.

Silence

Or do you hang out with other people besides... when you go home, for example, D, who are you with? Who do you join?

D: Guys from our road L, K, some other boys...

I: And what do your'll do?

D: Play soccer, sometimes... (indistinct)

I: Sorry

D: Sometime you get together and do your homework

I: Get together and do your homework? Oh that's good. (Screeching of furniture) Sorry.

D: Everyone do our project

I: Ok. and when your'll listen to this music with your friends, because you also listen to music with your chommies right? When you're with your friends and you're listening to this music, it doesn't motivate your'll to go and do something like...

A: Ya, it does.

I: ...vandalize, or something like that?

A: Not vandalize...

I: Yes...

A: Your mind, you start thinking differently.

I: How?

A: You like want to fight with anyone you see. You always want to behave faulty.

(A teacher comes in for a school matter. The interview stops and continues a few minutes later.)

Class(2)

I: Sorry uhhh A, sorry about that, you were saying, it makes you, when you listen to this music, it makes you do things.

A: Mmm

I: Like what?

A: Like if you see like someone walking pass, wanna fight with them. No one must tell you anything.

I: Mmm

A: You get offended. You like always angry, always wanna fight (inaudible).

I: If you weren't listening to this music would you be the same way?

A: Maybe.

I: Why?

Silence

I: R, you?

R: Maybe.

I: You what?

R: Be the same.

I: Do you react the same way as A does when you listen to rap music?

R: Nods.

I: You do. Why?

Silence

I: I'm asking because although I heard him, maybe you have different reasons.

R: (inaudible) ...swearing.

I: Uh huh.

R: Thinking about other boys. (sniggering).

I: Right, no,no,no. Not thinking about boys in that way. (laughter) Even if you want to, we can't stop you. (more laughter).

N: It's a free country.

I: Yes, it's a free country.

R: Thinking about the rappers, swearing other rappers, you gonna see somebody you don't like.

I: Mm mmm.

R: You gonna get angry and treat them just like that.

I: But all the rap songs are not about having a beef with someone. Surely there are rap songs that talk about other issues. (Murmurs from the class).

?: Yeah, ya.

N: About life.

I: About life? What about life? What does it say about life?

N: It talks about (inaudible) when they was small how they grew up on the streets and all.

I: Uh huh.

N: All that.

I: You like that?

N: Mmm

I: What do you think is the reason for your liking that? I mean why don't you like listening to Indian music? What is it about Rap that makes you like it?

?: Full of violence.

I: Pardon.

N: Ya, it's very violent.

I: Ok, we'll come back, let me just listen to N.

N: It's violent.

I: It's violent. You like the violence.

N: Huhh.

I: If rappers rapped about uhhh Easter Bunnies, would you still listen to them?

N: No.

I: No. Why?

N: It's not violent (Laughs. Class joins in the laughter.)

?: It's not violent. You need violence?

I: Ok so it's the violence that attracts you?

N: Yah.

I: L, you were saying something about violence as well.

L: Ya, cos they mostly talking about how they get shot in the driveby's , all the drugs they did.

I: Uh huh. But isn't that so far removed from the lives that you're leading? I mean we don't have drive by's and drugs here.

L: We got driveby's and drugs. (Pupils sniggering in the background).

A: But it's similar to the way they live.

I: What do you mean? How is it similar?

N: We had driveby's here.

A: See the way like how we was growing up here, killings, driveby's, drugs and all. Now where they grew up is like also the same.

I: And when we have driveby's here, what's the reason for it?

N/A: Gangs.

I: Gangs. And what's the reason for gangs having a beef with one another?

A: Drugs. (murmurs of assent).

I: So you think drugs are so important that it causes conflicts between gangs and leads to driveby's?

N: Sir, it's all about respect.

I: Respect. What about it?

A: Like you can't go somewhere else and talk bad about that place. Like, you not from there...

I: So your turf...

A: Ya (murmurs of assent).

I: ... must be respected. This is our territory...

A: Ya.

I: If you come here...

A: ... you must have respect.

I: You must have respect and how will I show disrespect to your turf?

Silence

I: Anybody? What would I have to do to show disrespect?

Silence

I: L, what are some of the things I would do that would mean I'm showing you disrespect?

L: Talk bad about me. Act like they're the top person. Not like me.

I: So if I put myself as being better than you (inaudible). But what if I am richer than you?

N: Then we ask you for tax.

A: Ya

I: Sorry.

A: Tax. They collect.

I: I'll have to pay tax.

A: Ya

I: And who decides how much of tax?

N: Whoever is asking for the tax.

I: And how will they decide how much of tax?

R: Depends how rich you are.

I: Depends on how rich I am. So wouldn't it be better then not to show how rich I am?

N/A: Ya.

I: But people don't do that.

N: Ya, they like to show off.

I: They like to show off. Ok

R: That's why all these people died. Showing off. Wanted tax, didn't wanna pay tax.

I: How affected are you, all of you- D, F, L, even if you don't listen to it, but the driveby's and the gang fights that are going on, how does it affect you?

L: We stay in the same area, sir.

I: Yes.

L: We live in the same area. We see all that is happening.

I: Uh huh. You see all that is happening. So how would that affect you, how would that make you, "Hey, I can't go to school today", or "I have to fight with my mother and walk out of the house". What's the connection between your life and what those gangsters and drug dealers are doing?

L: You see it.

A: Some people like it.

I: Some people like it? They like that lifestyle because...

L: When you see it everyday, you get influenced by it.

A: Ya

I: Do you'll see it everyday?

A: Used to.

I: Used to, and what changed that it stopped now?

Silence

I: What changed that you stopped seeing it everyday?

L: Gangsters behind bars.

I: Gangsters behind bars. So you have seen gangsters ending up in jail.

L: End up the same.

I: Sorry!

L: You'll end up the same.

L: You live like them, you gonna end up like them.

Class (3)

I: Ok, listen, the last time we spoke, uhhh, you gave me some very interesting answers, and I went back and looked at what you said, it gave me an understanding, not complete, an understanding of some of the things that you do. Uhhh, but it has also given me more questions that I'd like to ask you, to better understand you, to better understand your lives, to better understand the way you think. So, I want to ask you a few more questions and hopefully your answers will build a clearer picture of you. How many of you don't have a group of close friends? Is there anybody in this class who doesn't have a group of close friends that you join all the time? You all have. And is it the same group of friends that you join all the time or you move from , maybe today you're with this group, next week you're with another group.

D: Same group all the time.

I: It's the same group all the time, you say D. K you also said it's the same group all the time, and what is the reason for you being with the same group all the time, not changing your friends?

D: These are the friends you can trust and stuff like that.

I: These are the friends you can trust and you feel loyalty towards them. How do you decide, or what made you decide that "these are the guys that I can trust?" Do you all feel the same way, that's the reason why you join the same people all the time. Ok, so what about them made you say "these are the guys I can trust". P, you?

P: We grew up together.

I: Your'll grew up together. So you know them for a long time. How long?

P: Ten years maybe.

I: Is it! Ok that's quite long and they feel the same way about you I take it?

P: (Nods)

I: So what did your'll go through in terms of growing up , the experiences your'll had...

P: We had fights, we had fun...

I: Uh huh, and the fun was...?

Silence

I: You have some instances in your mind, in your memory, some memories that stand out?

P: We shared laughter.

I: Ok and this laughter was in school, outside school, weekends?

P: Both

I: Both, and the fights?

P: Outside.

I: Outside? The fights weren't in school? I'm taking it that your'll must have been together from primary school because you were saying "ten years". Ok, so the fights happened outside school as well and generally what were these fights about?

P: About girls.

I: Sorry.

P: About girls.

I: About girls. (Addressing the class) Would you agree that it's about girls? Not always. Ok, but when you had these fights you're saying it was about girls.

Kyle: (Nods)

I: And what about girls?

K: It's like I'm stealing someone else's girlfriend, they're stealing my girlfriend, but they're my close friend. Something like that there.

I: Ok so you fought even amongst your close friends.

K: Ya

I: Because either you stole their girlfriend, or you tried to steal or they tried to steal your girlfriend.

K: Ya.

I: So where's the close friendship that we were talking about, where's the trust?

K: Ya, but we learnt from all that there. That's how it built more trust.

I: So how was it then that this fight didn't lead to your breaking up the friendship?

K: It's like you can't pick a girl over a boy or a friend.

I: Uh huh.

K: It's like a bond.

I: So your friends are more important than a girl...

K: ...more important than a girl, ya.

I: ...the girls, and what makes your friends more important than the girls?

Silence

I: Can't you find another friend?

D: That's brotherly love.

K: You can.

I: Yes, sorry D you were saying?

D: That's brotherly love.

I: Brotherly love. But you're not brothers.

D: Ya, that doesn't matter. Ya we take each other like that.

I: Why do you take each other as brothers?

K: We're born and brought up in the same district.

I: Uh huh.

K: We know each other for long.

I: Yes.

R: Shared everything.

I: Sorry R, you were saying we shared ...?

R: Shared everything.

I: You shared everything and when you say everything, what do you mean everything? Food?

R: Food.

I: Fun.

R: Fun. Everything.

I: Problems?

R: Problems too.

I: So how do you share your problems, I mean, I can understand food and fun, but how do you share your problems?

R: You tell your friend, you in this situation.

I: Uh huh.

R: Maybe he'll try to help you out.

I: And how would he be able to advise you and help you out?

R: Talk to you.

I: What does he know about your problems?

D: Sir, even if you're going through a rough time, with family problems and stuff and you got a friend that can counsel you and talk to you, he can help you out.

I: Uh huh. Well that's good, that you have somebody, but where would he get the answers from? Has he shared similar experiences, has he had similar problems that he can give you the answers?

D: Maybe.

I: So perhaps that's one of the things that brought you together, that you share similar problems?

D: Ya.

I: What will some of these problems be? I mean besides girlfriend boyfriend problems.

Silence

I: Any other kind of problems?

Silence

I: L? Yes? L you have a group of friends as well, what are some of the similar problems that you have?

L: Whatever happens in the house, family problems, drugs, alcohol...

I: Uh huh, so you talk to your friends about drugs, alcohol, family problems? (L nods.) You don't think that the family problems, or, like you say, whatever happens in the house, should stay in the house?

L: Ya, but there's no one else to talk to. Your friends are there, you can trust them, you respect them.

I: Louder please, I can't hear you.

L: You can talk to your friends, if you feel you need to talk to someone, your friends they are willing to help you.

I: Ok, but your father, you have elder brothers?

L: Ya.

I: How many?

L: Two.

I: Two, elder than you? And your dad. You don't feel comfortable talking to them?

L: No, sir, how can I say...

I: No, it's interesting that you don't, why don't you feel...

L: ...uncomfortable.

I: Ya, why do you feel uncomfortable talking to them about drugs or girls or whatever?

L: Not like how my situation is. How am I going to explain?

K: You won't understand it sir.

L: As friends you've been through it, you'll understand it.

I: So your friends, who've been through it, you say, will understand.

L: ...will know about your family problems.

I: But don't you think that your brothers and your father even, went through the same problems as a teen, that you're going through now?

Lor: But their type of issue...

I: Oh, so the circumstances have changed and..., all right, but have the circumstances changed enough to , umhh, make the answers or the solutions to the problems, different?

Silence.

I: I mean, the girlfriend problems that your elder brother, who's thirty, had ten years ago, you think the answer to his problem is different to the answer to the problem that you're having now with your girlfriend?

R: Yes.

I: Say you and your girlfriend are having a disagreement and you are not getting along right now, When he was having the same problem, the solution that he used, you don't think you'll be able to use that solution?

L: Can use it...

I: Yes, you'll use it. (Lee nods.) Then, why don't you talk to him?

L: I feel comfortable with my friends.

But they're not your real brothers.

L: I take them as a brother.

I: So you take them as more important than your...

L: Ya, 'cos he's not always around, friends are always there.

I: Sorry, just repeat that.

L: He's not always there.

I: Your brother is not always there.

L: He's got a life of his own; my friends are (inaudible).

I: And who is that life that your brother has, or what is that life that your brother has?

L: He got children, family, he need to cater for.

I: Ok, alright. So he has a family to look after...

L: I don't wanna be a burden on his life.

I: Ok, alright. Silence. Yes anybody else? D, you've been quiet so far. D, you have friends.

D: Ya.

I: And what L has said, you agree with him?

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D: Yes.

I: ... because he's said that his friends are more important than his brothers because his brother has other commitments. Do you find yourself in a similar situation?

D: Yes sir.

I: Explain.

D: Sir you see your friends is always there for you when you need them. Your brother and all they'll, they won't understand what you feel.

