

Indigenous Pattern of Music Discovery: Khwe Bushmen and hip-hop in Platfontein, South Africa

Abstract

Since the resettlement of the indigenous Khwe Bushmen near the city of Kimberley in the Northern Cape province of South Africa, hip-hop has become popular among the youth as a platform for negotiating restrictive urban spaces. This paper discusses how these young hip-hop enthusiasts encounter new hip-hop music within their rural indigenous community. Unlike in the urban centres where access to digital technology has democratized music discovery process, the impact of technology remains limited in the Khwe, as in many African indigenous communities. Using qualitative data obtained through participatory observation, interviews and focus group discussions, the paper argues that 'class' remains a significant factor in the discovery of music in many African indigenous communities where a few persons with a higher socioeconomic background play a significant role in the acculturation and spread of digitally embedded music and music cultures. Previous studies on music discovery among youth tends to ignore the plights of these indigenous and rural youth who struggle to keep up with the pace of the global youth trends and phenomena.

Keywords: Music discovery, hip-hop, Bushmen, indigenous youth, digital technology

Introduction and Background

Music discovery refers to the way people locate music that is new to them. A considerable number of studies have focused on this subject in recent times, notably because the way people (particularly young people) consume music has changed dramatically in the last decade (Burčáková 2013; Tepper & Hargittai, 2009; Buckingham 2006). These changes began with the emergence of the new media technology which made it easier for artists and cultural creators to circulate their works, and for consumers of cultural products to access a larger selection of creative content like never before. The technology (i.e. platforms and devices) not only ensures availability and unrestrained access to digital songs of extremely high quality from virtually every musical artist, it also provides sites for identity formation for young people (Navas, 2013). While studies continue to focus on the impact of these technologies in young people's discovery of music in different urban settings,¹ the plights of the indigenous and rural and youths in Africa and other developing regions who struggle to keep up with the pace of the phenomena has been overlooked or grossly overgeneralized.

In Africa, digital and new media technologies emerged exclusively among the elites and the urban dwellers, while the continent's majority living in the rural spaces lacked technological experience² (Shivji, 2006). In recent times however, there has been significant efforts aimed at bridging this gap with many African governments realizing that technology brings the rapid social, economic and environmental changes taking place around the world to the rural populace (Arko-Achemfuor, 2012). In the year 1998 for instance, there were less than 2 million mobile subscriptions in Africa; today that figure which currently stands at 630 million, is estimated to reach one billion by the end of 2016 (Mungai, 2015). Constituting over 75 percent of the 'connected', the young people in Africa have a modest online presence. Behind these astonishing figures and statistics however lies a group of young individuals located perhaps at the bottom of the continent's digital ladder: the indigenous people.

¹ For instance, Tepper & Hargittai's (2009) study focused on the various digital media platforms university students use to find new music.

² According to Huawei, one Africa's leading ICT firm, the lack of mobile technology in many remote places in the continent is as a result of the sparse population and geographical location of these areas. Providing telecom services in such places meant low returns on investment for service providers (see, <http://www.huawei.com/za/about-huawei/corporate-citizenship/bridging-digital-divide/>).

Indigenous people refers to the original inhabitants of a particular place or region. While there is no universally accepted definition for “the indigenous”³, *Cultural Survival*⁴ lists the following as the characteristics common among indigenous peoples, **i.** They tend to have small populations relative to the dominant culture of their country **ii.** They usually have (or had) their own language, **iii.** They have distinctive cultural traditions that are still practiced, **iv.** They have (or had) their own land and territory, to which they are tied in myriad ways, **v.** They self-identify as indigenous.

The indigenous San or Bushmen⁵ of Southern Africa are the descendants of nomadic hunter-gatherers who were invaded and displaced following the intrusion of Bantu-speaking agropastoralists, European colonialism, large-scale infrastructure projects, and land concessions to companies. Currently regarded as the most disadvantaged and marginalized ethnic minority in southern Africa, the over 100,000⁶ San population today account for only a small percentage of the populations in Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland, Botswana, Namibia, Angola and South Africa. They all possess individual clan names, occupy distinct areas, speak different languages and have individual history and strategy of survival (Penn, 1996).

The Khwe Bushmen lived a hunter gatherer lifestyle until around 1960s when they were forced from their homes in Angola as a result of the postcolonial/border war. They fled, and resettled in the Caprivi Strip in Namibia, where they became embroiled in the war between the South African Army and the nationalist movements in Namibia. During this riotous wartime, the Khwe men were compelled to join the South African Defence Force (SADF) due to their tracking expertise, to help track the enemy forces. Hence, the Khwe together with another Bushman group, the !Xun,⁷ formed the infamous Bushman Battalion 31 (Robbins 2004; Den-Hertog 2013).

