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Citation for final published version:

Singh, Jaspal Naveel and Dattatreyan, Ethiraj Gabriel 2016. Cultural interventions: Repositioning hip hop education in India. *Linguistics & Education* 36 , pp. 55-64. 10.1016/j.linged.2016.05.003

Publishers page: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2016.05.003>

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1 **Cultural interventions: Repositioning hip hop education in India**

2

3 **Abstract**

4 In this article we show how subject positions are assumed when hip hop is used by
5 institutions supported by western nation-states as a ‘cultural intervention’ in the global south.
6 Focusing on the Indo-German Hip Hop & Urban Art Project 2011-2012, a hip hop
7 educational project sited in several cities in India and sponsored by cultural institutions
8 funded by the German State, we study how actors negotiate between what we identify as a
9 discourse of hip hop authenticity and a discourse of internationalization. Employing a theory
10 of scales allows us to investigate how actors on the ground engage in the semiotic play of
11 repositioning of and in historically situated notions of authenticity and pedagogy. We argue
12 that the findings have implications for future applied and theoretical work on the
13 internationalization of hip hop as an educational and diplomatic endeavor.

14

15 Key words: Delhi, internationalization, formalization, authenticity, scales, north-south

16

17 **Introduction: Rescaling authenticity**

18 ‘Authenticity’ is a buzz word in hip hop studies. While ‘authenticity’ is used analytically in
19 various strands of the social sciences and humanities to discuss seemingly fixed markers of
20 personhood in domains of socio-cultural and historical life, in hip hop ‘authenticity’ points to
21 an internal cultural principle that allows actors to perform a version of what it means to be
22 real; to be true to oneself and one’s ‘hood.¹ An explicit and enunciated authenticity, marked

¹ ‘The ‘hood’ is a central term in hip hop, signifying the importance of the locality from which one produces hip hop’s cultural forms. It refers to both a physical place, traditionally the inner-city ghetto, and a discursively produced space of solidarity, authenticity and dangerousness. Taking such a Lefebvrian understanding of space, Forman (2002: xix) explains that ‘hood “is literally an abbreviated version of the term ‘neighborhood’ and, as such, defines a territory that is geographically and socially particular to the speaking subject’s social location.

23 by the phrase ‘keeping it real’, emerged during hip hop’s inception as a framework by which
24 to navigate socio-cultural and historical ideologies of class, race, and gender in North
25 American urban contexts (Forman 2002, Cutler 2003, Judy 2004). As hip hop has spread
26 globally and is appropriated locally, artists, fans and the hip hop industry re-negotiate this
27 principle of authenticity in complex ways (Osumare 2001, Solomon 2005, Omoniyi 2009,
28 Lee 2010, Westinen 2014, Opsahl & Røynealand, this issue, Magro, this issue). Alastair
29 Pennycook (2007b, p. 103) captures this phenomenon as “the global spread of authenticity”,
30 which he thinks of as

31

32 a tension between on the one hand the spread of a cultural dictate to adhere to certain
33 principles of what it means to be authentic, and on the other, a process of localization
34 that makes such an expression of staying true to oneself dependent on local contexts,
35 languages, cultures, and understandings of the real. (Pennycook, 2007b, p. 103)

36

37 In this article, which draws on our ethnographic research on India’s hip hop scene, we
38 make two contributions to the study of authenticity in global hip hop. First, instead of
39 considering the tensions that emerge in the local/global binary, or what scholars and
40 mainstream analysts of emerging world systems have dubbed the glocal, we shift our focus to
41 the *internationalization* of hip hop. Utilizing the term ‘internationalization’ we draw attention
42 to the ways in which western nation states, in this case Germany, actively promote hip hop
43 education in nation states in the global south and that such promotion should be understood in
44 international and national terms, rather than in the ecumenical, post-national or transnational
45 terms like the Global Hip Hop Nation (Alim, 2009, for a related distinction between inter-,
46 multi-, and transnationalism see Portes 2001, pp. 186–187). Secondly, we suggest that this

Quite simply stated, the ‘hood exists as a ‘home’ environment. It is enunciated in terms that elevate it as a primary site of significance.”

47 sort of internationalization of hip hop education entails a *formalization* of the quintessentially
48 informal pedagogies of hip hop. By focusing on talk centered on the Indo-German Hip Hop
49 & Urban Art Project, an endeavor sponsored by the German government in several first tier
50 Indian cities, we argue that such formalization leads to the repositioning of local and
51 international actors in ways which require a rescaling of authenticity.

52 While we unpack the term ‘scale’ in a later section, very briefly, we utilize ‘scale’ to
53 discuss the ways in which linguistic signs and discourses in a globalized era are always
54 hierarchically ordered. The rules of speaking, the normativities and appropriateness of usage
55 that shape language in use, are always operating simultaneously on ‘lower’ and ‘higher’
56 levels. The here and the there, the now and the then, the local and the translocal, the
57 vernacular and the metropolitan, the contemporary and the historical, all mark different
58 temporal and spatial scales of communicative engagement that are imbued with value
59 judgements (Blommaert, 2007, 2010). Importantly, scales are not fixed but speakers control
60 these hierarchical orders of normativity by repositioning themselves vis-à-vis what is being
61 said; for example they can highlight certain normativities and erase others (ibid.). An analysis
62 of the semiotic play of rescaling provides insights, we suggest, into the complex and
63 entangled positionalities of actors involved in international endeavors like the Indo-German
64 Hip Hop & Urban Art Project. We also maintain that such an analysis updates our
65 understanding of the continued effects of colonialism in international relations, especially in
66 north-south development work.

67 In what follows we first provide a brief description of the Delhi hip hop scene and our
68 collaborative ethnographic fieldwork in 2013. We then review the literature on the
69 formalization of hip hop pedagogy and carve out what effects formalization can have on hip
70 hop’s discourse of authenticity within national contexts. We then turn to our experiences of
71 doing ethnographic fieldwork in the hip hop scene in Delhi to discuss how the formalization

72 of hip hop pedagogy becomes a matter of scales when it is being internationalized in cross-
73 border cultural interventions like the Indo-German Hip Hop & Urban Art Project. We draw
74 from ethnographic interviews with international and Delhi based hip hop practitioners to
75 suggest that a formalization of hip hop pedagogy necessarily positions international actors in
76 ways that force them to rationalize as well as subvert state interests to attempt to maintain
77 authenticity on various scales. We conclude by suggesting that our findings reveal some of
78 the dilemmatic and historically sensitive positionalities assumed by hip hop pedagogues
79 involved in the internationalization of hip hop. Hence, we hope that our discussion
80 contributes to a critical understanding of international development work in general, and hip
81 hop as a site for international pedagogy in particular.