I: Have you tried asking them?

D: Yes sir.

I: And?

D: You have to have respect for them see. That's your family, you can't share your secrets, what you, your likes and dislikes.

I: But say for example, you have, say a girl you like. Now I know that's not the only problem you have, right. Or say, for example, there's a teacher who doesn't like you, or there's a teacher you just can't come to get along with, don't you think you can talk to them about this problem? Because your brother's been to school, he must have had, perhaps, a similar problem.

D: Sir they won't give you advice, they'll tell you about what, they won't understand your point of view.

I: Uh huh.

D: They'll always give you what, this thing must go talk to the teachers.

L: They give you strategies.

D: Ya.

I: But isn't that a good strategy – "go talk to the teacher"?

D: But they won't understand what your point of view is sir. In case you,... wouldn't like the teacher talking to you like that.

I: But even if you talk to the teacher, can't you tell the teacher "Sir, we don't like the way you are talking to us. Say, for example, I scolded you this morning...

D: Ya

R: Sir, with them you always wrong, your brothers and your parents- you always wrong.

I: So your family, your brothers, your parents- you're saying-always blame you.

R: Yes, you always wrong.

I: Uh huh.

R: With them ...

I: Did that happen to you?

R: Yes.

I: Can you give me a specific instance?

R: Ya, like...I got involved in a fight.

I: Uh huh.

R: Right, that boy he swore me, and he gave me one slap.

I: A boy?

R: Ya.

I: Mm mmm

R: For nothing.

I: When was this?

R: About a month ago.

I: Did it happen in school?

R: No.

I: Ok

R: Then, I hit him back, that's when and opened charges and everything, against me. Then I told my parents what happened, they said "no, why you could not come complain to us?"

I: Did you think of complaining to them?

R: No.

I: No.

R: He swore me ...and slapped me. I lost, I went away..., in another world.

I: Ok, he swore you...

R: Yes.

I: He slapped you, and then you hit him back.

R: Ya.

I: But then when he opened the charge, couldn't you also open a charge because he also assaulted you?

R: Yes I did that.

I: Why did he swear you?

R: No, for nothing. You know, you go into another district now, it's like, that's they district now, you can't come there.

I: Oh yes, we were talking about this the last time-you go into somebody else's district, you don't diss them and...

R: Ya.

I: ...all of that. So this is what happened?

R: Ya.

I: You went into somebody else's turf. Where was this?

R: Unit 5.

I: Unit 5. So you went into a different district. Do you know this boy?

R: No

I: No. So what was the reason for him swearing you, I mean you didn't diss him, you didn't disrespect him?

R: No, just walking in the road. I went to see someone.

I: Uh huh.

R: And he's asking me what I'm doing here. I told him I came to see someone and he said "Hey, you know why, this is my area. This is our..."

I: Turf?

R: Then he swore me and klapped me.

I: Was he alone?

R: Him and another two boys.

I: So there were three of them and you were ...

R: Ace out.

I: Alone? This matter that you went to unit 5 to address or this person that you went to see, couldn't have been done elsewhere, you couldn't meet him elsewhere, or you couldn't speak to them some other way, you had to go and see them personally?

R: I went to see one girl.

I: Oh, you went to see a girl. And you think perhaps he knew you went to see a girl?

R: No I don't think so.

I: No! I'm asking because remember what K was saying earlier, 5 minutes ago, "somebody's trying to steal our girlfriend or we're trying.... You think perhaps maybe he saw you as a threat – "you coming to take my girl", or something like that?

R: No.

I: No. So he wouldn't have known that you came there to see a girl.

R: No

I: When you told him you came to see somebody, you didn't mention it was a girl. You just said you came to see somebody.

R: Yes.

I: Mmm. Alright. L, you wanted to say something a few moments ago and I stopped you. You remember what you wanted to say?

L: No.

I: O.K. So lots of the problems that you have or lots of the fights that you get involved in are over girls. Is there anything else that you have fights about? Cars, clothes? No? Cellphones?

D: Money.

I: Money. You had a fight over money? Why?

D: I'm just saying.

I: Yes.

D: Just say if couple of boys are gambling and all right and if that boy wins and say "no you called a wrong card" or something like that, then they fight like for a R2 or something. Saying " that's my money, that's my money" , then they start fighting.

I: You think R2 is worth fighting over?

D: No, but I'm saying the stupidity of fighting.

I: But it's a stupid reason, so why do they fight over a stupid reason? Do you think it comes back to disrespect and dissing and.... So that's important then? Being respected?

L: Yes.

I: It's important to you?

L: Yes.

I: Why?

L: Cos respect works both ways.

I: Sorry.

L: Respect works both ways.

I: Yes.

L: Respect works both ways.

I: Works both ways. What do you mean by that?

L: Like, if K, if he respect me, I respect him.

I: Uh huh.

L: Can't disrespect him.

I: And if he disrespects you? Say you respect him and he disrespects you?

L: Ya, that's how the violence starts.

I: Is that the only way that they can sort it out, by violence?

L: No, my situation I will go to a solution to sort it out. If he disrespect me, I will ask him...(inaudible)

I: Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you had to use violence to get respect?

L: Ya, in many cases.

I: Yes explain.

L: (inaudible)... with people and when they disrespect you, continuously disrespecting you, and you talk to them, give them advice and it's not the solution, so we have to sort you out, set the boundaries.

I: How do you do that?

Silence

I: How do you set those boundaries?

L: Someone carry on, continuously swearing you, insulting you in front of females and you tell them "hey it's wrong stop it." They just carry on kuzzaring you cos they want to feel important.

I: Ok.

L: The only solution is to give them 1,2 smacks and tell them " stay in your place, don't cross the line."

I: Ok, but that's after you talked, and spoken to them.

L: Ya, you can't go straight violence.

I: OK, so violence has not been the first option, that's what you're saying?

L: Yes.

I: And when you did use..., after you spoke...

L: I felt guilty.

I: You felt guilty. Why did you feel guilty?

L: Because he never like come back and fight with me or he assaulted me, no sir.

I: Uh huh.

L: By just disrespecting me, it's almost like violence, but it's not violence. It's insulting a person in front of others just to feel important (inaudible).

I: And did you get over the guilt that you felt at using violence?

L: Can't get over it, just went back and apologised.

I: You went and apologised to the person you assaulted, and what was his reaction when you apologised?

L: Told me he was wrong and he's sorry. He just was making the boys laugh. I told him you doing it out of friendship – do it two out, don't do it in front of everyone, cos you insulting me, making me be low.

I: So he was making you look bad, to make himself look good.

L: Amongst others.

I: ... in front of other people. Alright, have any of you had similar experiences?

Silence

I: L ?

L: Mm?

I: You've had experiences like that?

L: No.

I: No. You haven't had that experience of people disrespecting you?

L: Uh huh.

I: Or is it that people have disrespected you and you just didn't let it bother you?

L: Ya, if it's a small thing then I don't worry about it.

I: How are you able to just overlook it and not worry about it?

L: They never tell me straight to my face, then it don't worry me.

I: Ok, what if you had a similar experience in a crowd, in public?

L: Ya, you'll react to it. You wanna hit him or swear him back or something.

I: But that has'nt happened to you?

L: Mm mm.

I: No, K? Hasn't happened?

K: No.

I: But if it happened, what would you do?

K: Same, I'd react.

I: How? Do you think you'd react violently or you'd try to discuss the problem?

K: If they push me or go over the limit then violence.

I: So you think your first reaction would be violence, it wouldn't be talk?

K: I'll talk first.

I: L you say you will also talk first. R you don't seem to be the kind that would talk first from the experience you told me about. You'll react with violence?

R: Nods.

I: Why wouldn't you try talking first, R?

R: Sir they making you feel low in front of everyone.

I: Sorry

R: Making you feel bad in front of everyone.

I: Making you feel bad in front of everyone. Uhh, but don't you think there are more important things to worry about? I mean, considering what you told me about yourself, your experiences. Don't you think there are more important things that you could get worked up about than just making you feel bad in front of everyone?

R: Sir, It's the respect that counts. I have respect for you, I expect you to respect me.

I: Uh huh.

R: Now you making me feel bad in front of everyone.

I: Yes.

R: I will have to react with violence.

I: Why wouldn't you talk, why wouldn't you say to the person "You know what, you are making me feel bad in front of everyone, you are disrespecting me." Why wouldn't you do that? I'm not saying you are wrong because it's not for me to decide. Right. So I'm not saying how you're reacting is wrong. I'm just trying to understand why you reacted the way you did. Why wouldn't you try talking first?

R: Other people respect me now they're gonna see you doing that now, making me feel bad, they're gonna stop respecting me.

I: You don't think they will respect you more because they've seen the mature way in which you've reacted to this threat, to this insult?

R ... Ya they will.

I: You don't think people will respect you because of the maturity with which you've handled the situation?

R: ... They will.

I: So you didn't think about that and say ok maybe people will respect me more if I don't react violently? That solution didn't cross your mind?

R: No.

I: Now that I'm putting it in front of you?

R: I'll use it.

(Siren sounds. Interview ends.)

A.

I: Ok, we'll continue the discussion we were having. Now I spoke to the class and you were there in the class as well, when I spoke and I'm interested to hear your story. You'll notice that when I spoke to the class I didn't get the individual stories, I spoke to them as a whole class. But you gave some replies that were very interesting and therefore I singled you out, because I want you to tell me your story. Right. However, if there's anything that I ask you that you are not comfortable answering, you can refuse. Right. You have that option. Uhh, how old are you now?

A: 17

I: And when will you turn 18?

A: Next month.

I: You want to tell me about your life so far. Things that are bothering you, things that affect you, how it impacts on your school life? The reason I'm asking is, you know and I know that you haven't been giving school the attention that it deserves. Right, with the result that you had to repeat this year. What were some of the things that affected your performance last year and even this year.

A: Hanging with friends, doing the wrong things.

I: Uh huh.

A: All like that.

I: What are the wrong things that your'll...

A: Smoking, drinking... ya, like that.

I: And when you talk about smoking, you're talking about drugs as well?

A: Only zol sir.

I: Zol, sugars? No. Any other hard drugs?

A: Should try (sheepish).

I: Like what?

A: Buttons, coke err pills and all.

I: And you didn't get hooked on it?

A: No.

I: How? How was it that you weren't...

A: Naa, you just doing it for the fun.

I: Do you think if you weren't joining these friends you still would have tried those things?

A: Mmm Mmm.

I: No.

A: ... don't think so.

I: So would you say then that the company you kept played a big role in, trying these things out?

A: No, not really sir.

I: No.

A: Say if you like wanna do something now, like all of us, they won't ... you won't just say we want to do it, we'll ask like everyone what they wanna do, then that's fine. Then we'll do it, we'll smoke, go places.

I: Have you been in a situation where you didn't want to but because everyone else was saying yes we will, you said yes?

A: No, no sir.

I: No. If you didn't want to would you've been able to say?

A: Ya.

I: And your friends would've respected that?

A: Mmm.

I: They would've accepted it?

A: Ya.

I: Mmmm. So when you don't come to school, A, what do you do?

A: I be at home for a while, and then I'll go on the road.

I: Mmm.

A: To see my friends, play ball.

I: And your friends are also going to school?

A: Most ya.

I: The people you join, most of them.

A: They are no not everyone is in school.

I: Most of them are out ...

A: Finished school ... ya.

I: They finished school? They didn't quit or leave?

A: No.

I: And how important is finishing school to you?

A: Ya it is.

I: Why would you want to finish school?

A: To get a job. Without school there's no job. You won't know what's happening in life things like that.

I: I've noticed that friends play a very important part in your life. Why is that?

A: Ya, but most of the time I'm with them, I'm not at home. That's why I'm like, always with them and they're like there for me.

I: So what attracts you to these friends? Why not another group of friends?

A: We all are like the same, we think the same..., do the same things and we like from the same area, so that's why we always together.

I: When you say your'll are the same, what do you mean by that?

A: Uhhhh, the way we behave, like we play, you know playing ball, that's how I like, most of our friends because of soccer. Always playing ball and if weekends come we'll go somewhere, we always together. Even week nights and all. Everyday.

I: What do you mean by your'll think the same?

A: Uhh, If you wanna do something, we'll do it. If something is wrong, we'll say it's wrong. We like not always doing the ... wrong things.

I: Mmm. Have your'll ever committed any criminal acts together as a group?

A: Like fighting....Fighting ya fighting, robberies.

I: And what has come of the fighting and robberies? Any legal action was taken?

A: Mmm.

I: No. The people that your'll fought with or your'll robbed, why didn't they take legal action?

A: They never ... No one did anything.