³ Since there is currently no international legal or even academic agreement on what constitutes indigeneity, indigenous identification remains an issue today (see Pelican *et al.*, 2015; Ndahinda, 2011).

⁴ Cultural Survival is an organisation which advocates for Indigenous Peoples rights and supports Indigenous communities worldwide. See <http://www.culturalsurvival.org/who-are-indigenous-peoples>

⁵ I am aware of the controversies surrounding the use of the names ‘Bushman’, ‘San’, ‘Khoi San’ etc. The varieties of names used today are both specific and general to communities and individuals. I have consistently used the name ‘Bushman’ or the plural form ‘Bushmen’ in this paper because it is much preferred by my respondents.

⁶ This figure was found on the ‘Meerkat Kalahari Project’ website.

⁷ The !Xun Bushmen live interdependently with the Khwe in the Platfontein. Both groups have shared a similar history of relocation, upheaval and displacement since their joint enlistment into the army in the 1970s. The present study was however carried out in the Khwe community.

After the war and following the independence of Namibia in 1990, the Khwe found themselves in a precarious situation, given that they had actively fought against the liberation movements who had assumed power. Consequently, the SADF and the South African government gave the Khwe and the !Xun the opportunity to relocate to South Africa with the promise of housing. After a series of meeting and negotiations, the soldiers and their families accepted this offer and were relocated to South Africa, granted citizenship and resettled in military camp tents at Schmidtsdrift, South Africa in 1990. They remained in this tented community until 2004 when they moved to their present settlement at Platfontein, an area a few kilometres outside the city of Kimberley in the country's Northern Cape Province (Ibid).

The relocation to Platfontein was a massive leap from the rural grass and tent houses they had inhabited, to semi-urban homes with access to pipe-borne water, electricity, digital signals⁸ and a general exposure to urban cultures and lifestyles. This thrust into hypermodernity was envisaged as a catalyst for employment and improved standard of living for the poverty stricken Bushmen (using the indicators of modern societies).

These promised benefits (of living near an urban centre) however failed to materialize. Rather, it has resulted into a semi-urban condition Thomas Hart (2011) describes as “skeletal urbanization”, characterized by hardship and poverty, unemployment and total dependence on government aid (Grant & Dicks, 2014). There are also concerns over accelerated cultural change and disintegration of tradition in Platfontein as core traditions such folklore and storytelling, traditional music, healing dances and hunting, to name a few, are being overridden by modern practices (see Bodunrin 2014a; Robbins 2004).

The Khwe youths in particular struggled with discrimination and suffer low self-esteem as a result of being derided by their urban counterparts (Le Roux, 1999). A respondent for instance recalls how they (the youths) were often mocked in Kimberley for their language which was likened to the noises made by chimpanzees (interview, June 2014). In response to the derision from the urban centre, the youths began to utilize hip-hop to address many of their problems. The commercial hip-

⁸ The Khwe are more exposed to modern technologies when compared to many of their indigenous counterparts in the Kalahari Desert.

hop encountered in the neighbouring city of Kimberley was transformed to conscious hip-hop to articulate and project self-identity to counter the external identity foisted upon them.

Since it is a common practice for artists to appropriate pre-existing artistic works in order to enhance their own work (see Shimanoff, 2002), the Khwe hip-hoppers and listeners began to seek latest American hip-hop music in order to enhance their own creativity and in their quest 'to belong' as young people. Taking advantage of the strong internet signals in the community, a few number of individuals who had direct access to internet via mobile phones became the gateway to discovering new music in the community.

Unlike in the urban centres where access to digital platforms give individuals direct access and a more pluralistic chance of discovering new music; the indigenous Khwe youths discover digital-embedded music through these gateway individuals via this more indirect route. The kinship network and bounded social relationship in the community ensures a dynamic flow of newly discovered music from the few digitally privileged to the majority without digital and technological access. Platfontein is an example of many African indigenous rural communities where availability of technological infrastructures does not necessarily ensure access or usage benefit (due to the problem of affordability).

This paper highlights the significance of the social class in the discovery of music and music cultures within African indigenous communities. Social class is understood here in the capitalist sense as the exposure to economic resources and advantage of certain group over the other (see Haralambos, 1980). The social class in Khwe community is comprised of working class families who can afford digital media technologies and who deploy their taste to determine the music consumed by others in the community. Although the notion of 'class' as the basis for cultural formation in societies has long been dismissed by contemporary scholars in youth studies, the present study argues that this category remains relevant in African indigenous and other modernizing communities undergoing social transformation.