82

83 **Ethnographic research in the Delhi hip hop scene**

84 The two authors of this article initially envisaged their ethnographic projects independently
85 from each other; however, we co-incidentally found out about each other's research shortly
86 before commencing fieldwork in India. We first met and got to know each other personally in
87 the field and tentatively decided to work together in the following months, engaging with the
88 hip hop community in Delhi and researching hip hop's relations to migration, globalization,
89 media, resistance and pedagogy. Dattatreyan, then a graduate student at the University of
90 Pennsylvania, was trained in cultural anthropology and Singh, a PhD candidate at Cardiff
91 University, was trained in sociolinguistics and linguistic ethnography. Our disciplines, while
92 being mutually informative and to a degree commensurable not least because they both
93 utilize long-term ethnography as ways of knowing, involve divergent epistemologies
94 concerning what could be considered 'empirical evidence', politically-nuanced analysis, and
95 reflexive writing, leading to fruitful interdisciplinary dialogues between the two of us. While
96 we take a more sociolinguistic slant in this article, one that allows us to investigate the micro-

97 argumentative rescalings speakers make in language, a more anthropological account of our
98 collaborative ethnography can be found elsewhere (Dattatreyan & Singh, in preparation).

99 Regardless of our professional differences, we were both ‘diasporic returnee researchers’
100 (Dattatreyan 2013), drawn to conducting ethnographic fieldwork in the country that our
101 respective parents had left to make a living in the west. Moreover, Dattatreyan, who grew up
102 in New York City, and Singh, who grew up in Frankfurt, were socialized into aspects of hip
103 hop cultural practices. For all these reasons we became interested in the idea of bringing our
104 academic and personal interests and competences together in researching Indian hip hop.

105 We first learned about the hip hop scene in India through acquaintances and social
106 networking sites, where we started noticing videos of Indian b-boys and b-girls² around 2010
107 or 2011. During travels to our parental homeland we began, independently, reaching out to
108 members of the Indian hip hop scene in Mumbai and in Delhi; connections that we could
109 follow up more systematically in our collaborative and individual fieldwork in Delhi in 2013
110 and 2014³. At that time breakin, the hip hop dance where b-boys and b-girls get down on the
111 floor to the breakbeat of a funk song, was the most noticeable element⁴ of hip hop in India,
112 and our ethnographic interlocutors suggest in several interviews that breakin became visible
113 in India’s urban spaces around 2006 or 2007, although many also hinted at the fact that
114 Indian b-boys and b-girls practiced the dance long before this, even if they did not video-
115 record these ciphaz (circles of dancers). In any case, we observed how groups of breakers,
116 predominantly young men in their late teens, would meet informally in semi-public spaces,

² The exact meaning of the terms ‘b-boy’ and ‘b-girl’ is contested. Most commonly it is understood as an abbreviation for ‘break boy/girl’, which was used to describe dancers who used to go down to the floor during the break of a record in the early 1970s in New York City (Schloss 2009). The term ‘breakdancer’ is refuted by many breakers who align themselves with authentic hip hop as a mainstream term that emerged in the brief media-hype of the dance during the first half of the 1980s (Fogarty 2012b).

³ Dattatreyan stayed in Delhi for 18 months, documenting the scene from January 2013 to June 2014. Singh stayed in Delhi for 8 months, from January 2013 to September 2013.

⁴ Hip hop is often understood as consisting of four elements (breakin, graffiti writin, deejayin and emceein) (Androutsopoulos 2003; Emdin 2013).

117 like abandoned monuments or courtyards of shopping malls, to practice their moves. Often a
118 mobile phone was somewhere in the corner playing the breakbeats on repeat and a crowd of
119 hip hop-affiliated and -unaffiliated onlookers watched the breakers move, battle, practice and
120 have fun. These informal ciphaz would at times be video-recorded with mobile phones and
121 make their way into the prosumer spaces of Web 2.0 for a wider audience to take notice, like
122 and comment. This was not so much the case for the other elements of hip hop, such as
123 emceeing, graffiti writing and deejaying, which were much less visible and were often, if at all,
124 practiced by travelling foreigners in India, or diasporic Indians who grew up in the west and
125 returned to India and practiced these forms there (see Dattatreyan, under review, Singh, in
126 preparation). Gradually, however, during and after our ethnographic fieldwork in Delhi in
127 2013, Indian emcees, deejays and graffiti writers are beginning to become more visible in
128 virtual and physical spaces. The emphasis on breakin, though, was important in our fieldwork
129 since, as for instance Schloss (2009) and Emdin (2013) also note, breakin is recognized in hip
130 hop connoisseurship as the most authentic and least commercial of the four elements and can
131 thus be understood as a practice that most directly conveys ideological values of the real to
132 hip hop scenes across the world. Within this atmosphere our ethnographic experiences in
133 Delhi were imbued with the global of spread of authenticity (Pennycook 2007b), which this
134 article further explores.

135 Our ethnographic fieldwork in Delhi, which we conducted partly together and partly
136 individually, focused on a few neighborhoods in South and West Delhi, where the hip hop
137 scene was exceptionally visible, with graffiti and street art scattered everywhere in the narrow
138 alleyways and informal breakin ciphaz taking place regularly in semi-public spaces. These
139 neighborhoods were urban villages, often with ancient old settlement histories and now
140 supplemented with informal housing and structures, at the fringes of New Delhi, which are
141 now being integrated in the rapidly growing metropolitan area of India's capital (see Kumar,

142 1999, Batra & Mehra, 2008). These neighborhoods comprise almost exclusively of migrants,
143 domestic ones (e.g. North-Eastern, Bihari, Punjabi) as well as international ones (e.g.
144 Afghani, Nepalese, Nigerian, Somali), who came to the city over the last 65 years, and
145 increasingly so in the last two decades, to find work, refuge or university education
146 (Dattatreyan, under review). Thus, these neighborhoods seemed particularly important
147 research sites, as they allowed us to study the effects multi-layered migration patterns and
148 rapid urbanization have in relation to hip hop.

149 We conducted participant observation and interviews as our principal ways to elicit
150 ethnographic insights. Moreover, Dattatreyan also engaged in what he calls critical hip hop
151 cinema, a visual anthropological methodology that took our participants' growing interest in
152 hip hop-inspired audio-visual production as a site to create shared anthropological endeavors
153 (Dattatreyan 2015, Dattatreyan, in preparation). Singh also set up a recording studio for b-
154 boys to experiment with producing hip hop music. The studio itself would eventually
155 function as an ethnographic site that provided us with stimulating and reflexive aspects about
156 hip hop in Delhi and the transmission of knowledge and skills, as discussed in more detail
157 elsewhere (Dattatreyan & Singh, in preparation).