I: How important is music in your life?

A: It is. I like, love music.

I: You love it. What type of music do you specially listen to?

A: Now, I listen to lot like RnB, Gangsta. There's only RnB, Gangsta and House. That's the only like three types I always listen to.

I: RnB, Gangsta and House.

A: Ya.

I: And what makes you want to listen to RnB. Say now, for example, you're in the mood to listen to RnB or House or Gangsta or whatever, what is it that'll put you into the mood?

A: It like relaxes you.

I: Mmm.

A: Like RnB and House, it relaxes you, keeps you in a nice mood.

I: Uh huh.

A: You're always happy...there's no need to be angry.

I: But I see you excluded Gangsta from that.

A: Mmm.

I: Why did you exclude Gangsta? Doesn't Gangsta make you feel good and happy?

A: Yes like only sometimes. That too make you like angry, more angry.

I: Why would you want to feel angry, why wouldn't you want to feel happy and relaxed with House and RnB?

A: Na sometimes you just listen to it words and all, it makes you, like you wanna do that. You feel like you would like to do that...

I: Mmm.

A: Ya. You wanna be angry. Like how they are .

I: What reason would you have for wanting to be angry, why would you want to be angry?

A: Depends..., but there's no reason to be angry.

I: You're not angry with life, you're not angry with your circumstances, not angry with the way things are at home?

A: Ya, in a way ya. Like that.

I: Mmm, why? Why are you angry?

A: Sir, now, see my parents are putting like lot of pressure on me.

I: Mmm.

A: See if I don't do good this year, then next year they're taking me out of school. I might go stay with my father and go work.

I: Where does your father live?

A: Phoenix.

I: Has he moved on with his life?

A: Hmm long now.

I: Your mum hasn't moved on. She hasn't...

A: She got boyfriend.

I: And he lives with your'll?

A: Hmm.

I: How are you about her moving on with her life? You're ok with it...

A: No, ya, cos she must be happy.

I: Mmm, and you think the way you're living your life is making her happy?

A: Not making her happy.

I: You've thought about this? (A nods.) And how does it make you feel knowing that you are contributing to her unhappiness?

A: It's a bad feeling sir, very bad feeling.

I: So how are you coming to terms with this, how are you handling...

A: Changing. Slowly. I'm like, being like she ask me to do things, I'm doing it and like I'm listening. Slowly.

I: Mmm. Tell me do you identify with, do you see things in common with the Gangsta Rap that you listen to and the things that are happening in your life?

A: Ya, in a way.

I: Mmm, do you want to tell me about it?

A: Naa, like, see like we, like how they used to talk about the killings and driveby's, murders and all, we should also experience the same thing. Most of it.

I: Uh huh.

A: So that's why we, like, our lifestyle is, like, similar to theirs.

I: Tell me about some of the killings and the driveby's that you've experienced.

A: Sir, you know the driveby's should happen on 301. I stay on 301.

I: Uh huh.

A: And the Dre Boys they should, they was outside my house everyday. They should park there non-stop. So, like, most of the things, like driveby's and shootings, murders and all, most of it, like we like saw. Most of the driveby's.

I: So you've seen it.

A: Mm.

I: With your own eyes.

A: You're sleeping and you know, you hear the gunshots and that.

I: And when you heard the gunshots, what did you think? Did you assume...

A: Ya.

I: ...it was a driveby...

A: I knew it was a driveby.

I: And you were right, it was a driveby?

A: Mm

I: And what about the drugs that the gangsters, gangsta rappers...

A: Sir, only zol.

I: ...sing about?

A: Ya, only zol. So that's what we hear.

I: The rappers don't sing about harder drugs?

A: And cocaine. Zol and cocaine.

I: And the fights that you were involved in, was it also about drugs?

A: No, that's same like, you know, like beefs. Like, say we're from 3b now, and like, no-one must come from 3a or unit 10, you know, to tell us things and all.

I: Why would that affect you, if somebody from unit 10 came and told you something?

A: It'll be like,...ehhh...embarrassing and disrespectful. You coming in someone else's turf and having your own ways.

I: And did it ever happen that your'll went to somebody else's turf and disrespected them?

A: Mm.

I: Why did your'll...what was the reason?

A: Sir, you see,like, same thing. Like they pick on our district... swear our people...

I: ...get back at them...

A: ...swear our people and all, like that.

I: Ok and when your'll went there, to get back at them, the fight happened?

A: Ya.

I: And it was one-on-one, or gang against gang?

A: Like, ya, it depends. One-on-one or gang fights. Like it depends how the situation...

I: And the injuries, how did your'll deal with that?

A: No, it's like, not our fault because your'll are encouraging the fight.

I: And when the fight happened, the beef, did that solve the problem?

A: Ya, cos they don't... like no-one will come back and you know...swear us and tell you anything.

I: So your'll found that violence was the solution to the problem.

A: Ya.

I: And your'll didn't try other methods, like talking or...compromising? (A nods.) No. Your'll didn't. Your'll didn't even try? (A nods again.) Why not?

A: Sir, we was, we wasn't... we are used to that way now. If something is wrong...you must fight.

I: Where did you get that thinking, that way of thinking?

A: Sir..., I..., alright me, I was always taught that.

I: Who taught you?

A: No one. I learnt it on my own.

I: Mm and where did you learn that from?

A: Sir, on the streets. Everyone, watching everyone. Someone swear someone, straight away they wanna fight. That's how we learnt it now, some one swear you, you must fight.

I: Uh huh. I'm asking because from what I know about Gangsta... music, they have a similar sort of ...

A: Ya.

I: ...thinking. That if somebody messes with you, you don't talk about it, you...

A: Ya, that's how it is.

I: So I'm trying to understand if the music also taught you this...

A: No sir, not the music.

I: No, you won't say the music. Learning..., you learnt...

A: The surroundings, our surroundings, ya. That's how we..., from our surroundings.

I: Is there anything that you want to tell me about this issue that I may not have asked you about?

A: No sir, you know everything.

R

I : Now you have made some very interesting points, and given some interesting explanations, especially when we spoke in the group about the rough life and the tough life that the rappers sing about. What are some of your favourite rap songs?

R: Now I stopped listening to rap music, but I have sum. Tupac is one of the artists I should listen to. He rap about gangsta ways, him doing drugs, selling drugs, smoking drugs. He wants to kill certain people because this clique, now, they don't respect him. He wants to kill them. Ya like that. But I stopped listening to Rap music.

I: To Rap music or specifically Gangsta Rap?

R: Specifically Gangsta Rap.

I: So you still listen to rap, but not Gangsta.

R: Ya, not Gangsta Rap.

I: What was the reason for you stopping? You just don't like it anymore...

R: Ya, I just don't like it anymore. It's not part of my life, why should I listen to things like that?

I: But the anger he used to sing about...

R: Ya...

I: Wanting to kill people or things like that, it doesn't affect you?

R: No.

I: You're not angry at anybody, you don't feel the need to take revenge and things like that?

R: No sir.

I: So you don't identify with these things that he sings about anymore.

R: Ya, doesn't interest me anymore.

I: Mmm. How did you come to this change in your way of thinking?

R: We was talking that day, the answers and all came up. I sat back and I thought about all those things. I said "Hey, what the guys were saying in the class is true. Why should we get angry... .Why should we listen to music and get angry. To this type of music. Then we wanna fight after listening to this music. This music here it's not... it's not right. It's taking us anywhere- nowhere. Plus all this things that's coming up now, this Illuminati things and I felt naww. I said "Hey, not gonna listen to this music anymore.

I: You're referring to those articles in the paper about Satanism and things like that?

R: Yes, all the children getting demon possessed and doing all sorts of things and don't believe in god anymore and they believe in this Illuminati thing.

I: And you're worried/ scared about the effect of Satanism, Illuminati, Gangsta Rap?

R: Ya it's getting me a bit scared, why must lie. I'm seeing how the children are doing all those things, wanna kill themselves, listening to this music, wanna do all that things there.

I: But how would Gangsta Rap make you want to hurt yourself? Ok Satanism wants you to draw blood...

R: Yeah...

I: ... and things like that, that I understand, according to the newspaper reports, but Gangsta Rap?

R: Naw, make you angry, when you listen to the swear words there, makes you, see now, if you, maybe a month ago, one boy swore you...

I: Uh huh

R: ... and you listening to this music now, you listening to this music there, that's gonna aggravate the problem. It's gonna make you lose your mind. It's gonna make you say, "Hey, let's go for this fella." Listen to all those words that he's saying. You could not diss me and now you do it, listening to all those things there. Then you're gonna go aggravate the problem. Even though you finished talk about it too. After you listen to the Gangsta music you still- you'll wanna be like them, wanna do what they do.

I: Mmm.

R: What he say in the music.

I: I noticed from your answers and even from the answers in the class the other day, for lots of the boys this dissing is quite an important aspect of their lives.

R: It's a very big thing

I: Mm mm.

R: Cos of respect. See now, I'm just saying, for example, in this school lot of people, lot of boys respect me.

Now one other boy just come and talk to me anyhow. I'll want to go and hit him because I say "Hey, lot of boys respect me, why are you disrespecting me?" That's why.

I: How is his disrespecting you going to make you feel bad?

R: Like I said, a lot of boys respect me, gonna say, "We'll have to disrespect this fella here, now this one boy like that there can disrespect him, what's for us to disrespect him?"

I: So your image is...

R: Ya, image (inaudible).

I: And what are the other ways you maintain your image besides the disrespect, or the respect? Is it in the way you dress, in the way you talk?

R: Ya, the way you dress, the way you talk, who you join. Ya

I: So who do you have to join to keep a good image, cool image, hip image?

R: All the boys in the school, you can say, who can I say?

I: What do they do that they're good to join?

R: Bunk, smoke, do drugs- all that stuff.

I: And their schoolwork, performance in school, academic achievements?

R: Naww, that doesn't matter. To be cool, that doesn't matter.

I: Ok, so you have to join the boys who are cool, and those are the ones who don't always perform academically?

R: Yes.

I: They're doing the things like bunking, smoking...

R: Bunking, smoking, doing drugs.

I: Doing drugs as well? Hard drugs?

R: Ya.

I: What are some of the drugs that they get involved in?

R: Rock, buttons, cocaine, zol.

I: That's all?

R: Ya.

I: And where does the money come from for these drugs?

R: Sometimes spending money. All the boys cover up. They say, "Hey, let's smoke buttons today." Cover up for a button or maybe ... uhh, go gambling, make money, then go have a smoke.

I: And the gambling is, in order to gamble your'll have to go out of school?

R: Naww, gambling is only weekends.

I: Your'll don't gamble in school?

R: Naww, we don't gamble in school.

I: What if you lose and you don't get the money to buy the drugs?

R: Maybe one of our friends will have to go borrow or something, or maybe we'll go borrow the money and get it. The drugs I should do was rock and buttons.

I: But those are expensive drugs, isn't it?

R: Yes.

I: You're not working.

R: Had friends, money all the time. So they should buy the thing. Maybe sometimes I'll have money with me too. My girlfriend used to give me money. I'd go buy the drugs. We should smoke. But then I realised, "Hey, this is not taking me anywhere, I'm only getting that feeling for, maybe half hour, one hour. After that I'm coming back... I'm ruining my life by doing this drugs. Plus how much money I'm saving by stopping this thing here.

I: Uh huh. Now the guys that had the money, they were working?

R: Ya.

I: So they were older than you?

R: Ya.

I: And they didn't tell you not to join them?

R: No.

I: They didn't try to dissuade you or stop you?

No.

I: They allowed you to join them?

R: Ya, they were..., we were close. Very, very close.

I: And did they ever think that, or say or give you an indication that they knew what they were doing was wrong?

R: Naww.

I: They didn't see anything wrong in it, and they didn't see anything wrong in you doing it, so they didn't stop you. How did you stop?

R: Sir, honestly, to be honest- one morning I woke up, I was like hallucinating. Like seeing things. I was scared. Very, very scared... .

I: This was after a night of... drugging?

R: Ya. Heavy drugs we smoked that night. I was hallucinating. I was scared, I was frightened. I was seeing things. I was seeing...I was seeing the wall and everything moving. I was frightened. I was seeing...hey sir, that was the ... worst ...day of my life. Then I said, "Hey!" After that everything came back to normal, I said ya, stop this now, really stop it and that afternoon, when my friends were going, they asked me if I'm coming, I said "Naww, I'm not coming." He's saying, "Yaa, howa see you acting like a girl." But they never use that term, I'm just using that term.

I: Mmm. But they tried to embarrass you.

R: They tried to embarrass me. I said, "Ya, the experience that I went through in the morning, I don't ever want to go through that again. This thing must stop.