The study, which was carried out in 2014 used qualitative data obtained via participatory observation, informal interviews, and focus group discussions. Photography⁹ and previous Khwe

⁹ See Richard Vokes (2012) for details on the use of photography in African ethnography.

rap songs were also used to explain the nuances and dynamics of Khwe indigenous life. A total of 34 respondents (both young and old) took part in the study. Eighteen of this are youths between the ages 18-24 while the sixteen adult participants are parents, grandparents (to some of the hip-hopsters) and opinion leaders (such as ex-soldiers and retirees, teachers, radio station staff members, pastors and traditional elders) within the community. Participants were identified using the snowball sampling technique. This paper is adapted from a Master's dissertation titled "the emergence of hip-hop subculture among the Khwe Bushmen of Platfontein South Africa", a study which sort to document the subcultural patterns among the Khwe youth in relation to adult concerns.

***Insert Figure 1**

Development of Hip-hop in Platfontein

Hip-hop began as an underground movement among a youth subculture within the African-American community in Bronx, United States during the mid-1970s (Rose, 1994). By the late 1990s, the music culture had become a global youth brand and phenomena that spread to virtually every country. Although some scholars have challenged hip-hop's authenticity in the face of its commercial boom (McLeod 1999), many however maintain that the core essence of hip-hop is generally shared among marginalized groups worldwide. In its authentic form, rap¹⁰ in particular can be used as a tool for social mobilization and vehicle for social change. It can also be read as a transcript detailing the different socioeconomic conditions, political climates, trends, and focus of participants (Motley *et al.* 2008; Osumare 2001).

Hip-hop became very popular in Africa where it naturally blended with the African music tradition which reasserts an erstwhile identity (see Charry 2012; Ntarangwi 2009). In South Africa (SA), hip-hop was notably deployed as a resistance tool against the racial oppression of the white ruling class during apartheid (Haupt, 2008). As in many African countries however, the once authentic

¹⁰ Rap, often referred to as hip-hop music, is a form of rhymed storytelling accompanied by highly rhythmic, electronically based music. It is the most popular component of the music culture. Other components includes breakdance, graffiti, Djing and fashion (see Rose, 1994).

or conscious hip-hop in SA has been largely eclipsed by the more marketable commercial form of the music genre (Bodunrin, 2014b).

According to sources, hip-hop began among the Khwe Bushmen of Platfontein in 2009, when five young persons, namely Daniel Kapira, Robert Kabuatta, Andre Nthoho, Piet Jonas and James Kazumba came together to form a group known as DRAP JJ stars. The name “DRAP JJ” was coined from the first letter of each group member’s names. Influenced by the commercial hip-hop in the neighbouring city of Kimberley, the DRAP JJ stars appropriated urban hip-hop and transformed it for their own local use as a medium to vent their frustration about a system which they believed marginalizes them (Bodunrin, 2014a).

This pioneering group gained popularity within the community after the release of their first album titled *Namibia, Angola en Botswana*. The album songs which were entirely sung in *Khwedam*¹¹ narrates the story of the Khwe multiple migration in the last five decades as well as their present struggles of unemployment, discrimination and abandonment by the government. Many embraced the song, ignoring its rather strange genre and form mainly because the story and narratives resonated among the people. For instance, the Khwe traditional chief when asked about his impression of the album says “we treasure this music because it tells the story of our difficult past” (interview, June 2014). The album which was produced in the recording studio of the local community radio (XK FM¹²) and made available to the youth on compact disc (CD) format received a lot of air play in the radio station.

The group’s subsequent album and songs were however unsuccessful due to a number of reasons, **i.** They were sung with the mixture of Khwedam, Afrikaans and English language (when the majority of the Khwe population speaks only Khwedam). **ii.** They were laced with too many expletives and offensive languages, and this made XK FM to reject it on its airwaves. **iv.** Since radio is the main media of communication in the community, the songs were thus unheard by the

¹¹ Khwedam is the language of the Khwe people.

¹² XK FM is a community radio station under the control of the South African national public broadcaster, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). The station was established 1999 to provide better social services to both the Khwe and !Xun to alleviate poverty, facilitate successful citizenship and promote development (Hart 2011).

general populace. v. The group soon became delinquent as a result of the hip-hop culture's own semiotic layers.¹³

Although the DRAP JJ had become largely unpopular among the older generation, they remained influential among youth and had popularized music culture of hip-hop in the community. By the end of 2012, other hip-hop groups and individual artists emerged within the community. Prominent among these are the groups; Blood Eye Gang and the BIC.