158 Our own positionality as hip hop-affiliated researchers from the west, with parental roots
159 in India, and with first-world accented Englishes and ways of dressing, behaving and moving,
160 as well as our possession of and literacy in audio and video recording devices of course
161 meant that we had a positively valued access to the life-worlds of our youthful participants in
162 Delhi, while our older age and our academic objectives, as well as our relative incompetence
163 of speaking and understanding Hindi also impeded a constant socialization into the
164 community. For example, our conversations and interviews were almost exclusively in
165 English, and while we could certainly understand some of the Delhi-accented variety of Hindi
166 that most of our participants spoke, we were not able to converse with them in the same

167 variety and certainly not with the same fluency. Although not the focus of this article, our
168 positionality as diasporic returnee and hip hop-affiliated researchers, requires careful
169 consideration and reflexive sincerity. At the very least, our own positionality brings to light
170 the matter of scales that we discuss in this article, given that the global positionalities we
171 assumed upscaled and formalized the informal transmission of knowledge, skills, practices
172 and ideas on the ground.

173

174 **In/formal hip hop pedagogies**

175 Informal hip hop pedagogies, where practitioners learn from one another the norms and terms
176 of practice, have existed locally and since the beginnings of hip hop in the early 1970s. These
177 informal hip hop pedagogies have their roots in the African-American and Latino musical,
178 movement, and visual cultural forms that have given expression to the struggle for
179 enfranchisement while celebrating Black life in North America. Historically hip hop's
180 cultural forms or elements – breakin, emceeing, deejaying and graffiti writing – have developed
181 these sorts of pedagogies through informal channels like the cipa (Mitchell, 2001, Newman,
182 2005, Alim, 2006). For example the phrase *each one teach one*, which developed as a form of
183 informal education during slavery in the Americas and was later appropriated by Frank
184 Laubach's large-scale Christian literacy program in the Philippines and in over hundred
185 countries later (Laubach & Laubach, 1960), is an oft-repeated axiom in hip hop communities
186 of practice. This axiom reminds each member of the local community of their educational
187 duties to each other and to their 'hood within the larger historical framework of colonial
188 domination. Informal hip hop pedagogy is thus an inter-generational, local, grassroots and
189 historically saturated educational process; a site for the community of practice to engage in
190 situated learning (Wenger 1998). Greg Dimitriadis (2001) argues that hip hop, in this sense,
191 functions as a 'lived curriculum,' what Derek Pardue (2007) has suggested is a "vehicle for

192 popular imaginations of history and personhood outside of the classroom” (p. 675). They, in
193 effect, suggest that informal hip hop pedagogy is not only a distinctive way of knowing for
194 the teaching and the learning of expertise in and of the forms of hip hop themselves, but it
195 provides an opportunity for historical, theoretical, and political messages to find form and
196 travel (see also Rice, 2003, Pennycook, 2007a). Such processes of informal pedagogy have
197 been documented by scholars in various localized hip hop scenes all over the world (e.g.
198 Nohl, 2003, Schloss, 2009, Beach & Sernhede, 2012, Fogarty, 2012a, Pégram, 2012).

199 In the last odd 15 years, this informal hip hop pedagogy, one that is rooted in history,
200 practice, experience, and dialogue, has been joined by a more formalized construction of hip
201 hop education. Hip hop has now established itself as a method and perspective within
202 national institutional education settings like schools, universities and community centers
203 (Alim, 2007, Ibrahim, 2009, Petchauer, 2009, Barrett, 2011, Ladson-Billings, 2014,
204 Pietikäinen & Dufva, 2014, papers in this issue). The formalization of hip hop pedagogy by
205 institutional actors transmits more and less of the kinds of explicit messages of liberation and
206 emancipation than hip hop’s informal structures of practice. As Pardue (2008, 2011, 2012)
207 argues in his ethnographic work on state-sponsored hip hop pedagogues in São Paulo, Brazil,
208 hip hop pedagogues working in formal institutionally sponsored settings see their dual role as
209 both state-hired professionals and hip hop heads to challenge the inequalities created, in part,
210 by the state while also recognizing and transmitting the ethical possibilities of the state by
211 promoting its liberal discourse on citizenship.

212 This dual role, of course, creates a complicated paradox of interests. On the one hand, the
213 hip hop educator works to promote an authentic hip hop that is inherently political and that,
214 because of its each one teach one perspective, transgresses top-down models of governance.
215 On the other hand, the hip hop educator, because they work in their capacity as a pedagogue
216 at the behest of state or other national institutional interests, promotes values and ideologies

217 of the state that may contradict or, at the very least complicate, hip hop’s informal processes
218 of transmission. This tension emerges because the state seeks to instrumentalize hip hop
219 pedagogy as a vehicle for governance, turning the pedagogical message of hip hop practice
220 into a medium, which in itself becomes the message (McCluhan 1964). As this medium is
221 infused with signs and representations of the national, or, as in in our case, the international,
222 the message attains degrees of formalization which operate on scales that are not easily
223 reconcilable with the informal scales of hip hop authenticity. It is precisely in this field of
224 tension between medium and message in which hip hop educators funded by national
225 organizations rescale arguments in an attempt to reconcile discourses of authenticity
226 (indexing their role as members of the hip hop community of practice) with discourses of
227 internationalization (indexing their roles as state-sponsored cultural ambassadors).

228 Scales, in Jan Blommaert’s sociolinguistic theory, emphasize that actors navigate worlds
229 of hierarchically ordered contexts, each which require and produce a specific positionality of
230 the speaker (Blommaert, 2007). The notion of scales essentially underlines that speakers are
231 not merely determined by sociolinguistic variation on a horizontal plane (dialect, sociolect,
232 genderlect etc.) but that they show certain amounts of agency of strategically controlling this
233 variation through indexicality. Crucially, this indexical agency is contingent on the speech
234 community’s valued arrangement of ‘better’ and ‘worse’ or ‘higher’ and ‘lower’ variants,
235 which is why every horizontal variation always also has a vertical – scaled – dimension. To
236 make powerful arguments in communication speakers can therefore select variants, as well as
237 discourses, that index contexts which operate on higher levels of normativity and power. This
238 agency is what Blommaert calls upscaling or scale jumping; speakers can move “from the
239 individual to the collective, the temporally situated to the trans-temporal, the unique to the
240 common, the token to the type, the specific to the general” (Blommaert, 2010, pp. 33).