I: You didn't feel the craving for it after that?

R: I felt, but I had to stop it, sir, because, I said, "Hey, it's taking me nowhere, plus my schooling career is on the line here, I need to stop all that nonsense.

I: And have you stopped feeling for it or do you still...?

R: I stopped it.

I: You don't get...

R: Only...

I: Pardon.

R: The only thing I do now is, honestly, is smoke a cigarette, nothing else.

I: And how often do you smoke?

R: Cigarette, morning, lunchtime and afternoon, before I sleep.

I: How long since you've had your last hard drug?

R: About three-three-and -a -half weeks. Say four.

I: That's excellent. What makes it even more admirable is that you were able to do it on your own, you didn't have to go to rehab.

R: Sir, plus, sir, my parents. What they gonna think of me? I'm letting their name down, doing all these things. (Inaudible). I just stopped it.

I: You mentioned a girlfriend earlier. Did she have any part...

R: Naww.

I: ...to play? No

R: She didn't have a part. She, she should just give me the money, then I should...

I: Did she know what you were using the money for?

R: Naw, she didn't.

I: She didn't know. She didn't suspect?

R: Naw, she never suspect.

I: She didn't ask you anything?

R: Nawww.

I: No, she's still your girlfriend?

R: Naww, we broke up because of her parents.

I: Mmm, her parents didn't like you?

R: Ya.

I: What was the reason for them not liking you?

R: Saying I'm a bad boy...

I: Did they know about your bad habits?

R: No, they didn't know.

I: So how did they know that you were a bad boy?

R: Sir, the way I carry myself and all, out. They can see that. The way I talk to my friends, the way I dress. All of that.

I: How do you dress?

R: Sir, you know how... this... jeans and takkies and ...

I: But isn't that normal...?

R: Ya it's normal but...

I: ... everyday, I mean adults, even I use it on a weekend or after school.

R: But the way we dress it now with caps and... all of those things...

I: Where did this style of dressing come from? Where did you get this inspiration to dress like this, with the caps and things?

R: From music videos.

I: Particular music videos, particular musicians?

R: Tupac or Biggie.

I: So you go out and buy these clothes especially because of these guys...

R: Ya.

I: Tupac, Biggie and 50cent and all of that.

R: Ya because, you see them wearing it, so it's like a must for us.

I: That was like..., uhhh..., just you or your friends as well?

R: Everyone. All of my friends.

I: So it was like a, sort of uniform for the group.

R: Ya.

I: But would your'll... sorry.

R: Ya, you can say that. It was like a uniform.

I: But would your'll consider yourselves a gang, or just a group of friends hanging out?

R: Just a group of friends.

I: Your'll didn't consider yourselves a gang?

R: No.

I: And now that you're not part of this group, who do you join?

R: Just the boys on the road.

I: Besides what I've asked you, is there anything that you want to tell me?

R: No.

I: Nothing you think you'dlike to get off your chest, something that I may not have asked you, that you want to tell me?

R: No.

I: Nothing.

R: Basically, everything you asked me, that's what I wanted to tell you.

I: Ok, thanks

L

I: O.K L, we were talking in class. I spoke to all of you about the music you listen to and how it affects you and things like that, but I didn't get an individual answer from you. How important is music in your life? On a scale of 1-5, 1 being least important and 5 being most. How important is music in your life?

L: About 4.

I: About 4. So it's quite important.

L: Mmm

I: And what type of music do you listen to?

L: Listen to all types of music-calming.

I: OK . I want to talk to you about a particular type of music, and that is Gangsta Rap or Rap music. You listen to this as well?

L: Listen to it.

I: How often do you listen to it?

L: About every second day or something.

I: OK, and if you had to say, again on a scale of 1-5, how much do you listen to it?

L: Naa, that's about 1,2,3.

I: 2,3, so you don't listen to it that much?

L: ...that much, ya.

I: You have other types of music that you listen to more than you listen to Gangsta Rap. Why do you listen to Gangsta Rap less than the other types?

L: Gangsta is mostly, you know- chilling with your friends and all. That's when you listen to Gangsta.

I: So you only listen to it when you're with your friends.

L: Ya.

I: Why is that?

L: Gangsta is not for relaxing. When you relaxing you listen to cool music. Gangsta is not cool music.

I: So when you're with your friends, you don't want to relax?

L: Na, na.

I: What do you want to do?

L: ...uhhh, have fun, act mad...

I: Be macho?

L: Ya.

I: Mmm, and you have to listen to Gangsta to be macho, to act mad, have fun?

L: Naa, you don't have to, but it..., you feel right, (inaudible) it sets the mood.

I: So if you were with your friends and you said you wanted to listen to cool music, how do you think your friends would react?

L: They won't react any way.

I: They won't laugh at you or anything like that?

L: Naww.

I: They won't say that you're a sissie. Nothing like that?

L: Never say that.

I: No, but would they think that?

L: I don't know what they're thinking.

I: Mmm, ok. So you like rap music.

L: Ya, I like it.

I: Any particular artists that you like?

L: 50 cent.

I: 50 cent, but he sings about violence, isn't it?

L: Ya.

I: I don't know about the sex and the drugs...

L: ...Naaa violence...

I: Violence? Not so much sex and drugs.

L: Naa, he sings about drugs too.

I: Drugs too. Is that one of the reasons you don't listen to Rap music that much? Because of the violence, sex and drugs?

L: Yaaa, lot of the swearing and all.

I: What about the swearing?

L: Yaaa, it's, hey, it's not nice to listen to it when you want to relax, it put you of the...

I: OK, so when you are with your friends and you are listening to this music and the swearing and all, how does it make you feel?

L: Make you feel like a gangster...

I: Uh huh

L: You feel hey, make you in the hype mode or something.

I: Hyped?

L: Ya.

I: Does it make you want to go outside and do something?

L: Ya, it make you, give you like a ..., put you in a ...,like a mode like you wanna fight and do all the stupid things when you listen to that music.

I: So it affects you mentally?

L: Ya.

I: Makes you want to do stupid things, you said.

L: Ya.

I: Illegal things...? Things that will hurt somebody, hurt you, hurt other people?

L: ...Sometimes.

I: ...Mmm. And have you ever have you ever seen this effect on your friends, or on you?

L: ...No.

I: ...that your'll listened to Gangsta and your'll went and did stupid things...?

L: No, not really.

I: No. Who are the artists that sing about, besides 50 cent, ...because you have sometimes, some artists that only sing about drugs. Is that the case, that this artist sings only about drugs, that artist only sings about sex?

L: Mmm, no.

I: No, they all sing ...

L: ...about all...

I: OK. Do you get Gangsta Rap that sounds like Gangsta Rap, but has a positive message? Whatever it is about- sex, treating women equally, whether it's about drugs- not doing drugs, are there any artists...?

L: I only know one.

I: Mmm.

L: That was Tupac, I don't know any other...

I: And he gave positive messages?

L: Mmm.

I: His messages were positive, all of them?

L: Not all, only one song.

I: Which song was that?

L: Dear Mama.

I: That was the one that you know of?

L: Mmm

I: Any others? No, you don't know. So generally, these Gangster rappers who sing about violence, sex etc., they're not giving you positive messages?

L: No.

I: All negative?

L: Ya.

I: Like what?

L: ...how to treat girls...

I: How are they saying you must treat the girls?

L: Treat them like bitches..., like that.

I: And what is your interaction with the girls you meet, the girls you interact with?

L: Ya, I react to them calm, I don't treat them, like how you see in the videos.

I: Uh huh. But do you see your friends, or boys you know, who treat women like that?

L: Ya, some boys I know.

I: Where do you think they got this idea from?

L: Watching all that videos, listening to all that music.

I: So you think they learnt how to treat women from there?

L: Ya.

I: From Gangsta Rap? And you think, perhaps, you treat women differently because you don't listen to Gangsta Rap so much?

L: Noo, because I got a mind, I know how to treat women.

I: Mmm and your mind tells you that what you see in Gangsta Rap...

L: ...respect them...

I: ...what you hearing...

L: Must respect women.

I: Uh huh. Where did you get that idea from, respecting women?

L: I just look at some people, how they respect their wives, the respect.

I: Your friends, who disrespect women, how much do they listen to Gangsta Rap ? Again on a scale of 1-5.

L: It's like everyday, I hear them listening to that music.

I: They listen to it...

L: Ya...

I: You'd say 5/5?

L: Ya.

I: And you think this has affected the way they treat women?

L: Ya, making them act like how they act in the videos.

I: They make their girlfriends act like that?

L: No, they behave like how the singers...

I: Ohh, so they treat the women the way...

L: ...the rappers...

I: ...the rappers treat their girlfriends and when it comes to drugs and violence, do you see the same things in those friends?

L: Ya.

I: They're influenced by...

L: ...music.

I: How come you don't do the things your friends do?

L: Uhh, I don't know... I don't like to do all that bad things...

I: Why not?

L: Spoil my future...

I: Mmm.

L: Don't wanna get spoilt. Make a good life for myself.

I: What do you want to do?

L: Wanna open up my own business...

I: What business?

L: Trucking.

I: Do you know anything about trucking?

L: Ya.

I: OK. Thanks.

Q

I: I want to talk to you about the things that influence you in your life and I'm trying to find out, of all the things that influence you, whether Gangsta Rap plays a part in it. So I'm gonna ask you questions about the type of music you listen to etc. You can tell me whatever you feel comfortable telling me. So you do listen to Gangsta Rap?

Q: Ya.

I: How often do you listen to Gangsta Rap?

Q: Every day.

I: Every day. And how often every day?

Q: Uhh, once every hour.

I: OK, so if you go home, you put...

Q: The first thing I put on.

I: You put it on in the lounge where everybody can hear it or it's in your room?

Q: No, it's just on my phone.

I: You have a phone and you listen to it there.

Q: Mmm

I: Why don't you put it on where everybody can hear it?

Q: Sometimes I put it on...

I: Mm mm.

Q: ...not all the time.

I: ... and your parents are ok with the type of music that you listen to?

Q: There are not alright with the swearing parts...

I: Uh huh.

Q: That's the time I put it off, it has too much of swearing.

I: Aren't there Gangsta Rap songs without swearing, or Gangsta Rap artists who don't swear?

Q: Ya.

I: DO you listen to them?

Q: Ya.

I: Mmm. But which do you listen to more?

Q: All the swearing.

I: Why do you listen to the ones with all the swearing?

Q: I dunno ... it's just ... everyday thing ... goes on everywhere...everybody swears, it's like nothing different...

I: Nothing unusual about it, it's normal.

Q: Ya.

I: And what about the drugs that they sing about, the gang fights, the sex etc?

Q: Well...

I: Is that normal as well?

Q: It happens in everyday life, so...

I: Uh huh.

Q: Whether we look at it one way or another, it's still gonna happen, so... you can't really stop that.

I: Mm mm. What do you like about Gangsta Rap?

Q: They talk about the life, of everyday, how it's happening, what people are doing...

I: Mm mm.

Q: ... and how they react to problems.

I: Why do you want to hear it from them?

Q: No one else will talk about it in that way.

I: You don't talk about it with your friends?

Q: We talk about it, but they don't say it in that way like.

I: In what way?

Q: Like, they're actually really talking to us and telling us what's going on, like behind the scenes, what we don't know is happening...

I: Mm mm.

Q: So they like, explain it in a song. My friends now they not going to know what's happening on the other side of the world (inaudible).

I: So how close is what they sing about, to your life? The things they sing about, is it anything like how you live your life?

Q: Quite close, because they talk about the anger, frustration, they rap about they life. In my life there's a lot of anger and frustration, by listening to it, like, it calms me down.

I: It does. It doesn't make you more angry and frustrated?

Q: No.

I: So what is it that they say that calms you down?

Q: They talk about like, when you're angry, you don't have to go out there and break this, break that. There's different ways of solving it, ways of calming yourself down.

I: OK, so they give you alternatives.

Q: Ya.

I: And what are the alternatives?

Q: Take a deep breath in, don't lose yourself.

I: These are words from songs that you're giving me?

Q: Ya.

I: Which songs are these?

Q: Mmm. He sings about life and ...

I: ...yes...

Q: ... he's not afraid of all the bad things in the world.

I: What was the name of the song, can you remember?

Q: Not afraid.

I: Oh, he advises you to take a deep breath, not use violence to...

Q: Ya.

I: So you use those techniques when you are angry and frustrated.

Q: Ya, I listen to that song there and calm down.

I: What are the things that get you angry and frustrated?

Q: Parents, friends, sometimes other people... people I just know, just started to know, things like that.