The Blood Eye Gang began music production from their makeshift Do It Yourself (DIY) bedroom studio (see figure 2). This group consists of about eight members who are mostly in their final years of high school. Membership of this group hinges on economic status reflected through dressing, use and knowledge of mobile technologies and having access to the latest information on hip-hop. For instance, Moses (popularly called Moss), a prominent member of this group is a son of a corporal in the South African Army. Unlike many impoverished families in Khwe, Moss' family own a car, a washing machine, satellite television and has internet access.

As a result of exposure and access to the global hip-hop and global digital media space, many of the Blood Eye Gang speak relatively fluent English language when compared to other youths in the community. In fact, some like Moss, speak English with American accent like his American hip-hop icons. When asked of their role models, many of the Blood Eye members listed; Jay Z, Rick Ross, Lil Wayne, and Kanye West among other A-list American hip-hop artists.

The BIC is the female version of the Blood Eye Gang. BIC, acronym for Best Incredible Choir, consists of three cousins, namely, Diana Shiwara, Sartjie Shiwara and Nikkita Shiwara. These female hip-hoppers construct their identity based on American female hip-hop artist, Nikki Minaj. Like the Blood Eye Gang, members of the BICs also have access to social media. Their access and exposure to the new media is reflected in their song titled; *BIC of Platie*:

I am here to do ma job,

¹³ Although hip-hop can be localised to reflect the socio-cultural and economic struggles of people, it also brings with it the complexity of a popular youth culture, entrenched in deviance and civil youth delinquency, violence, crime and drug-taking (see O'Brian 1996). In Khwe community hip-hop was said to have influenced many of the DRAP JJ stars to drop out of school and to be involved in drugs (Interview, June 14, 2014).

Amma rip you up like Nicki Minaj,

Amma hit it up like Willow Smith.

Check BBM and Twitter maybe you can follow me

Give me a request on Facebook and amma check you later

Both the Blood Eye Gang and the BICs are highly regarded in the Platfontein community. They often dress in trendy outfits and perform during local events and festivals within and outside the community. As previously expressed, in Khwe where the majority of the hip-hop consumers cannot afford the digital technology needed to discover new music, many of the youths look up to these 'sophisticated' individuals to discover new music for them. The influence of these few individuals is similar to that of a typical local DJ or the record store owners prior to the digital era, who were regarded as the musical tastemakers who find and recommend new music for local audiences and customers (see Celma, 2010).

***Insert figure 2**

The Dynamics of Music Discovery Khwe Community

The Khwe community has about 400 households with more than 2000 inhabitants. Of this population, only about 10 households have unrestrained access to digital television, internet and other modern technologies that are required to discover new music within the community. As mentioned previously, the majority discover new music by going directly or indirectly through these few individuals with digital access. When these few individuals encounter new music of interest (e.g. on the internet or digital satellite television), they download or record such music directly using their mobile devices and then share with their friends through Bluetooth transfer (with ones with Mp3 phones) or burn them into CDs to be played in the local pub or *Shebeen*.¹⁴

Meanwhile, the hip-hoppers (particularly the Blood Eye gang) engage and experiment more with the newly discovered music. Oftentimes, the discoverer of the new song, transfers it into the local studio computer where the song's instrumental is extracted and separated from its vocal. The Khwe

¹⁴ Shebeens are informal drinking places popular in South African informal settlements. The Shebeen in Platfontein provides music and dancing, allowing people to express themselves.

artists will then attempt a remix of the newly discovered song using their own language, style and aesthetics. Hence, as soon as a hip-hop song becomes popular in the community, the hip-hoppers create a local version of the song.

Due to a well-established kinship network and closely knit ties between families within the community, new music often permeates very quickly through the community. It was observed that the technologically advantaged individuals do not hegemonize or hoard music they discover. Rather, they share music, information and trends with others, thereby engendering participation of all. Due to the power they have in determining the music that permeates through in the community, the music discoverers are highly regarded as opinion leaders in the realm of music. This is consistent with Ruvio and Shohan's (2007) study that reveals that acquiring knowledge that others find useful, confers status or prestige that leads to one becoming an opinion leader in such a culture.

The most influential sources of music discovery in Khwe community are briefly discussed below. This includes digital satellite television, mobile internet and interpersonal contact/recommendation.