241 Using Blommaert's theory of scales, Elina Westinen (2014) shows how Finnish rappers
242 construct authenticity by assuming subject positions on multiple scales in the 'ideological
243 topography' of Finnish hip hop. While Finnish hip hop can be regarded peripheral in the
244 Global Hip Hop Nation (compared to more central hip hop scenes, e.g. in the U.S. or in
245 France), Finnish rappers draw on Finland's own centre-periphery ideologies to construct
246 authenticity. Thus Westinen does not regard scales as fixed but as fractal: "when we look
247 more closely into the micro distinctions of Finnish hip hop, we see the same structures (and
248 distinctions) of the 'upper' scale of Finnish hip hop repeated over and over again" (p. 201).
249 Authenticity in hip hop is thus not a simple claiming of realness or an alignment with
250 predetermined subjectivities of the real, but it is rather a complex practice of repositioning
251 that has to take into account both local and global realities and histories.

252 Whereas most literature on global hip hop emphasizes the localization of hip hop and its
253 fractal scalarity, we take an inverse view in the present article. When nations-states, like
254 Germany in our example, stylize themselves as hip hop nations abroad, negotiations of
255 authenticity enter an international scale. Rather than localizing global hip hop, actors in this
256 scenario internationalize authenticity by intervening in cultures abroad. This complicates a
257 simplistic binary of hip hop as grassroots, counter-hegemonic and historically rooted on the
258 one hand, and the state as the top-down, hegemonic and short-lived on the other.
259 Accordingly, as we will show in this article, actors involved in the internationalization and
260 formalization of hip hop will have to find new ways to construct themselves as authentic.

261 Here, we are not trying to decide on who is (or should be) authentic, we rather show how
262 the internationalization and formalization of hip hop as a site for pedagogy affords discursive
263 positionalities (Davis & Harré, 1990) that reveal something of the roles, the power structures,
264 the histories and the practices that are assumed in cultural interventions, such as the Indo-
265 German Hip Hop & Urban Art Project.

266 Cultural intervention, we suggest, occurs when informal local cultural pedagogies are
267 formalized in international contexts. In this case, the formalization occurs when
268 internationally operating institutions like the Goethe Institute begin to reach out to local
269 scenes and offer them an international stage where hip hop can be performed for both local
270 audiences and an imagined global audience. Such encounters are often framed as a ‘cultural
271 exchange’, however, we prefer to use the term ‘cultural intervention’ (for discussions of this
272 term see Kershaw, 1992, Frank et al., 2001) to index that these are curated encounters that are
273 to some degree orthogonal to the informal practices of hip hop pedagogy described above.
274 Importantly, the internationalization and formalization is a matter of upscaling. The
275 encounter involves policy makers, state representatives, NGO workers, volunteers,
276 journalists, researchers, and it often takes place in the clean and neat spaces of national
277 cultural centers, consulates, or on international exhibitions. The institutions that these actors
278 and spaces represent operate on different scales of power than the ones found within hip hop.
279 As Zebster, the lead organizer of the Indo-German Hip Hop & Urban Art Project, says in an
280 interview with Singh comparing hip hop with European cultural organizations: “they function
281 totally differently.” In the remainder of this article we show how Zebster and other actors
282 involved in international cultural interventions rescale authenticity within the seemingly
283 disparate arrangements of hip hop on the one hand and the formal institutions on the other.

284

285 **The Indo-German Hip Hop & Urban Art Project**

286 The Indo-German Hip Hop & Urban Art Project was an endeavor sponsored by the Goethe
287 Institute, the German Foreign Office, the German Federal Ministry of Education and
288 Research and the Asia-Pacific Committee of German Business. In the two-year hip hop

289 project that took place during the Germany + India Year 2011-2012,⁵ delegates of the
290 German hip hop scene travelled to India and collaborated with the emergent Indian scene by
291 organizing events, hosting workshops and network meetings in several first tier Indian cities.

292 The Project is advertised on the website of the German Consulate General in Mumbai. On
293 this website visitors can find a tab on “Culture” under which four further tabs appear: “Film”,
294 “Hip-Hop”, “Literature” and “Art”, placing hip hop in between established and widely
295 accepted arenas of ‘high’ cultural production. The institution’s upscaling of hip hop as a
296 German cultural offering is troubling given hip hop’s historical beginnings are in the Black
297 urban communities of North America. What does this upscaling of hip hop mean for the
298 actors involved in such projects on the ground? How do they position themselves
299 authentically in this international formalization of hip hop pedagogy? And what are the
300 implications for our understandings of the continued effects of colonialism in the current
301 stage of globalization?

302 As highlighted in the following quote taken from the Consulate General’s website, the
303 upscaling of hip hop involves western political discourses of development work in the global
304 south, which are surely enmeshed in the history of colonialism. Essentially, this is a
305 pedagogical discourse that negotiates issues of social inequality, poverty and well-being, by
306 referencing the positive socio-psychological effects hip hop can have for underprivileged
307 children and intercultural understandings in India:

308

309 Extract 1

310 Hip-Hop has also established itself in India as a lifestyle with which the children and the
311 youth can relate to [sic]. Values like solidarity and respect convey to the kids, especially

⁵ The Germany + India Year 2011-2012 celebrated 60 years of diplomatic relationships between India and Germany. It featured projects, exhibitions and fairs in both nations, where representatives of business, education, engineering, politics and culture convened.

312 those less privileged, a sense of belonging and esteem and therewith a rising self-confidence.
313 Hip-Hop is increasingly accepted as an experimental approach to educational work because it
314 is a suitable support for back-to-school programmes [sic] and the same time has the potential
315 to bridge inter-cultural differences and thereby facilitates conflict-free dealings with one
316 another.

317 [http://www.india.diplo.de/Vertretung/indien/en/05_Mumbai/Departments/Culture_Culture/
318 HipHop_Seite.html](http://www.india.diplo.de/Vertretung/indien/en/05_Mumbai/Departments/Culture_Culture/HipHop_Seite.html)

319

320 From this section it should perhaps become clear for visitors of the website that hip hop is
321 ‘doing good’ and is not necessarily something associated with violence, drugs, guns,
322 misogyny or homophobia as it is often represented in mainstream media. Hip hop is depicted
323 as promoting ‘good’ values like solidarity, respect, belonging, esteem and self-confidence,
324 which seem especially relevant for India’s less privileged youth and children. The text further
325 substantiates the institutional upscaling by mentioning that hip hop has already been
326 experimentally applied in educational work in India to reintegrate children and youth in
327 schooling. According to the website, hip hop is a conflict-free, intercultural bridge and should
328 therefore be promoted. This upscales hip hop institutionally through the deployment of a
329 moral framework, which operates on an international scale of socio-developmental education
330 and addresses questions of inequality, poverty and well-being for future generations in
331 nations of the global south.