I: Has the music you listen to ever influenced you to go and break something or take out your frustration in some violent way?

Q: No.

I: And your friends? Do they listen to the same type of music?

Q: Ya.

I: And their reasons?

Q: Not sure. They just like the songs and sometimes they say funny words and stuff so they just laugh...

I: OK thanks.

S

I: I'm talking to boys in our class and I'm trying to see if there's a relationship between the music that they listen to, especially Gangsta Rap and their behaviour, their attitude to school work and things like that. Do you listen to Gangsta Rap?

S: Ya, I listen to Gangsta Rap.

I: How often?

S: Not that often, certain songs...

I: Certain songs. Like...?

S: Like... like Tupac, Changes or something. Not... not the vulgar Gangsta music

I: So the song Changes is not a vulgar song you say.

S: Ya.

I: What is the song about?

S: Talks about changing future, how life is about, the wrong they do, the ways to do it.

I: Interesting. Why do you like that song?

S: Because... it's ...it's from somebody that's experienced.

I: Experienced in?

S: Whatever gangsterism he did. So he's putting it in words for us not to do it.

I: OK. Do you have to listen to a gangster to tell you that?

S: No...

I: What if your...

S: My option.

I: ... your pastor, you are a Christian?

S: Ya.

I: What if your pastor tells you that? Why won't you listen to that?

S: Because it's ...

I: But your pastor, I'm sure, is telling you the same thing.

S: Ya.

I: So why won't you listen when he says it?

Silence

Why do you listen, why does Tupac have to tell you?

S: Not all Gangsta music is ... satanic.

I: Uh huh.

S: There's some that has meanings and there's some that...

I: OK. You were saying that Tupac, example, is about positive change and all that.

S: Yes positive change.

I: But Tupac also sings about drugs and...

S: Ya, there is, not saying isn't, but there is.

I: You don't listen to that?

S: No, I don't listen.

I: What are your reasons for not listening to that?

S: Being a gangster is not for me. Listening to Gangsta..., you know, acting ... like a gangster.

I: You don't like that?

S: Ya.

I: What are the reasons for not wanting to follow that path?

S: It's not a good path.

I: How do you know that?

S: Because my father was on that path.

I: And you saw from him.

S: I saw from him.

I: Did he tell you what he got up to?

S: I saw what happened.

I: You saw what happened.

S: Ya... small.

I: And what were the things he was involved in?

S: Drugs, violence, stealing...

I: Is he living?

S: No, he's not living. Passed away.

I: And you're the eldest child in the house now?

S: Ya.

I: You have younger brothers and sisters?

S: I got a sister.

I: How old is she?

S: Eleven.

I: She looks up to you?

S: Ya, she talks about me.

I: And you want to be a role model for her?

S: Ya.

I: Are you comfortable talking about this?

S: Yes I am.

I: Because if you don't want t, we can...

S: No it's fine.

I: Your friends listen to Gangsta Rap?

S: Ya, they do.

I: More than you do?

S: Ya, more than I do.

I: Mmm and how does it impact on their behaviour?

S: Impacts differently.

I: In what way?

S: They get more vulgar, they wanna... if there's a problem...

I: Sorry you were saying "vulgar"...

S: Vulgar. If there's a problem they'll wanna like... you know, like... fight. Take out a knife ...or...

I: Mm.

S: Some object.

I: So for them the solution to a problem, any problem is fighting.

S: Fighting.

I: And for you?

S: Not fighting.

I: How would you solve that problem then?

S: Even if that person has to say... say me things or something, I'll tell them, "Hey, just go," because from what I was, sir, to what I am now, two different things.

I: What brought about that change?

S: Hey, after my father passed away... I thought what was better for me, what will my future look like.

I: Mm mm.

S: If I stayed, did whatever wrong I did...

I: If you continued doing that. Leading that lifestyle...

S: Ya.

I: Uh huh.

S: That's why I came to ##### Secondary.

I: You were in another school?

S: I was in another school.

I: Which school was that.

S: Meadowlands.

I: But you are from this area.

S: Ya I am from this area.

I: So what made you want to go to Meadowlands in the first place?

S: You see I wanted to do a trade.

I: Uh huh.

S: But things didn't work out.

I OK.

S: But if I had the mindset, I have now and if I was still in that school... I shouldn't off...

I: You wouldn't have come back here.

S: I shouldn't have come back here.

I: But you realized at least ...so that's a good thing.

S: Yes.

I: Your friends...

S: All ex-pupils from ### Sec.

I: They finished school...?

S: Ya, they finished school.

I: Or they left?

S: Finished.

I: And their behaviour and attitudes and all you say is different because...

S: ... because of the music. They only listen to Gangsta Rap.

I: They only listen to Gangsta Rap.

S: If you go through their phone you'll see only Gangsta Rap.

I: And you don't try to talk to them...

S: ... doesn't interest me, it's there life, if they wanna do it, they gonna do it...

I: So why do you still join them?

S: I don't get involved..., they around, they around. I can't tell them "you know what...".

I: OK thanks.

L

I: OK Lee, you know I spoke to the class some time ago, I was asking you questions about Rap music. You said you used to listen to it; you don't listen to it anymore. For what reason did you stop listening to rap music?

L: ... it's ..., how can I say, ... when you get involved in a fight like, you listen to the music it like motivates you to fight and do wrong things.

I: So you used to fight and then you used to listen to the music?

L: Naww, I shouldn't do that, it's like when you getting involved, before you get involved...

I: Uh huh.

L: You listen to the music and someone come get involved with you, that's like a motivation to fight with them.

I: So it happened to you.

L: Ya.

I: How many times did this happen?

L: Not often, but it did happen to me. Maybe one, two times.

I: OK, then how did you see the connection between fighting and the music?

L: ... like how Gangsta Rappers , similar like how our problems are, to them.

I: What problems are these?

L: Like... jealousy among friends, women.

I: But all of us have that problem.

L: Ya...

I: I don't listen to Gangsta Rap, but I also have a problem with jealousy and women...

L: Naww, it's not that. Cause you got that problem, you going to go listen to certain songs and you going to go and fight. But in that song when they saying something about your problems, it makes you think and you wanna...

I: Right. So if you didn't listen to that music, would the problem be solved?

L: I won't say be solved, but it will be less harm to the others.

I: Because you wouldn't want to fight and things?

L: Maybe by talking to them, you can prevent the problem. By listening to that music, you wanna use violence.

I: When you listen to that music, with all your problems, you didn't think, "Hey, this is not the way to solve a problem"?

L: Ya, at that stage, when you got the problem, your mind is nothing else, on anything else, you just thinking about what's happening.

I: Mm mm.

L: ... which is the easiest way to solve the problem.

I: And violence was the easiest way to solve the problem.

L: It was, take out your anger...

I: Uh huh.

L: ... by assaulting someone else or getting involved...

I: Mmm.

L: Just taking your mind off things.

I: So now, you don't have those problems anymore?

L: Ever since I stopped listening to it, it... how can I say... ever since I stopped, I lost track of Gangsta music, I wasn't so into fighting with people, smoking...

I: Mm mm.

L: ... doing all wrong things, ever since I stopped listening to that music.

I: So you will say that your life has changed for the better because you're not fighting anymore? Ever since you stopped listening to Gangsta Rap.

L: Not just fighting. I was deep in the world with all the other things, bad stuff...

I: You want to tell us about the bad stuff?

L: Smoking, drinking. I did almost every drug that came out... alcohol... while listening to music and being drugged up or alcohol, it just motivates you. So by me stop listening to it, I'm just more to my friends in school.

I: When did you come to this realization that you need to stop listening to this music because it's a bad influence?

L: You get tired of it sir, ... it... how can I say, you carry on, carry on, carry on. At that time it'll be fun but, when the consequences come to you, you'll get tired, you'll sit back and think...

I: So you had consequences?

L: Ya, I had lots of cases... attempted murder, assault...

I: So you had to go to court.

L: Yaa.

I: And what happened to the charges and the cases?

L: They eventually dropped it but,... giving them something...

I: OK, so you had to reimburse them. Where did the money come from to pay them?

L: The friends that we was, we all put money together, some and paid them.

I: And your parents, your family? How did...

L: My family told me if you went to it and you get in trouble, so you must come out of it yourself. They told me that anything else they'll help me out. When it comes to drugs and polices and all I mustn't expect them to be there.

I: Was this both your parents who told you that?

L: Ya, my mum's late, she should also tell me that.

I: OK.

L: But mainly my dad. He was also deep in the world.

I: Mm mm.

L: So, he like... educated me.

I: So he had the experience to tell you, and when he used to tell you that...

L: I always took it for granted, like if people say your father was like this, your father was like that, they just saying that for you to become like that. But when he really sat and spoke to me, and you think about it, he's telling me something right.

I: But you made a mistake first then you realized.

L: You learn from your mistake.

I: Mmm. You don't think it's possible for anybody to, to not learn from their mistakes, to learn from somebody else's mistakes?

L: It's possible, but... if you put your mind to it, if you really tired of doing what you doing, and you really sit back and think, all the wrong, you can change it.

I: Mmm.

L: You can learn from someone else's example. But if you choose not to listen and carry on with that gangster life you won't come right, eventually you'll be six feet under or behind bars.

I: And your friends, they still listen to this type of music?

L: They listen,... they... how can I ...

I: They're still deep in that world...

L: They still there. Ya. They don't have like a dream or...

I: ... ambition...

L: Ambition in life. So they just carrying on with the flow how everyday comes.

I: So you think ambition is important if you want to get out of that world and that lifestyle?

L: Ambition ya. If you set your mind to it and you think by doing drugs and all, it won't get me there...

I: Uh huh...

L: You can make it if you give it up and you stop joining all the wrong friends.

I: OK. So you have something that you want to work towards.

L: Ya I wanna make my family proud, become someone, where I can fend for myself.

I: How come your friends didn't come to that realization?

L: Sir, maybe they started late, at the age what they are doing. They started late so they still going through the process of getting there...

I: Mmm.

L: Maybe it's because of their age. Or maybe they choose not to.

I: So are you saying that in a way it's good that you started early?

L: Ya, you can say that. It's early, it's better to start early. I'm not saying it's a good thing that I started.

I: Mm mm.

L: It's better to start early and grow out of it and when you come big you know what it is.

I: What's the chances of growing out of it though?

L: Hey..., very unlikely that you will grow out of it, but it's mainly because of company. Ya. Bad company then you won't stop.

I: And how did you break away from this bad company? Because it's not easy, once you're in a gang to leave, so ... how did you leave?

L: When my mum and all passed away I just sat back and thought about life, what I want to become, if I carry on like this I'll be someone on the streets so I just stopped and I got new friends. (Siren sounds)

I: And how did your friends react when...

L: ... The bad friends...

I: When you stopped joining them?

L: They like stopped, like how we used to communicate, like swearing and stuff, but I just pay no attention to them.

I: But didn't they try to pull you back into the gang?

L: Many temptations, but if your mind is set, it's set.

I: OK. Thanks L.

D

I: OK D, I'm studying the influence of Gangsta Rap on your lives, the lives of teens, grade 11 boys. Do you listen to Gangsta Rap?

D: No, not really.

I: Why not?

D: Too much violence, sex, vulgar languages...

I: Mmm.

D: Usage of drugs, I don't listen to it.

I: How do you know that these songs have those things?

D: Because the boys I hang around with, they play that songs, the songs that have that meanings.

I: So when you're there, aren't you listening to it?

D: Not really.

I: So it's playing but you don't...

D: Ya, they have like big speakers and stuff like that.

I: Mm mm. So while they're into that music, you're not.

D: Ya, I'm more into like Back Street Boys, Westlife.

I: So what's wrong with the things those rappers sing about- drugs, sex etc? Isn't it real life? Don't you witness it in your life?

D: I do but, they trying to say we must also pick up the life they're living and get influenced by what they're doing and stuff like that. They're influencing us...

I: How are they...

D: Like they talk about killing and violence and when people listen to it, they'll think why can't I be same like him and they'll try to do it.

I: Do you know of people who've done that, who've tried to be like the rappers...

D: Yes plenty...

I: Yes...

D: Plenty I know of.

I: Uh huh.

D: And they went nowhere in life. All they did was get locked up and stuff like that.

(Pupils interrupt with a notice from the office)

I: Sorry you were saying...

D: Ya because plenty people like to follow their lifestyle in USA and they go to the wrong path in life.

I: So why don't you want to go that way?

D: Mmm, I'm not sure. That's very like ..., hey I don't know what to say sir. You can't like go in that lifestyle, you got to live your own life, be who you are, follow your religion...

I: So these things are important to you?

D: Ya.

I: Why are they important to you?