***Insert Figure 3**

Satellite Television

For decades, satellite television has been the main source of music discovery. The establishment of the music dedicated channel known as 'Music Television (MTV)' which was exclusively available on the digital satellite, led to the boom of hip-hop and other Western music genres within the African continent (Omoniyi, 2006). Multichoice-owned Digital Satellite Television Service (DSTV) is the most popular carrier of this music channel.

As mentioned previously, in Khwe community, a few numbers of working class families with a slightly higher socioeconomic background own DSTV in their homes. Many young hip-hoppers converge in these houses to watch American rap music videos. The youths whose families have DSTV admit that it is the most important source for encountering new hip-hop music. For instance, a respondent whose family own a DSTV says boastfully in American accent¹⁵ "I gat ma DStv and

¹⁵ The author observed that the youths with unlimited access to digital technologies in Khwe speak English language more fluently than others with limited or no access. The Khwe are non-English language speakers. Hence, in a way,

Mtv; this is where I listen to the latest song and performances from Lil Wayne, Drake, Rick Ross and others. I may record my favourite music on this phone to enjoy with my homies in the evenings” (interview, June 2014).

The Internet

Although a study by Andrews (2012) reveals how an Aboriginal indigenous group utilizes the internet platform to project its cultural indigenous identity to the world via online newspapers, the study failed to adequately provide information on the level of participation and accessibility of the local indigenous audiences.

While many in Khwe community have come to recognize the internet and online platforms as very important sources to encounter new music, very few have access to these platforms. Mobile internet which is the only source of internet connectivity available to the youths is used to check for latest information regarding their favourite artists and the global hip-hop world in general.

Thanks to Platfontein’s proximity to the city of Kimberley, internet reception in the community is quite strong and fast (researcher’s observation). Again, it is the few youths who own internet enabled-phones and who can afford internet connectivity that access the web on a regular basis. In order to access the internet, majority of the youth often depend on their friends who own these phones and can afford internet connectivity. For instance, a respondent, Jason Marinda says “I check my friend’s phone for news and latest happening in hip-hop and I also sometimes I read magazines by the road-side whenever I visit Kimberley” (Interview, June 2014).

As a result of this limited access to the internet, many who own social media accounts (such as Facebook) rarely log onto the platform. Social media, meanwhile, is regarded as one of the most influential sites for music discovery due to its ability to connect with friends who may recommend suitable music (Lin 1999). Although the few youths who frequently log onto these platforms have used it to promote their music, the lack of social media connections with people from other areas limits their ability to get recommendations and perspectives outside their local environment

listening to American hip-hop has helped improved the spoken English of the youths. This phenomenon is in tandem with Riia Milovanov (2011) study which describes music as a good and cognitive resource for learning new languages.

(personal observation). Social media platforms such as Facebook are therefore utilized more to disseminate and share information rather than to discover new information, especially about popular and new music.

Interpersonal Contact

Interpersonal contact is another popular medium of discovering new music in the Khwe community. Many in Khwe community easily get to know about new music by interacting with their friends while some others claim to be influenced by relatives who reside outside the community. Belson Kajanga for instance says he learns about the latest information, news and trends in hip-hop whenever his cousin who works as a tourist guard in the city (Cape Town), visits the community (interview, June 2014). When such individuals visit Platfontein, they influence their relatives' choice of music.

Interestingly, none of the Khwe hip-hoppers mentioned the local radio station, XK FM, as a source for new hip-hop music discovery. This is perhaps down to the fact that the XK FM focuses its programming more to suit the adult population (see Hart, 2011). For instance, Andre says “the older people listen to XK, we are way passed that level” (interview, June 2014). The producer of XK FM radio station revealed that the station promotes the local hip-hop music produced by the youth, but such songs must be free of expletives in adherence to the South African broadcasting regulations (interview, June 2014).

***Insert figure 4**

The Significance of Social Class in Music Discovery in Khwe

Social class is defined in terms of groups who hold a ‘similar share in a market economy and by virtue of the fact they receive similar economic rewards’ (Haralambos 1985:44). Those who share similar class situations also share similar life chances. Max Weber’s position was that “while class forms one possible basis for group formation, collective action and acquisition of power are the other basis for these activities. In particular, groups form because their members share a similar ‘status situation’, whereas class refers to unequal distribution of economic reward, status refers to

the unequal distribution of ‘social honour’” (Ibid: 45-46). In this study class connotes social standing and material well-being of group which confers both power and status on them.

Class played a significant role in youth subcultural style and identity during the post-war era in Britain. It was instrumental in the development and redefinition of youth market during this time. After the war, many youth (with no formal training) joined the working class and thus had money and increased dependence from their families. Hence they began to identify themselves as a distinct group. Dick Hebdige’s (1979) noted that the ‘fetishization’ of expensive and highly desirable commodities (such as Italian sharp suits and designer sunglasses) was common among the office boys and subculture.