332 During the two authors’ collaborative ethnographic fieldwork in Delhi in 2013 several of
333 our local interviewees conformed to this pedagogical discourse by reporting that the events
334 produced under the auspices of the Indo-German Hip Hop & Urban Art Project promoted hip
335 hop in India and even that such foreign intervention is needed to establish sustainable hip hop
336 scenes in India. However, many also expressed discomfort and mentioned that the Project

337 gave rise to conflicts within the Indian scenes. It was suspected by some of our interviewees
338 that the Indo-German hip hop events excluded some local actors, while it promoted (and
339 funded) others, for reasons that were not transparent to them. Some of our interlocutors,
340 implicitly or explicitly, even connected the Indo-German Hip Hop Project to notions of neo-
341 colonialism, where, under the guise of cultural exchange and development work, India's
342 poverty was exploited by western nations and their cultural ambassadors to actively wield
343 power and accrue wealth in India. Whereas it is beyond the scope of this article to account in
344 more detail for the many voices and positions that our interviewees take in relation to the
345 Indo-German Project (for further analyses, see Dattatreyan, under review, Singh, in
346 preparation), we now turn to an episode that succinctly illustrates the conflictual potential of
347 such cultural interventions.

348

349 **The death and revival of an 'authentic' jam**

350 Although Delhi is rich of fully independent underground hip hop events, many of the jams
351 (hip hop gatherings and dance competitions) we visited during fieldwork in 2013 were partly
352 sponsored by national institutions like embassies, foreign-nation cultural centers and other
353 non-Indian agencies. These institutions intervene in the cultural production of Indian hip hop
354 by hosting workshops and hip hop jams as well as other events. The institutions have enough
355 resources available to set up a venue with expensive and 'authentic' equipment like
356 turntables, which are not easily available in India, and to fly in hip hop ambassadors from
357 abroad who operate this equipment and do showcase performances at the jam and also judge
358 the battles (dance competitions), as well as to offer prize money to winners of the battles.

359 These jams create small spectacles in the city. Through the travelling hip hop ambassadors
360 from abroad, these jams are understood by our youthful Delhi based participants as learning
361 spaces. That is, they are pedagogically valuable as they bring older, more experienced hip

362 hop heads from abroad into contact with younger, less experienced local hip hop heads and
363 expose them to forms of hip hop art from a more ‘developed’ foreign hip hop scene. Seeing
364 more experienced breakers from abroad perform live in the cipa, taking pictures with them,
365 getting down on the floor to their deejayin, receiving the honor of being judged by them,
366 meant that our participants can experience hip hop on an international scale, or more,
367 poignantly, they can experience themselves as part of a global unfolding of hip hop.
368 However, conflict was not absent.

369 B-boy Rawdr, a well-known breaker in Delhi, in an interview, narrates how he used to
370 host the underground event Cypherholic several years ago. This was an entirely non-
371 commercial event and it was semi-professionally organized by Rawdr and his crew to
372 promote the breakin scene in the city. Cypherholic, in its early years, was an informal event
373 that emphasized the kinds of real and grassroots transmissions between breakers, which have
374 been the cornerstone of hip hop’s informal pedagogies. Rawdr says that Cypherholic became
375 successful over time, whereas the fourth Cypherholic had 45 paying guests, the fifth
376 Cypherholic attracted 150 paying guests.

377 He remembers that a representative of the Goethe Institute New Delhi attended this fifth
378 Cypherholic and afterwards approached Rawdr and proposed to have the following event at
379 Max Muller Bhavan, the mansion in New Delhi that hosts the Goethe Institute. He accepted
380 her invitation and the sixth Cypherholic was held at Max Muller Bhavan and attracted 350
381 visitors. However, after the success of the sixth Cypherholic, the representative of the Goethe
382 Institute “changed completely” as Rawdr puts it in the following interview extract.

383 Transcription conventions can be found at the end of this article.

384

385 Extract 2

01 Rawdr: She straight up said “they’re not supposed to give away our (.) place just

02 like this.” I said “what you MEAN? We had a good jam last time you
03 know now you’re changed completely.” And then you know “Rawdr
04 there are some terms and there are some you know things you need to
05 watch out and this and that” she told me. “You have changed
06 completely.”

07 Singh: Okay

08 Rawdr: Alright. “Why why are you doing this SHIT?” And then I got to know
09 there were, there was a thing called Indo-German thing.

10 Singh: Yeah

386 (Personal interview, Delhi, May 2013)

387

388 When Rawdr wanted to reconnect with her to plan the seventh Cypherholic she was
389 hesitant to give away the Max Muller Bhavan space for free. He did not understand her
390 sudden change of heart, but then soon found out that it was because of the Indo-German Hip
391 Hop & Urban Art Project. For reasons of confidentiality we do not present Rawdr’s further
392 explanations as verbatim quotes here but paraphrase him in the following. He continues to
393 narrate that he later found out that the Goethe Institute’s representative was by then
394 conferring with members of the Indo-German Hip Hop Project and that another Indian hip
395 hop activist was nominated by the Germans to become part of the local organization of the
396 Project and accommodate the German delegates while they were in Delhi. This other Indian
397 hip hop activist, according to Rawdr’s account, entered into negotiations with the Max Muller
398 Bhavan. Rawdr was very disappointed with this move and relinquished the Cypherholic event
399 to the new organizers. At first he imagined that they could throw the event jointly, but he
400 soon had to find out that the other Indian hip hop activist wanted to promote his own crew

401 and his own NGO at the event. This was unacceptable for Rawdr and he backed out of the
402 organization.

403 When the German delegates were in India the Max Muller Bhavan hosted the seventh
404 Cypherholic, organized by the Germans in collaboration with a few local organizers. After
405 the Germans had left, however, Rawdr said that no one felt like they could continue this
406 event. Rawdr is forthright in blaming the cultural intervention for this: “It [Cypherholic] died
407 of Indo-German thing. Straight up man. No hard feelings. No offense. It’s true. It’s a fact.
408 Alright.”

409 Rawdr, soon after this conflict, revived the jam under a new name: Keep.It.Raw – Ground
410 Zero Battle, now taking place in the Korean Cultural Centre in New Delhi. He emphasizes in
411 a later email interview that this jam is no different from the original Cypherholic jams as it is
412 organized independently by his crew. In an announcement for Keep.It.Raw. on a social media
413 website, he writes:

414

415 Extract 3

416 The Jam is back again with it’s authenticity. The first Jam of North India started in 2009 in a
417 gym space & went viral among the youth, teen & adult. Only HipHop Jam in New Delhi
418 which will be paying all the artists involving Judges(Breakin’/Poppng), Mc, On the Music,
419 Winners.