D: They're values of life, gotta respect them...

I: Mmm.

D: You can't just be abrupt and start killing everyone and swearing, using the same terms they do.

I: But don't you think that women like being treated the way they are in the rap songs and videos?

D: Well... they get paid for what they're doing... so... they do anything for money...

I: Mmm.

D: But some girls get offended when a boy talks to them like that and stuff like that.

I: And have you noticed girls in your school, for example, getting offended?

D: Uhh ya, certain ones and certain ones like that.

I: Your friends listen to Gangsta Rap?

D: Ya, like K, he listens to Gangsta Rap. He falls asleep with it.

I: And do you think that Gangsta Rap influences your friends to choose the wrong path that you were talking about...?

D: My friends..., not really, they listen to it once in a while, they sing along with it...

I: Mm mm.

D: But they don't like go on the wrong path.

I: So how is it that...

D: They set their values, before they listen to songs and stuff like that.

I: So for them this music is purely entertainment...?

D: Ya...

I: They don't take it too seriously.

D: They don't take it too seriously.

I: How is it that they were able to separate entertainment from reality, so that they don't get influenced?

D: Hey,... they do it by many ways eh sir. Like they got to set their differences aside because you listening to that's just entertainment, but in real life you do it, you committing a crime. Now when you grown up, you can't take the same lifestyle and grow up with it. You got to take care of family, your job, a career, which path you're going.

I: Mmm

(Interruption)

D: You can't just go around killing people, swearing their wives and stuff like that. That's what most Gangsta Rap is about- killing, drugs, nudity.

I: Why do they sing about...only..., I'm asking because lots of people gave me the same answers- drugs, sex, abuse of women, violence. Why is it that these rappers only sing about those things?

D: Hey I'm not sure sir, it's up to them and what they feel like singing...

I: Mm mm.

D: Cos say like, I'm not sure, Tupac or Notorious and stuff, if they died because of the same Gangsta Rap, they've been like dissing each other from the areas, swearing each other's mothers and stuff like that and they both ended up dead.

I: So for them, the stuff they rapped about became reality.

D: Became reality. That's true. So imagine if we listen to that and we follow the same path what's gonna happen to us? We gonna be same- six feet under...

I: Mmm.

D: ...so I rather not follow that path. I'll just set my values straight, follow my road ahead...

I: Mmm.

D: ...and carry on.

I: And these values that you talk about, seem to be quite important to you, because you mentioned it quite often. Where did you get these values from, who gave them to you?

D: My parents said I must always ... I don't know what to say now, they always said you must set your goals, dream hard you'll get there one day.

I: So you have goals?

D: Ya.

I: What are those goals?

D: Get a job, earn a decent salary, put my sister through school, high school and stuff like that. Support my family. Maybe I'll have some children.

I: Thank you very much D.

D

I: I want to talk to you about Gangsta Rap and how it influences you. You listen to Gangsta Rap?

D: Yes.

I: How often do you listen to it?

D: Every day.

I: Every day. Why do you need to listen to it every day? What is the reason for you wanting to listen to it every day?

D: I like the sound of the music. The beat.

I: Does it make you feel in a particular way?

D: Certain songs make you feel not so right.

I: For example?

D: Like hard core rap. That aggravates people.

I: Does it aggravate you?

D: Ya, it makes you angry, talk about killing people...

I: Mmm. So if you know that it aggravates you and makes you angry, why do you listen to it?

D: Once in a while (inaudible).

I: Sorry, you were saying hard core rap, you listen to it and it aggravates you. So why do you listen to it?

D: Well most of the people listen to it.

I: OK. But I'm interested in you. How does it influence you, does it aggravate you?

D: A little.

I: A little. So what other reasons do you have for listening to Gangsta Rap?

D: They talk about life, like most of the songs...

I: Uh huh.

D: ... how things are that side.

I: Yes...

D: How people are getting killed.

I: Mm

D: Raped and all.

I: So you like all that?

D: No, we can learn from it what's happening around the world through a different person's point of view.

I: Mmm. Can't you learn from a newspaper or watching the news on t.v?

D: You can, find it easier to listen to music.

I: So you identify with the music.

D: Yes.

I: And the things that they sing about, can you identify with that? I mean what you were talking about.

D: It creates a small picture in your head.

I: It does, and this picture does it seem familiar to you, like you've seen it...

D: You see it in the news...

I: And do you see it in your own life?

D: No.

I: So you don't see those things that they sing about-the killings, the drugs etc. And your friends, they also like listening to this music?

D: Mm.

I: What are their reasons for listening to this music?

D: Don't really know, each person likes a different kind of music.

I: Mm mm.

D: You got hard core, you got jazz. Some people like relaxing music.

I: But you prefer hard core, because you listen to it every day.

D: Mmm.

I: Do you listen to it alone, or with your friends?

D: Alone.

I: Alone...

D: Sometimes with my friends.

I: And when you're alone, and this music aggravates you, what do you do?

D: Well I just sit and listen.

I: Mmm, and when you're with your friends and you're listening to this music, what do you do?

D: Hey..., they act stupid. They want to get violent, interfere with people.

I: Uh huh, why is that?

D: Because of the gangsterism in all the music.

I: So you are saying that they're doing it because of the music they're listening to?

D: Ya, they want to be like how the other people are in America.

I: Mmm. Now Gangsta Rap also sings about drugs, besides violence.

D: Drugs, ... alcohol...

I: Ya, does it also influence them to take drugs as well? If it's influencing them to be violent... would it influence them to take drugs as well?

D: Maybe.

I: Mmm.

D: You can say that.

I: But your friends, do they take drugs?

D: One, two of them.

I: And what about how they relate to women?

(interruption)

D: Hey they relate to women bad. As bitches...ho's...

I: Do they have steady girlfriends?

D: No.

I: Why is that?

D: They used to like, having one girlfriend here, another girlfriend there.

I: Playing around?

D: Playing around.

I: And do their girlfriends know that they're playing around?

D: No.

I: But they do it?

D: But they do it.

I: Why do they do that? Why do they have so many girlfriends?

D: Dunno.

I: Have you asked them?

D: Not really.

I: Have you wondered, thought about it?

D: Have.

I: And?

D: I don't find (inaudible).

I: Do you have many girlfriends?

D: No.

I: Do you smoke?

D: Yes.

I: Cigarettes?

D: Cigarettes.

I: Drugs, zol?

D: No.

I: How come you're not like your friends, you're not influenced?

D: Everyone has a mind of their own. It's what you wanna do with your life. Some people just wanna throw their life away by going into gangsterism, drugs, going into the hard life.

I: Mmm. Coming back to your friends listening to Gangster Rap and then doing stupid things, what are the stupid things?

(Interruption)

I: Your friends, when they listen to this music, what are some of the stupid things they do?

D: They interfere with people for nothing.

I: Mm mm

D: They cause a problem; just to show that they can do something another person can't do nothing to them.

I: So it's to show their authority.

D: Yes.

I: Makes them feel macho?

D: Ya.

I: And what happens when they meet up with someone else who wants to make themselves feel macho?

D: Then they cause a problem, and say when that person is walking alone, they all attack him.

I: Mmm and what happens when they are walking alone?

D: The same thing goes around, it goes around in a chain.

I: Haven't they seen what you're talking about, the chain, and said let's stop it?

D: They see, but they don't wanna stop it, they like the lifestyle.

I: What do you like about that life?

D: I really don't know, they think they it, that no-one can tell them nothing.

I: Mmm, what is the reason for you joining those boys?

D: Just company.

I: Don't you have other people you can join?

D: They got...

I: Why don't you join other people who don't like that lifestyle?

Silence

D: I can, but I kinda like my friends...

I: Could it be that you also like that lifestyle?

D: It could be but...

I: Mmm

D: I know...

I: Have you been personally involved in those fights that you were talking about?

D: A couple.

I: And what was the extent of your injuries? Were you injured?

D: Mm.

I: How badly?

D: Bust head, broken bridge.

I: Mm and what was your parents reaction when they saw this?

D: Shocked at my behaviour.

I: Mm mm what did they say?

D: They asked why we did all this and we told them. We blamed the other people for our mistakes, just to get away.

I: So you admit that it was your mistake?

D: It was our fault.

I: In all the times that your'll had these fights, in all the fights that you were involved in...

D: Not all.

I: But whenever it was your fault, you blamed them...

D: Yes.

I: ... just to get away. Did it ever end up going to court or police getting involved or anything like that?

D: Once.

I: What happened?

D: We got involved with the people, we hit them and when they caught me alone they hit me with a gun.

I: You know these boys?

D: Yes.

I: Are they from your area?

D: From the district.

I: And then did you try to take revenge?

D: Yes.

I: So, your'll hit him, then they took revenge and then you took revenge on them?

D: Not on them, on him.

I: On him. How many of your'll assaulted him?

D: Just me alone.

I: But that normally doesn't happen you say?

D: Yes.

I: It's normally when they see you alone, a lot of them will gang up...

D: ... on you.

I: When you see them alone, a lot of your'll...

D: ... will gang up on them.

I: So these one-on-one fights are not normal?

D: Not normal.

I: Why is it that it's mostly gangs and not one-on-one?

D: Because people mostly got mouth, they like fighting with gangs, they don't like fighting themselves. So in a gang, they hit the person more worse than how you do it yourself.

I: Ohh.

D: Plus, not only you take the blame, everyone else takes the blame too.

I: OK. Tell me, of your friends in this gang, how many of them use drugs?

D: About four.

I: And how many in this gang?

D: About sixteen.

I: So quiet a small number takes drugs.

D: Ya.

I: They all listen to Gangsta?

D: All.

I: All of them. Thanks.

E

I: Right F you know that I've been asking the class about the role that Gangsta Rap plays in their lives, the influence it has etc.

F: Ya.

I: You listen to Gangsta Rap?

F: No.

I: Not at all?

F: Not at all.

I: Why not?

F: I don't like it.

I: What don't you like about it?

F: The theme of the song, they swear filthy words; they pick on all the other singers, very violent.

I: How do you know these things?

F: Because I hear it, cars go past they play it, my neighbours play it in their house, so it's too much of violence in the songs.

I: Your parents ever stopped you from listening to this music?

F: Naww. It's not like they never stop me, it's just that I don't listen to it.

I: So it's your choice, nobody has told you that you're not allowed to listen to this music...

F: No.

I: You chose not to listen to it. So what's wrong with the things they're singing about- the violence, the sex and the drugs?

F: The words are too open, like they use too violent words when they're making the song. Very violent words which are... like it's not for young children.

I: Uh huh, how old are you?

F: Eighteen.

I: Eighteen. You're an adult now, so don't you think you're old enough to listen to that?

F: No, I'm saying for my brothers now. If I happen to like the music and play it in the house, my brothers are going to listen to it and my parents will then tell me that it's not good for them to listen, you wanna listen, listen for yourself.

I: Mmm.

F: But I don't like to listen to all that music, it's not right. I just don't like it.

I: But you could listen to it on your cell-phone with your ear phones.

F: Ya, I could do that too, but I don't.

I: So you don't like it.

F: I don't like Gangsta Rap music.

I: Mmm. What type of music do you listen to?

F: I listen to normal hip-hop, R 'n B. One, two old songs, that's all.

I: Mmm, do you have friends who listen to Gangsta Rap?

F: Ya, I do have friends who listen to Gangsta Rap music.

I: Do you think it influences them in a negative way, a bad way?

F: Ya, the way that they see it, like it's good for them, they like it and it uhh, as I said it takes them in a different mood like.

I: Mmm. You've noticed that.

F: Ya, I've noticed it myself.

I: Does it happen all the time or once in a while?

F: When they listening to this Gangsta Rap music, they feel that they proud of themselves, that there's no one like them, ya, they like start to show off with their attitude...

I: But it doesn't get them into trouble, they just put on an act, show off.

F: Ya, but then if they're messing with the wrong people like and acting faulty, it can lead to violence.

I: Has it ever led to violence?

F: No it hasn't.

I: Did they ever get into violent situations...?

F: Ya they got into arguments with that.

I: Mmm and what did they argue about or what do they argue about?

F: As these songs are playing, they sing with the song and they swear the words and all that, so people don't like it so they tell them to put it slow or stop and they disapprove of it. They don't want to do it, so things lead into all the situations.

I: Mmm. So if, you belong to a group of friends, you have a particular group that you join all the time?

F: Mmm.

I: Would you say you're the only one from that group who doesn't listen to Gangsta Rap?

F: Ya.

I: How many of you in this group?

F: Well actually, I don't have a lot of friends; I only got one friend opposite my road, next class. That's the only friend I have. Otherwise when I go to work and all I got some friends over there who listen to Gangsta Rap music and all. But from all of them, I'm the only one who doesn't listen to all of that.