Contemporary studies would later disregard class, as insufficient in explaining the behaviour of human groups. Other variables and categories such as taste, age, gender, ethnicity and aesthetics were proposed instead of a class (see Muggleton 2000; Bucholtz 2002; DiMaggio *et al.* 2008). They posit that today’s social relations lack the rigidity of the past and this is most visible in the decline of high culture and an increase in the consumption of popular culture by the upper classes in Europe and the United States.

Many of these studies visibly obscure realities in indigenous, modernizing and socially fluid societies such as Khwe where for several years there were no identifiable social classes in the classical European sense of the concept and where a tiny fraction of individuals seems to be constituting an emergent class division within the previously classless society. As presented in the study, digital and new media technologies in Khwe (through which people access musical and media content) are not generally accessible to all, rather, they are exclusive to this class of youth who by virtue of their higher socioeconomic background, have constituted a class-based subculture.

There is a general lack of sturdy theorization of class in Africa. This is perhaps as a result of a view popularized by Pan-Africanist scholars¹⁶ that ‘class’ is part of western-imposed capitalist system enforced on Africa through the conduit of colonization. Diop (2012) believes that it is this

¹⁶ concepts such as “African humanism”, “traditional collectivism”, Nkrumah’s “African socialism” and Nyerere’s “ujamaa” all point to the absence of socially classes in precolonial African culture

western-centered system that robbed Africa of its egalitarianism and created the present unequal system of economically well-off minority benefitting from the impoverished masses.

The inequality that has been closely associated with the western-imposed capital system in postcolonial African nation-state has been most visible in South Africa¹⁷ where economic and class relations remains within the construct of apartheid's racialized system. During apartheid, whites and those who identify as mixed race enjoyed economic advantage over the black majority who were resident in designated low income settlements known as townships (Iquani 2015; Seekings 2005). Although the African National Congress (ANC)-led government has enforced initiatives, policies and programmes such as affirmative action, 'black economic empowerment' and wealth redistribution since 1994, these have however succeeded only in accelerating a very few black population to the middle and upper classes (Ibid).

As Peter Alexander *et al* (2013) edited book, "*Class in Soweto*" has shown, the contemporary South African township comprises of a complex and integrated multi-class identities. The study for instance, reveals that the overwhelming 69 percent adult Sowetans who are often categorized as unemployed in academic analysis (because they are not part of the labour force), are in fact, engaged in survivalist activities that are indirectly related to production. Having operated and functioned in isolation from the mainstream economy during apartheid, many township dwellers today thrive in a sustainable rural economy with many having access to basic amenities such as electricity, water and technology (cf. Schoon, 2014).

The significant role townships played during the anti-apartheid struggle¹⁸ also makes them relevant today. They provoke nostalgic sentiments when articulated during national debates or rhetoric. For instance President Jacob Zuma, in one of his first addresses as president in 2009 highlighted the importance of Townships in South Africa:

“Our townships need to have proper shopping facilities, proper roads, electricity, water and sanitation, quality schools and clinics, affordable public transport and all

¹⁷ South Africa has been regarded as the most unequal country in the world, with the city of Johannesburg believed to be the most unequal major city (with a Gini co-efficient of 0.75) (UN HABITAT 2010: 73, 193).

¹⁸ Townships represents the very heart of where the struggle for freedom was waged and where many of today's leaders, including famous politicians, artists, business icons, sportsmen and women were born and grew up (see Mayekiso, 1996).

the basic services that are taken for granted in historically white areas. We will not rest until that happens” (Township Transformation Timeline, 2009: 3).

Although, it may be argued that the social condition and class structure in Khwe indigenous community is an extension of the larger South Africa’s socio-economic inequality, a comparison between the Khwe community and other informal settlements or townships reveals a greater lack of political representation and intervention in the indigenous Khwe community. The indigenous population is believed to suffer from isolation and exclusion from the mainstream often as a result of perceptions that their lifestyle is 'primitive' and that they need to be made to live like the majority cattle-herding tribes (interview, June 2014). This perception and myth which is found at its starkest in Jamie Uys’ popular 1981 film, *The Gods Must Be Crazy* has been utilized by the South African advertising industry in a number of campaigns (for example, the Vodacom advertisement aired during the Rugby World Cup in 2007, in a South African Railways advertisement and even the national crest of the South African government). While these representations may be accurate, based on historical records that suggests their ‘primitivity’, they nevertheless, fail to account for the social changes that occurred to these groups over the years (Bodunrin, 2014a).