420 <https://www.facebook.com/events/365095483672659/>

421

422 Authenticity, directly invoked in this extract, is connected to the history of Cypherholic
423 being the first jam in North India, one which started in the modest space of a neighborhood
424 gym and grew into popularity in the scene. The spatio-temporal scales that surface in this
425 extract construct a historicity for Keep.It.Raw through the temporal deictics ‘back again’,

426 'first' and '2009', and localness through spatial deictics 'North India' and 'gym space'. These
427 points in timespace are upscaled by Rawdr when he reveals that the jam "went viral" among
428 all generations, using a socio-cultural metaphor of the relatively uncontrolled spread of
429 meaning in the techno-systems of Web 2.0 to express the idea of the jam's popularity in the
430 underground. His upscaling is different from the Consulate General's institutional upscaling
431 (Extract 1), we suggest, as Rawdr authenticates the jam by pointing to the informal, organic
432 and grassroots type of popularity the jam has had in the local community, whereas the
433 Consulate General authenticates the employment of hip hop as a pedagogical tool by drawing
434 on a formalized moral framework of international development work.

435 At the very least, Extract 1 and Extract 3 are targeted towards different audiences, real or
436 perceived Bakhtinian super-addressees, and they use discursive resources that accommodate
437 to each of these audiences. Whereas we can imagine that Extract 1 is written for real or
438 perceived international stakeholders, policymakers and perhaps tourists, Extract 3 is most
439 probably intended for local hip hop heads and perhaps travelling hip hop heads. Blommaert
440 (2010, pp. 22) understands such Bakhtinian super-addressees as higher-scale centers of
441 normativity and appropriateness. In both extracts hip hop is argumentatively upscaled to
442 become appropriate to the according context. A local, informal, grassroots normativity is
443 contextualized in Extract 3, when Rawdr invokes the historical rootedness of the jam and an
444 organic, uncontrolled going viral, whereas an international, formalized and top-down
445 normativity is contextualized in Extract 1, when the Consulate General lists the positive
446 effects hip hop can have for the socio-psychological well-being of less privileged youth, for
447 interculturality and for schooling.

448 Interestingly, Rawdr also feels that he has to emphasize that Keep.It.Raw. is the only jam
449 that will be paying all the artists and participants that get involved, implying that other jams
450 do not do the same. For Rawdr, in the context of his announcement, fair distribution of

451 money seems to be an important part of authenticity in independent hip hop. As he also
452 relayed in our interview, when he was involved in organizing jams for big multinational
453 sporting brands he was sometimes not being compensated for his work. These companies, he
454 said, did not even pay the prize money to the winners of the battle. The authenticity that is
455 proclaimed for Keep.It.Raw. on the other hand guarantees that the money is distributed
456 properly and honestly.

457

458 **A first ‘proper’ jam**

459 Money, fairness and authenticity were in fact recurring themes also in an interview with
460 Zebster, the lead organizer of the Indo-German Hip Hop Project and an icon in the European
461 hip hop scene. In 1992 Zebster founded the famous German label *MZEE Records*, signing
462 independent and now legendary German rap groups, such as Advanced Chemistry, Stieber
463 Twins and Massive Töne, considerably contributing to shaping the German hip hop music
464 scene in its early years. For over three decades Zebster travelled the world and explored hip
465 hop scenes in Europe and the USA, teaming up with graffiti writers, breakers, MCs, DJs and
466 other hip hop-affiliated artists to produce work and practice hip hop’s forms (see Walta &
467 Cooper, 2004, Walta, 2012).

468 When Singh met Zebster in Berlin for an interview, they were joined by DJ Uri. A veteran
469 deejay born in Birmingham and raised in London, Uri is of Indian descent and he recently
470 settled in Mumbai where he works as a DJ instructor and club DJ. During this summer 2012
471 he, however, had a residency in a well-known club in Berlin and so stayed with Zebster in the
472 *Hip Hop Stützpunkt* (literally ‘Hip Hop Base’), a cultural center initiated by Zebster in 2006.
473 They told Singh that they had met in India, during the Indo-German Hip Hop & Urban Art
474 Project and since then collaboratively promoted hip hop education in India with the help of
475 the Goethe Institute and other agencies. Because DJ Uri was present we conducted this

476 interview in English. However, Singh and Zebster liaised in their native language German
477 before and after the interview.

478 In the following extract Zebster and Uri narrate how they produced the first “proper b-boy
479 event” in India or in Delhi. This of course contradicts with Rawdr’s accounts who equally
480 claims to have organized the first b-boy event in North India in 2009. To complicate the
481 picture even more, Zebster upon reviewing this article mentioned in an email to Singh that
482 Cypherholic had in fact been initiated in Mumbai by the breakin crew Roc Fresh and was
483 then adopted by Rawdr in Delhi.

484

485 Extract 4

01 Zebster: But till now there is not really a proper understanding how to do a proper
02 b-boy event right. I think the first one (.) we we did

03 Uri: We did it ya

04 Zebster: organize. Where we said “hey graffiti here, DJ there, spin with vinyl.”

05 Singh: Yeah

06 Zebster: And help them also with some some some stuff where we made the
07 experience like many years before, where they have no understanding
08 where to put the stage that everybody see, how to organize things that it’s
09 a little bit more like in a friendly way.

486 ‘(Personal interview, Berlin, August 2012)

487

488 Whereas Rawdr’s first jams were made possible through his crew’s informal kinds of
489 transmission and resources, Zebster’s and Uri’s event represents the first produced event in
490 India, or at least one of the first ones. Here, hip hop comes in a package, what Nietzsche
491 (2012) calls the ‘hip hop manual’, a well-codified and historically developed set of things and

492 practices that make real hip hop recognizable. A proper hip hop jam becomes recognizable
493 when it involves the different elements or pillars of hip hop, b-boyin, graffiti writin and
494 deejayin, and certain dictates of how to authentically practice these elements. In the above
495 extract authenticity is evoked by mentioning that the DJs were asked to spin with vinyl
496 records on turntables (line 04), even if these are not easily available in India, rather than
497 playing CDs in CD players or MP3s on laptops, which is often regarded as less real in the hip
498 hop DJ scene. Zebster's and Uri's extensive experience with organizing jams also made the
499 Indo-German hip hop events in India more democratic, as it was made sure that everybody
500 had a good view on the stage or the dancefloor (lines 07-08). In general they were trying to
501 create a friendly atmosphere (lines 08-09).

502 It would be a flat analysis to understand the large-scale Indo-German Hip Hop & Urban
503 Art Project as a formal, top-down cultural intervention and Rawdr's small-scale efforts of
504 throwing jams an informal, grassroots emergence of culture. This would neglect that both the
505 cultural intervention (as represented in Extract 1 and Extract 4) and the emerging culture (as
506 represented in Extract 2) are claimed to be authentic in three ways: they construct historicity,
507 they promote participation and diversity, and they commit to egalitarian values. Through
508 claiming authenticity, the speakers, rather than assuming singular subject positions, seem to
509 discursively reposition themselves to negotiate meaning in the polycentric and multiscalar
510 context of the internationalization of hip hop pedagogy. To complexify our analysis of
511 cultural intervention, we now further investigate how Zebster engages in the semiotic play of
512 rescaling to position himself and his fellow hip hop ambassadors meaningfully within the two
513 discourses of hip hop authenticity and hip hop internationalization.