I: You work?

F: Ya.

I: Where?

F: Catering, every Saturday, Sunday...

I: At weddings and things?

F: Ya. Weddings, ceremonies...

I: Did you need to work to help your parents, or for your own pocket money?

F: No, I work for my own pocket money. So I don't worry my parents to buy this for me, buy that for me, I see to it myself.

I: But they give you an allowance?

F: Only when I ask for it.

K

I: K we'll continue the conversation we were having with the class. You explained that you like listening to Gangsta Rap.

K: Ya.

I: You also said that it helps calm you, make you sleep.

K: Yaa, sometimes. Depends on the music. You see like they got like hard-core and they got certain songs.

I: OK let's focus on hard-core. When you listen to that, how often do you listen to it?

K: Like every day.

I: Every day. If you didn't listen to it one day, would it affect you, would you feel bad?

K: No.

I: So what makes you want to listen to it every day?

K: Just that... I don't like change the music when I listen, I let it just play. So eventually it comes up to that songs and I listen.

I: OK. But you won't specifically listen to that song, you'll just listen to music and it will come up in your mixed tape?

K: Ya.

I: Alright. Does it make you feel any particular way? Does it affect you, make you angry, make you calm?

K: Mm mm.

I: No, it doesn't make you angry, agitated anything like that?

K: (nods)

I: So what do you get from this music?

K: I don't get anything. It's just that when you listen to certain of the songs, it makes you think about, you see our, they days and life in our days now, the rough life and the easy life so... (siren sounds)

I: So you think there are similarities between what life they're leading and the life that you're leading.

K: Mmm. Ya we living the hard life, they're also living the hard life.

I: What do you mean by "hard life"?

K: Sir, like, if we want something and all, we don't get it like straight like that there, we have to make our own money, or time by time get money, save up and then buy things. It's not like we just gonna get the money straight like that and then buy it.

I: And your friends... how popular is Gangsta Rap with them?

K: Not like much, my friends... all of us like , into house music, not so much rap.

I: Not so much rap. Why is it that your'll are not so much into Gangsta Rap?

K: I don't like so much Gangsta Rap. House and all it's alright.

I: I'm asking because Gangsta Rap is supposed to be cool, people who listen to Gangsta Rap are considered cool. Your'll don't want to be considered cool?

K: Not like that, not in that way.

I: What do you mean "not in that way"?

K: Not like, we not trying to be cool, you can listen to this thing but it's not showing us that you're cool, see like that there.

I: So if somebody had to look at you and say, "Hey K. you don't listen to Gangsta Rap, you're a ...

K: I wouldn't bother

I: It wouldn't bother you, why not?

K: Cos I don't think like, what people..., they have their own opinions on me, I don't like... care about that.

I: It doesn't matter...

K: It doesn't matter to me.

I: ... what they think about you doesn't matter. Alright it's interesting to know that you're strong enough to not let that bother you. Do you know of anybody who lets it bother them and they listen to this music just to make an impression on people?

K: Not any of my friends.

I: So your'll are quiet secure, the way ... and when people know that you listen to house music, how do they react?

K: It's not like, they don't react like eh... you listening to Gangsta music, you can't listen to house, like that and things like that. It's what you want to listen to.

I: It's your choice.

K: It's my choice.

I: OK. Then coming back to the point you made about... uhh.

(Interruption)

I: OK so Gangsta Rap doesn't play a big role in your life.

K: Mm mm.

I: But the hard life that they sing about and the hard life that you are living, uhh... you identify with it?

K: Ya.

I: So how is it that you are able to stay away from the influence of violence and drugs and things that they sing about?

K: See... if like, I won't overlook everything. If I don't do that I won't do it. If I want to do it, then I'll I always got a choice....

I: Mm mm.

K: ... to do things.

I: And how is it that you're able to stop yourself from doing those things?

K: I got self-confidence.

I: Yes, where did that come from? How does it come?

K: Sir, it just build, say like, if people, if they talk bad about me and all... and like my parents, or if they argue with me, I wouldn't like, get violent or... argue back, I'll just take whatever answer they give me and I keep it. But at the end of the day, they are bigger than me, I'm still small, so I have to have respect. So with respect sir, you go a long way.

I: Uhh, the people that you join, do they think the same way that you do, in terms of respect...?

K: Ya.

I: And your'll don't get into trouble, fights...

K: Eh heh (no). If we get into a fight, we just overlook it, or we talk about it and everything is sorted out.

I: OK thanks K.

M

I: M I'm interested in examining how or what role Gangsta Rap plays in your life. So how important is Gangsta Rap to you?

M: Sir, it's not, ehh... doesn't play a role in my life, it's just that I like to listen to that music.

I: What about it appeals to you?

M: Sir, the beat and the way they use the beat, and they use the different words. And they mix it, and they make sense in what they say. It's like poetry, but only thing, in a different way. That's the way I look at it.

I: Mmm. You think we can say the same of other types of music? Like rock or jazz or whatever?

M: Uhhh, no.

I: But that's also poetry. Words... beat. So what makes other forms of music different from Gangsta Rap?

M: Sir, the music ... is similar to how we..., similar to what you see in your every daylife.

I: And what are those things?

M: ... they talk about drugs, abuse of women...

I: Are you seeing these things in your every day life?

M: Some of it, sir.

I: Mmm, which parts?

Silence

I: Both drugs and...

M: Yes sir.

I: So this drug problem, when you look at it, how big is it?

M: Sir, it's a big problem in Chatsworth.

I: Why do you think that is so?

M: Because more and more people are getting hooked on drugs and it's taking over their lives. Forcing them to stay on the streets. They fight with their family, their loved ones. They only care about the drug and that is why it's taking over their lives.

I: So you spoke about seeing drugs everywhere and it's common in Chatsworth etc. Do you think drugs is a problem in this school?

M: Not really, compared to other schools.

I: No forget about other schools. Here, do you think it is a problem?

M: From what I see, no sir. There is a problem with a certain drug. **Inaudible.** ...different drugs, chemical drugs...**Inaudible.**

I: OK abuse of women, you say that you hear about that in Gangsta Rap music as well.

M: Yes sir.

I: You see that in the world around you, in the community you live in?

M: Yes sir, you do see it. Sometimes it's the women abusing the men too.

I: You've come across instances like that?

M: Yes.

I: Which is more, men abusing women or women abusing men?

M: Men abusing women.

I: What generally are the circumstances in which men abuse women?

M: Anger issues.

I: Anger at whom, at the women?

M: No, sometimes they take other people's frustration out on the women.

I: And these women are they... wives, girlfriends... daughters?

M: Could be girlfriends, could be wives.

I: Mmm. Not so much the daughters. Why is it they don't take out their frustration on their daughters?

M: Because they created that person.

I: Do they take out their frustrations on their sons?

M: ...Yes.

I: You've experienced that?

M: Sometimes sir.

I: That people have taken out their frustrations on you?

M: Yes sir.

I: And you realized what is happening.

M: Yes.

I: How did you realize...

M: You can sense it sir.

I: So in your case your father was angry at work or something... and did you tell him that...

M: No sir.

I: So how did you react?

M: I never speak to him for couple of days.

I: Did your mum intervene?

M: Yes.

I: Did he listen to her?

M: Yes sir.

I: So all of these problems that you experience, you find that in Gangsta Rap too. Tell me, do you have a girlfriend?

M: Not really. She shifted from where she was staying. She's in Phoenix now. But she comes and sees me. I'm not really interested in her because I don't know what's happening there.

I: So is there any other girl that you like?

M: Not really.

I: So what are your interests in life at the moment?

M: Right now sir I just want to finish school, try and take out my license, look for a job, start my life.

I: Besides that, what hobbies do you have?

Silence

People you join?

M: Sir, I got a lot of different friends staying in different areas... . So sometimes I'm here, sometimes I'm there. My cousins come see me.

I: And when you're with those friends, whichever group you are with at that time, how important is Gangsta Rap to them?

M: They're more or less the same, listen to the same type of music cos if I have a nice song and they hear it, they'll want it too. It's like that. I got a song and they like it, they'll take it from me, if I like a song from them, I'll take it from them. That's how we end up with a lot of songs.

Interruption- cleaner

I: And how important is drugs to them?

M: Not sure sir.

I: Do you suspect that they take drugs?

M: Some of my friends, I know they take drugs, but... some of them I don't know what's their intentions. Whether they plan to give it up...

I: And they have girlfriends and wives?

M: Yaa..., no, more girlfriends. My age group friends are small. Only one two big friends I got.

I: And they're happy in their relationships? It's stable?

M: No, they experience problems too.

I: What are some of the problems? What are some of the causes of the problems?

M: My one friend, his wife was seen in a taxi with another boy, now he doesn't know what to do. So that's causing them to have a disagreement and they might get a divorce...

I: When your'll get together with your friends, you are sitting together listening to Gangsta Rap, does it influence your'll to go out and do crazy things like start fights or cause fights or get involved in fights?

M: No, not really. We just listen to the music cause we like it.

I: OK. Thanks.

N

I: OK N you know that I'm talking to the class to try and find out the influence that Gangsta Rap has on your lives. So do you listen to Gangsta Rap?

N: Not all the time sir.

I: Not all the time.

N: Very rarely.

I: Why is that, because it's a very pop...

N: It's, it's too violent, my mother...

I: Too?

N: Too violent. My mother and all, my mother always told me not to listen to music like that.

I: Weren't you curious to see why she doesn't want you to listen (inaudible).

N: ...That's why I listen to it sometimes.

I: And you agree with her?

N: Yes sir.

I: It is violent.

N: Yes.

I: Is there anything else about Gangsta Rap that makes you say it is bad?

N: It's disrespectful to women, it creates, uhhh, bad tension between people. Stuff like that.

I: How is it disrespectful to women?

N: It's the way they regard women, the way they class them as hoes, bitches. Things like that.

I: All the songs?

N: Not all the songs. Most of them.

I: Most of them. So in your opinion most Gangsta Rap songs disrespects women and treats them badly?

N: Ya.

I: And because it's violent, you don't listen to it.

N: The only type of rap music I listen to is old rap. No swearing, nothing.

I: So what do they rap about?

N: They rap about themselves.

I: You have any examples you can give me? (Hoping for KRS1 etc)

N: Mostly like rhyming words.

I: Uh hu. Some artists that you can name?

N: Vanilla Ice. He never used to disregard women or use any violence. He was the first white R 'n B, rap artist.

I: Mm.

N: His music is ok.

I: Have you heard of people like KRS1?

N: No sir.

I: Never heard of them, ok. So you listen to rap music, but not the violent, sexist kind.

N: Yes sir.

I: Do you have friends who listen to this type of music?

N: Yes sir.

I: Do you think it affects them negatively?

N: Ya (laughs).

I: You've seen it?

N: Seen it sir.

I: Can you relate some experiences perhaps?

N: No, when they're listening to it, they wanna try the things that they rapping about. You know like, disrespecting women, create tension between another person... . Makes them wanna do things that, say for instance, Tupac did. Have guns..., do illegal stuff, sell drugs. Stuff like that.

I: So you have friends who get involved in that?

N: Yes sir.

I: And you think it's because of the music? You don't think it's that they may be unemployed, they need money... or whatever?

N: It works both ways sir. It's like, you have a mind of your own too. Have a choice to do what you want to do. You can't blame it on anyone, it's also the person that's listening to the music.

I: Well that's true, because you have a choice, the same choice that they have and you chose not to listen.

N: Ya.

I: So how did your mother know that this music is violent and...

N: My brother, he listens to it all the time.

I: How old is your brother?

N: Twenty-one.

I: Did you ask him why he listens, why he likes that music?

N: He just likes it.

I: And the swearing and all that?

N: He likes it. He raps with it and all, knows everything well.

I: Does he listen to it at home?

N: He used to, doesn't listen to it anymore.

I: Why?

N: Cos of my mum.

I: So she put a stop to it. She told him that he mustn't... so you say that you sometimes (siren) listen to Gangsta Rap. How often?

N: I listen to music everyday sir. Without fail. Like maybe in a day, I listen to like two songs, three songs of rap.

I: OK.Thanks.

N

I: We're going to talk about the influence that Gangsta Rap music has in your life. When I spoke to the class, you told me that you used to listen to it, you don't listen to it anymore. Is that true, or do you still listen to it?

N: No, not a lot now.

I: Not a lot now.

N: Not as much as I used to.

I: So you used to listen quite a bit. What made you want to listen to it so much?

N: We watched the movies, saw how they're living, so we listened to the music.