In the face of these difficulties and circumstance however, a tiny class of people within the Khwe community continue to enjoy “modern” privileges when compared to the poor majority. These few individuals who are adults between the ages of 35-50, are mostly *sheeben* owners, SABC/XK FM executive staff members, prison warders, clergymen, serving military officers in the South African Army and others whose paychecks are gotten outside the social grant scheme¹⁹. These individuals who constitute only about 2.5 percent of the entire population, own car(s), operate bank accounts²⁰ and have access to the internet, emails and other digital media devices for music discovery.

My argument therefore is that the slow modernization and the emergence of modern social structure of the Khwe, plays a crucial role in the relevance of class in the community. This is because unlike in most modern society, where economic status does not necessarily determine access to popular music culture and styles, in places such as Khwe, where an encounter with

¹⁹ More than 90% of the Khwe Bushmen are dependent on the social grant scheme. Unemployment remains the major problem of the community.

²⁰ Majority of the Khwe don’t have bank accounts as there are no banks in the community to encourage saving. Hence, the money from the social grant scheme are quickly expended (Bodunrin, 2014a).

modernity is fairly recent and where the absolute majority are 'poor', access to popular culture (via internet, satellite television) is an exclusive luxury of a certain tiny fraction and class of people.

'Class' is an already-given category, predefined by historical precedent, hence, the social class identified in this study cannot be compared with classes in the contemporary society. While the few individuals who enjoy socio-economic advantage in Khwe community may be classified as members of lower middle classes in a typical social class structure, they nevertheless, enjoy the status accorded to the 'rich' of the upper class in their local community. The class-based analyses of scholars such as Hebdige (1979) were already embedded in the historical specific class structures of mid-century British society, and carry the baggage of a long-established and well theorized class division. This same level of division and analysis does not exist in Khwe society, and parallel examples are rare in Africa. Thus, this is a theoretical issue that will require further academic attention.

***Insert figure 5**

Conclusion

The paper sets out to explore the complex pattern of youth discovery of hip-hop music in the Indigenous Khwe community in South Africa. This is crucial considering that the realities of youths in these places are often obscured or grossly overgeneralized in the music discovery and technology discussions. While the Khwe present state of underdevelopment is a reflection of the contemporary post-apartheid South African society largely marred by the inequality of the apartheid years, the Khwe isolation from the mainstream is believed to be as a result of their complex history as well as the savagery perceptions of them in late modern era.

Contrary to contemporary studies on youth music and style which dismisses the significance of class in a society, this essay argues that 'social class' remains a very significant factor in music discovery in African indigenous communities undergoing sociocultural and economic transformation. The study reveals how new hip-hop music is often discovered by a class of individuals with digital access who then pass it down to the majority without access within the

community. The kinship network and social relationship in the community in particular engenders the dynamic flow of music from the technologically-privileged few to the majority without technological access. Unlike in the modern society where there is a significant gap between the haves and the have-nots, the economic and class divide in the relatively small Khwe community is virtually unnoticeable due to the continued social cohesive relationship and egalitarian spirit that exists in the community. Despite the complex pattern of music discovery, the Khwe hip-hop enthusiasts continue to find ways to transform the global hip-hop to empower themselves, penetrate the restrictive urban spaces and to project themselves as a people present in modernity in the midst of dire straits.

Hence, when scholars label youth as the 'digital generation', with unprecedented access to digital technology (see Buckingham, 2006), it is important to acknowledge the situation that confines the indigenous and rural youths in Africa and other developing world to a space where they are dependent on others for digital or online experience and music discovery. As more and more individuals join the advantaged social class, more indigenous people will be able to independently discover new music through the variety of online platforms available today.

***Insert figure 6**

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Interview Questions (Youths)

(Note: Questions are semi-structured, in-depth and flexible)

1. How did you encounter hip-hop?
2. Do you watch or listen to hip-hop music and news? How and where?
3. Do you prefer hip-hop to other genres of music? If yes why?
4. What new media technologies do they have access to?
5. Do you have hip-hop heroes or idols?
6. When did you first come in contact with hip-hop?
7. What kinds of festival do you have in Khwe community
8. Do you participate in the festivals?
9. What do you think of indigenous activities such as Bushman dance music and rituals?
10. Which do you prefer; hip-hop or traditional music?