514

515 **Money, sustainability and mobility**

516 Zebster says that while he had been positive in the beginning, he has grown skeptical of the
517 support the formal institutions provide, who he has learned have their “own targets.” He even
518 takes up an unmistakably critical position towards the formal institutions when saying that he
519 thinks that “they use hip hop” and that “they’re not willing to support it the proper way.” The
520 formal institutions seem occupied with self-interests and spectacular “teaser projects”, as he
521 says later, and these kinds of spectacles require a lot of work but are not sustainable: “you
522 have the feeling you do something here and there on your own energy but it don’t leads to
523 anything.” In fact, Zebster even revealed in our interview that he spent considerable amounts
524 of money from his own pocket to make the Project happen. These kinds of personal
525 investments are not uncommon among hip hop ambassadors and pedagogues. Several
526 participants of our respective studies, both internationally travelling and local ones, invested
527 considerable amounts of money and especially time to participate in the each one teach one
528 practices of informal hip hop education, a type of communal work that seems to go unnoticed
529 by and happen irrespective of nationally and internationally operating governance.

530 In the following interview extract Zebster acknowledges that the formal institutions that
531 supported the Project provided them with money, however, the financial flow was only of
532 short while.

533

534 Extract 5

01 It’s very very difficult to talk about sustainable development especially with the
02 formal institutions. This is like a private ehm let’s say ehm result after after having
03 the experience with all the projects. That the formal institutions they talk about
04 sustainability but in the end they don’t care. They say “OH IT’S GERMANY
05 YEAR LET’S HAVE LIKE EVENTS blablabla.” And then the most of the events is
06 fun events. Like (.) they go nowhere? and only possible because they have money

07 and after the budget is over, nothing is happening anymore. So like we built like
08 really connections and I think with the German project we helped to bring people
09 together? Because we had some money for like let's say mobility

535 (Personal interview, Berlin, August 2012)

536

537 Zebster describes how he had to experience that the rhetoric of sustainability so often voiced
538 by formal institutions eventually leads nowhere (lines 01-07). Yet, after lamenting this state
539 of affairs he concludes that the Indo-German Hip Hop & Urban Art Project was eventually
540 successful in bringing people together and building real connections (lines 07-09). This at
541 first sight illogical conclusion becomes meaningful when we consider the shift in agency that
542 occurs in the last two utterances of Extract 5 (on lines 07-09). Using the shifter 'they'
543 throughout this extract to refer to the formal institutions, he now uses the shifter 'we' to
544 directly index the hip hop affiliated people that were involved in the Project. He thereby
545 discursively repositions himself and links the success of the Project to the informal, hip hop
546 and grassroots pedagogies, rather than the formal, state-driven and top-down ones. This move
547 represents an informalization of formal hip hop education, it moves from a type of pedagogy
548 that is a short-lived, spectacular and "fun" intervention to a more serious, real and sustainable
549 exchange afforded by the hip hop heads themselves. However, to operate in an international
550 context, which is contingent on mobility, informal hip hop pedagogy seems dependent on
551 money from the formal institutions (line 09).

552

553 **Passion**

554 To free themselves from this dilemmatic entanglement, passion, authenticity and esoteric hip
555 hop practices are invoked. Zebster argues that if the hip hop ambassadors only relied on the
556 money and the resources provided by the formal institutions the events would not engender

557 real cultural exchanges. He says that the events of such international projects are only made
558 possible in a way that is consistent with hip hop's discourse of authenticity because of
559 individual and informal arrangements between hip hop heads. Zebster says that individuals
560 mobilized their private resources:

561

562 Extract 6

01 most projects work only because people like Uri say 'okay I arrange that five
02 people can stay for two weeks at my friend's place' and stuff like this. 'I come
03 with my own turntables.' So ehm they were all going with a lot of passion.

563 (Personal interview, Berlin, August 2012)

564

565 The travelling European hip hop ambassadors crossing borders to India, and also the few
566 young Indian hip hop artists who received funds through the Project to travel to Germany,
567 were passionate to create colloquial networks and draw on personal resources to transform
568 the short-lived interventions curated by the formal institutions into more informal practices
569 found within hip hop, which were perhaps not intended or even not deemed necessary by the
570 formal institutions. Passion thus seems to provide an 'in kind' provision of networks and
571 resources for formal cultural intervention projects which is ultimately not remunerated or
572 perhaps not even acknowledged by the formal institutions.

573 Singh asked what kind of infrastructures would be needed in India to build the kind of
574 sustainable cultural exchanges the hip hop ambassadors thrive for. Zebster begins his answer
575 by first regretting that the formal organizations do not acknowledge the effectiveness of
576 informal pedagogies:

577

578 Extract 7

- 01 Singh: What kind of infrastructure would you need to build up something like
02 this in India?
03 [...] ((Uri talks about a successful workshop in a school in rural India))
04 Zebster: There's a theory like that if you have passion for something you are
05 willing to learn.
06 Uri: Exactly
07 Zebster: This is something where we ask ourselves why this is not much more
08 used as a method. And like that this let's say kind of interactal learning is
09 like ehm more supported?
10 Singh: Right

579 (Personal interview, Berlin, August 2012)

580

581 Passion results in a willingness to learn and it is therefore a way of knowing that can
582 potentially transform the methods of learning and education (lines 04-05). However, Zebster
583 regrets that the formal institutions don't recognize and support such passionate pedagogies
584 (lines 07-09).

585

586 **Place**

587 He then directly answers Singh's question:

588

589 Extract 8

- 01 Zebster: So the question is what is needed? Like to be honest there is not much
02 needed. Like there is only a place.
03 Uri: We need a place that's it ((claps hands)).
04 Zebster: Where let's say you have maybe a basic financing. You have maybe a

05 room where people can dance. You have like light. You have like ehm a
06 little office. And you can LEARN the people who then teach the others.
07 Especially in dancing it's pretty easy.

590 (Personal interview, Berlin, August 2012)

591

592 A physical place in this account is a prerequisite for the informal, sustainable and
593 intergenerational each one teach one pedagogies hip hop offers. Especially dancing, he says,
594 is an “easy” (line 07) way to engage people in the practices of hip hop just by providing a
595 place. The place creates a possibility for a cipa, a hip hop inflected contact zone that brings
596 hip hop heads together in a specific locality under the common banner of global hip hop
597 production and veneration. In contrast to the short-lived pop-up workshop at a cultural
598 intervention event produced by formal institutions, the place Zebster and Uri envision here
599 represents a real sustainable cultural exchange, i.e. a localized cipa stable over larger time
600 scales. A hip hop place might be initiated by international development financing but will
601 have to ultimately rely on the each one teach one types of transmission between members of a
602 local scene (lines 04-06).