I: So what was so good about how they lived that you wanted to listen to their music?

N: Struggle and everything else.

I: You like to see people struggle?

N: Want to know how they came up in life. The struggle.

I: Mmm, and did it motivate you?

N: Yaa...

I: To work?

N: Yaa... finishing school, that's our struggle now (laughs).

I: So you identify with their struggle because you...

N: ... also struggling.

I: OK, besides their hard work, anything else that you identify with in their music?

N: Naww.

I: The drugs, violence?

N: No, I don't do drugs. The violence, yaa, we fight.

I: You belong to a ...

N: No, no gangs.

I: ... Gang? No. But you have a set of friends that you join all the time?

N: Ya.

I: Your'll don't get into fights and things like that?

N: Sometimes we get into fights.

I: And when your'll fight, what do your'll fight about?

N: Mostly about soccer. Now at this moment, ya about soccer.

I: Does it get physical, do people get hurt?

N: Ya.

I: So when your'll do fight, it's generally about soccer. Nothing else? Not about girls ...or...

N: Naww, not girls. For now what we fight about is mostly soccer... on the field.

I: So out of the field your'll don't fight?

N: We don't look for fights. If the fight comes, if someone interfere with us, then only we fight.

I: So, why did you stop listening to Gangsta Rap as much as you used to?

N: It get old.

I: What gets old?

N: The music, it get boring after that.

I: But there are new songs coming out all the time.

N: Not like what it was.

I: What do you mean? What's the difference between the old songs and the new songs?

N: See, the old songs was like hard-core Gangsta. Now the new songs is just like... it's not the same.

I: Not the same in what way?

N: The beats and...

(Pupil interrupts to hand in work).

I: Yes, what about the beats?

N: It's different.

I: Different... eh... less hard-core?

N: Ya.

I: What do you mean by hard-core?

N: ...like mostly swearing and...

I: ... and now there's not much swearing in their...

N: ...Naww.

I: Why do you think there's not much swearing in the music now?

N: I dunno eh.

I: So because there's not much swearing, you don't like it anymore?

N: Ya, it's not, plus that music there like, it hypes you up like.

I: Hypes you for what?

N: Like fighting, you know when you hear them swearing, you wanna swear and...

(Pupil interrupts to hand in work).

I: When you hear them swearing and all that...

N: ... You get hyped up and you...

I: ... You get hyped up and you wanna go and fight?

N: ... fight and all.

I: Did that happen to you? Did you go and fight with people?

N: Naww.

I: Then what's the need to get hyped up?

N: It's just that in that moment, now you...you like ... as you listening to the music, you get hyped up.

I: So what was the reason for you getting hyped?

N: No reason.

I: Alright, how do your friends react to this music. Do they react to it the same way that you do?

N: Some of them.

I: But generally they don't get violent.

N: No.

I: Do you have a girlfriend?

N: No.

I: When you used to listen to this type of music, did you have a girlfriend?

(Pupil interrupts to hand in work).

N: Ya.

I: And how was your relationship?

N: Normal, same.

I: What do you mean by normal? Your'll used to fight every day?

N: Naww. Not every day.

I: No. But your'll used to fight?

N: Yaa... sometimes.

I: Did it ever get violent, physical?

N: No.

I: What was the reason for your'll breaking up?

B: She finished school and I stopped paying attention.

I: OK, she finished school, is that one of the reasons why you want to finish school?

N: Ya.

I: OK, thanks.

P

I: P you know that I'm looking at how Gangsta Rap influences you. So I'm trying to find out what role Gangsta Rap plays in your life. Do you listen to the music?

P: Yes I listen to it, not all the time but.

I: Why not?

P: I don't really like Gangsta Rap. Only some songs I like.

I: So you don't like the music as such, there may be one or two songs that appeal to you.

P: Ya.

I: Which songs do you like?

P: Like Tupac Dear Mama. It has meaning to his life.

I: What makes this song different from other Tupac songs?

P: Some songs he sings doesn't make sense to me. They're just swearing.

I: So you understood this one. What is he singing about in Dear Mama?

P: About his mother and what she went through (inaudible).

I: Some other songs that you like?

P: Tupac "Life goes on".

I: What did you learn from that?

P: No matter what happens, always get back up.

I: Mmm, so these songs, they're not just... do they have swearing in them?

P: ... Uhhh maybe one two words.

I: But not...

P: ... Not a lot.

I: So you listen to it more for the meaning and the ones with the swearing and no meaning, doesn't appeal to you. These songs that you mentioned seem to have messages in them. Is that what draws you to them?

P: Yes sir.

I: So how do you identify with the message of "Dear Mama" for example?

P: It's like... in the song Tupac tells us how he grew up and what his mother did for him. And he appreciates it. So that's like a meaning to his mother.

I: Which you can identify with, your mum, and you are growing up in difficult circumstances... alright. How do you show your appreciation to your mum?

P: At the moment I can't do a lot of things for her. I'm trying to finish school, get a job...

I: Have you thought about maybe helping out in the house?

P: Yes I do that.

I: Good. Tell me, the friends you join, do they listen to Gangsta Rap?

P: Yes they do.

I: More than you?

P: More than me.

I: Why do they listen to it so much?

P: I don't really know. Maybe they just like the swearing and all.

I: You don't like the swearing?

P: I can't say I don't like it. I enjoy it sometimes. Not all the time.

I: Is there a particular time when you listen to the swearing in Gangsta Rap?

P: Uhhh... like if I'm with my friends... and we all having a good time... and they wanna listen to that song, then I'll sing it with them.

I: So you know the words to the songs?

P: Ya.

I: When your friends listen to this music, does it make them want to go out and do something... fight... violence... destructive? No... sorry.

P: If they're like drunk or something, then...

I: These friends of yours, what age group are they?

P: My age. I do have bigger friends, I hardly see them.

I: So this age group that we're talking about, they are not over eighteen?

P: No.

I: But they drink alcohol regularly?

P: Ya.

I: Do their parents know that they drink alcohol?

P: Some of their parents do.

I: Did their parents try to stop them?

P: Ya.

I: Has it worked?

P: Well when they're drinking, their parents are not there, so the parents don't know if they're drinking or not.

I: If you had to drink alcohol or take drugs, how would your mum feel?

P: Well... with drugs now, from the time I'm small, my father always told me mustn't take drugs because I got a uncle- he's about twenty-three now, he's on sugars.

I: Mmm.

P: Looking at his life now, my father don't want me to go the same way, with alcohol, I drink alcohol sometimes. And my father knows about it.

I: How often?

P: Not very often. Like on special occasions.

I: Mmm and hard alcohol, or like champagne or wine or something?

P: Like ciders... I do drink sometimes... hard... .

I: Hard liquor. Mmm. And when you drink, do you get drunk or you have maybe one or two?

P: One or two.

I: So you don't get totally drunk.

P: I know what I'm doing sir.

I: OK. Your friends, can they control their liquor the way you control yours?

P: Not really. They just don't know when to stop. They drink until they fall down.

I: And when they're in this state, do they do violent things, destructive things?

P: No.

I: Do you think Gangsta Rap influences them?

P: Ya.

I: To a greater extent than it influences you?

P: It influences them in mostly bad ways. Like with me now, I only go for the meaning of the song.

I: OK. Thanks.



Application for Permission to Conduct Research in KwaZulu Natal Department of Education Institutions

1. Applicants Details

Title: Prof / Dr / Rev / Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms Surname: _Maharaj

Name(s) Of Applicant(s): Rohith Whotho

Email: maharajs@webmail.co.za

Tel No: _031-4018183

Fax: 031-4016990

Cell: _0836324522

Postal Address: 57-30th Avenue, Umhlatuzana, 4093

2. Proposed Research Title:

The influence of gangsta rap on grade 11 male learners at a Chatsworth school.

3. Have you applied for permission to conduct this research or any other research within the KZNDoe institutions?

Yes	No✓
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If “yes”, please state reference Number: N/A

4. Is the proposed research part of a tertiary qualification?

Yes✓	No
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If “yes”

Name of tertiary institution: UKZN

Faculty and or School: School of Education

Qualification: M. Ed

Name of Supervisor: Prof. A. Sheik

Supervisors Signature_____

If “no”, state purpose of research: N/A

5. Briefly state the Research Background: Since I started teaching in this community almost 20

years ago, I have been intrigued by the apparent influence of “Gangsta Rap” amongst male learners in this school. Through the study, we should be able to gain insight into the attitude of these learners towards education and school by testing their attitudes towards this genre of rap and its influence on them.

6. What is the main research question(s) :

To what extent does “Gangsta Rap” influence grade 11 male learners in a Chatsworth School?
 Why does it influence grade 11 male learners, the way it does?

7. Methodology including sampling procedures and the people to be included in the sample:

Ethnographic study. Sample size of grade 11 male learners- 17 pupils. Thereafter one-on-one interviews with two pupils.

8. What contribution will the proposed study make to the education, health, safety, welfare of the learners and to the education system as a whole?:

Data gleaned from the research will go some way towards researching pupils apparent disinterest in education. It should also help us understand whether the current education system is addressing this problem. It may also help explain the drop-out rate in this school. It will also give insight into the logical construction of these learners in respect of the attitudes and values

KZN Department of Education Schools or Institutions from which sample will be drawn – If the list is long please attach at the end of the form

Westcliff Secondary		

9. Research data collection instruments: *(Note: a list and only a brief description is required here - the actual instruments must be attached):* Interviews will be tape recorded and transcribed into text. This will be given to my supervisor for verification.

10. Procedure for obtaining consent of participants and where appropriate parents or guardians: Permission will be sought, in writing, from parents/guardians for their children to participate in the research project. If participants are over 18, they will also give written consent to be interviewed. Pupils will also be informed that they can withdraw from the study at anytime, without consequences.

11. Procedure to maintain confidentiality (if applicable): Participants will be untraceable and false names will be used. The information will be confidential. As per requirements, the data will be stored by the university for 5 years (by arrangement with my supervisor). Thereafter the data will be destroyed.

12. Questions or issues with the potential to be intrusive, upsetting or incriminating to participants (if applicable): Pupils will have the option of refusing to answer any question should they choose not to.

13. Additional support available to participants in the event of disturbance resulting from intrusive questions or issues (if applicable): _____

14. **Research Timelines** : I will spend 15 minutes interviewing the focus group. Thereafter one-on-one interviews with two pupils for a total of ten minutes.

15. Declaration

I hereby agree to comply with the relevant ethical conduct to ensure that participants' privacy and the confidentiality of records and other critical information.

I Rohith Whotho Maharaj **declare that the above information is true and correct**

Signature of Applicant

Date

16. Agreement to provide and to grant the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education the right to publish a summary of the report.

I/We agree to provide the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education with a copy of any report or dissertation written on the basis of information gained through the research activities described in this application.

I/We grant the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education the right to publish an edited summary of this report or dissertation using the print or electronic media.

Signature of Applicant(s)

Date

Return a completed form to:

Sibusiso Alwar

The Research Unit; Resource Planning; KwaZulu Natal Department of Education

Hand Delivered:

Office G25; 188 Pietermaritz Street; Pietermaritzburg; 3201

Or

Ordinary Mail

Private Bag X9137; Pietermaritzburg; 3200

Or

Email

sibusiso.alwar@kzndoe.gov.za

Questionnaire. Gangsta Rap

Answer the following questions by ticking one of the boxes, marked 1-5, for each question, 1 being the least and 5 being the most.

a. I identify with Gangsta Rap music.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

b. I listen to Gangsta Rap.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

c. There is nothing wrong with the way women are portrayed in Gangsta Rap.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

d. I enjoy Gangsta Rap because of the swearing.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

e. I listen to Gangsta Rap because of the violent lyrics.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

f. I listen to Gangsta Rap because of the sexual lyrics.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

g. I like the lifestyle of Gangsta Rap.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

h. Gangsta Rap attracts me because of its drug culture.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

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	1	2	3	4	5
1 ^o -	I listen to Gangsta Rap .				

	1	2	3	4	5
v-	There is nothing wrong with the way women are portrayed in Gongsta Rap.				

	1	2	3	4	5
	I enjoy Gangsta Rap because of the swearing.				

	1	2	3	4	5
<r-	I listen to Gangsta Rap because of the violent lyrics.				

	1	2	3	4	5
L f	I listen to Gangsta Rap because of the sexual lyrics.				

	1	2	3	4	5
u-	I listen to Gangsta Rap because I like the lifestyle.				

	1	2	3	4	5
%	Gangsta Rap attracts me because of its drug culture.				

	1	2	3	4	5
K	I listen to Gangsta Rap because of its drug culture.				



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Name

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1	2	3	4	5
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