Appendix 2

Interview Questions (Adults)

(Note: Questions are semi-structured, in-depth and flexible)

1. What do you know about hip-hop?
2. If yes, how, where and when did you learn about hip-hop?
3. Where do you think the youths learn hip-hop?
4. Why do you think Khwe youths are delving into hip-hop music?
5. What do you think contribute to the popularity of hip-hop culture among Khwe youths?
6. What efforts are made to promote indigenous genres of music?
7. Does hip-hop prevent youths from participating in indigenous or cultural activities?
8. What do you think of the indigenous music in comparison to hip-hop?

Appendix 3

Focus group Questions (Youth Subculture)

1. How and where did you learn about hip-hop?
2. What media exposes you to hip-hop music and news?
3. Do you prefer hip-hop to other genres of music? If yes why?
4. What do you think of new media technologies (Satellite TV, internet, Facebook, emails etc)?
5. What new media technologies do you have access to?
6. Who are your hip-hop models?
7. Have you heard of hip-hop?
8. If yes, when?
9. Do you participate in local music, dance or festival?
10. What do you think of indigenous activities such as Bushman festival, dance music and rituals?
11. Which do you prefer; hip-hop or Bushman music?

Appendix 4

Focus group Questions (Adults)

1. Do you know what is called hip-hop?
2. If yes, how, where and when did you learn about hip-hop?
3. Where do you think the youths learn hip-hop?
4. Why do you think Khwe youths are delving into hip-hop music?
5. What think of new media technologies (Satellite TV, internet, Facebook, emails etc)?
6. Do you think new media technologies contribute to the appropriation of hip-hop by Khwe youths?
7. What new media technologies do they have access to?
8. Are there efforts made to promote indigenous genres of music culture?
9. Does the influence of hip-hop prevent them from participating in indigenous or cultural activities?
10. What do you think of the indigenous music in comparison to hip-hop?

Appendix 5

Informed Consent Form

TOPIC: Enculturation and Influence of New Media Technologies in the Emergence Of Hip-Hop Culture Among Bushman Youth Subculture In The Khwe Community, Northern Cape

Correspondence with interviewees

Letter of invitation to participate in the study

Dear Sir/Madam

My name is Itunu Bodunrin, I am collecting data to complete a study on youths in Khwe community. The study is conducted under the supervision of University of KwaZulu-Natal Centre for Culture and Media in society (CCMS). I am writing to request your participation. The aim of the study is to investigate the impact of new media technologies in the lives of the Bushmen of the Khwe community. This will contribute to the discourse on the impact of new media technologies in indigenous societies; a reminder that global cultural forms are taken up in diverse ways in local contexts.

Participation in this study is voluntary. The data will be kept securely for five years for purposes of verification.

Should you request it, an electronic copy of the final thesis will be sent to you on completion.

Your willingness to participate in this study will greatly be appreciated.

Details of the researcher and institution of research:

Researcher	Mr. Itunu Bodunrin	+27-84-0496035	itunubodunrin@yahoo.com
Department	Centre for Culture and Media in Society (CCMS)	+27-31-2602505	
Institution	University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN)	Howard College Campus, Masizi Kunene Ave, Glenwood, Durban, South Africa.	
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Chair, UKZN Human Sciences Research Committee	Dr Shenuka Singh	+27-31-2608591	singshen@ukzn.ac.za
Committee Clerk, UKZN Human Sciences Research Committee	Ms P. Ximba	+27-31-2603587	ximbap@ukzn.ac.za
<p><i>Please do not hesitate to contact any of the above persons, should you want further information on this research, or should you want to discuss any aspect of the interview process.</i></p>			

Signed consent

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand that the purpose of this interview is for solely academic purpose. The findings will be published as a thesis, and may be published in academic journals. 	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand I may choose to remain anonymous. (Please choose whether or not you would like to remain anonymous.) 	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand my name will be quoted. (Please choose whether or not you would prefer to have your remarks attributed to yourself in the final research documents.) 	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand that I will not be paid for participating but a souvenir will be given. 	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand that I reserve the right to discontinue and withdraw my participation any time. 	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I consent to be frank to give the information. 	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand I will not be coerced into commenting on issues against my will, and that I may decline to answer specific questions. 	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I understand I reserve the right to schedule the <i>time</i> and <i>location</i> of the interview. 	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

*** By signing this form, I consent that I have duly read and understood its content.**

<hr style="border: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">Name of Participant</p>	<hr style="border: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">Signature</p>	<hr style="border: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">Date</p>
<hr style="border: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">Name of Researcher</p>	<hr style="border: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">Signature</p>	<hr style="border: 1px solid black; margin-bottom: 5px;"/> <p style="text-align: center;">Date</p>