603 The negotiations around notions of place point at the multiscalar nature of global hip hop,
604 recognized by hip hop scholars as processes of localization, glocalization or transculturation
605 (Mitchell, 2001, Forman 2002, Androutsopoulos, 2003, Pennycook, 2007a, Alim, Ibrahim &
606 Pennycook, 2009). A long-term self-sufficient place can anchor hip hop locally and can act as
607 a physical hub in which an informal inter-generational education and real intercultural
608 exchange can occur. Conversely it can make local hip hop scenes globally visible. The *Hip*
609 *Hop Stützpunkt* in Berlin is such a place, where artists like DJ Uri can stay to pursue his
610 deejayin in the city or where workshops and exhibitions can take place and where Zebster has

611 office facilities to manage the place and develop future projects with similar hip hop inflected
612 places elsewhere or with the formal institutions.

613 The *Stützpunkt* thus exhibits degrees of formalization that are able to operate within scales
614 of bureaucratic orders and planned, international collaboration. This is fundamentally
615 different in the many places that we visited in Delhi during our collaborative fieldwork,
616 where hip hop affiliated youth and their friends would spend their early evenings, informally
617 socializing and practicing breakin. These were public spaces like small neighborhood parks
618 or semi-accessible places like ruin monuments, gym spaces, private flats or open courtyards
619 of malls. Local breakers could claim these spaces to practice and transmit hip hop's forms
620 and ideas amongst themselves. The question then is, why is it even necessary for the young
621 Indian hip hop scene to formalize itself and create a place similar to the *Stützpunkt*? We
622 suggest one answer is the wider scale visibility that such formalization engenders. A more
623 formal place, in the form of a community center for example, with a website, an institutional
624 address, and a contact person, would lead to a higher visibility and could thus attract foreign
625 investment, policy makers, social workers, travelling hip hop heads and people working in
626 the creative industry, such as filmmakers or musicians, as well as journalists and researchers.
627 Whereas it is quite difficult for interested people from abroad or outside the hip hop scenes to
628 find out about the places in Delhi where breakin would take place, which we only gradually
629 and certainly only fragmentarily found out about after months of fieldwork in the urban
630 villages, a hip hop center would be better visible to outsiders and would thus allow and
631 promote cultural exchanges. It would put Delhi on the map of the Global Hip Hop Nation and
632 the cultural and pedagogical networks that hip hop affords.

633 A place is ultimately also more sustainable and promises self-sufficiency of the local hip
634 hop scene, as Zebster says in this last extract.

635

636 Extract 9

01 Because ehm (.) especially like I mentioned before in India when you can show the
02 people “look you have to go this way to build your own structure and not let’s say
03 let the business guys take over when like it becomes like interesting. And you can
04 control a little bit the way of the culture.” This experience we wanted to share and
05 build up.

637 (Personal interview, Berlin, August 2012)

638

639 In this account the place does not represent a formal, top-down imposition, but guarantees
640 independence from the forces of the free market. The independent local structures that hip
641 hop heads create themselves promise to produce a sustainable hub in which the elements and
642 the culture can thrive. This is an experience Zebster made in his own extensive career as a hip
643 hop organizer and practitioner, which he now wants to share and develop in the upcoming
644 scenes around the world.

645 Zebster’s negotiations around money, mobility, sustainability, passion and place point to
646 his polycentric and multiscalar positionality in the twin discourses of hip hop authenticity and
647 hip hop internationalization. The complex image that we get is that global hip hop does not
648 simply emerge in the global south, but that it is also extensively shaped by travelling
649 ambassadors from the west. These do not merely bring in resources, money and structure, but
650 they also promote values like self-sufficiency and passion for hip hop to prosper locally and
651 sustainably. The hip hop travelers are, however, navigating a contested zone as they depend
652 on money, networks and structures that seem to be connected to formalizations, which, as the
653 Cypherholic episode shows, potentially become sources of conflict.

654

655 **Conclusion: Continued entanglement**

656 As Singh finished his interview in the *Hip Hop Stützpunkt*, Zebster handed him his business
657 card that had the title ‘Cultural Ambassador’ written under his name. The card also had on its
658 top left corner the official logo of the German Government and its Federal Ministries (a slim
659 vertical bar in the colors of the German flag black, red and gold) but changed the adjacent
660 text to ‘Embassy of the Hip Hop Republic of Germany’ and substituted the German coat of
661 arms (an eagle) with the silhouettes of three hip hop inflected figures: a breaker, a DJ and a
662 graffiti writer, the logo of *MZEE Records* and Zebster’s publishing house *From Here to*
663 *Fame*. What these appropriations of the national in the semiotics of this business card
664 epitomize, we suggest, are the dilemmatic positionalities hip hop ambassadors who travel and
665 promote educational work in international exchange find themselves in. Yet, the business
666 card also epitomizes the creative ways in which hip hop ambassadors rescale and ultimately
667 reconcile symbols of the national and symbols of authentic hip hop to make them appropriate
668 in an international context.

669 As this article has shown, in the discursive repositioning an *informal pedagogy* is indexed
670 through discourses of the authentic or the real, a grassroots structure, as well as through
671 passion, sustainability, self-sufficiency, place and each one teach one ways of transmission,
672 while a *formal pedagogy* is indexed through discourses of state-driven, top-down imposition,
673 mobility, certain degrees of control and planning, supra-local and short-term engagements.
674 We have shown that all this indexing essentially works with scalarity; scales of time, space
675 and socio-culturally constructed metaphors that all operate on higher and lower levels of
676 power. We traced how authenticity is evoked when speakers move between scales to make
677 arguments about hip hop as a site for pedagogy.

678 On, perhaps, a more political level, the analysis pointed to the ways in which hip hop’s
679 cultural forms are being utilized by western nation-states as a cultural intervention in the
680 global south in a way that calls for a reconsideration of the continued effects of colonialism,

681 which, we argue, can include deployments of potentially liberatory popular cultural
682 formations such as hip hop. By employing the perhaps belligerent term ‘cultural intervention’
683 we tried to point to the ways in which hip hop’s informal pedagogies can, when
684 institutionalized, carry with it conflicted messages that align hip hop with liberal western
685 ideologies concerning ‘development’ and its concurrent discourses on hegemonic space, time
686 and identity. What a study of the Indo-German Hip Hop & Urban Art Project and the
687 formalization of hip hop pedagogy reveals, are therefore the continued effects of such
688 historical power structures in our contemporary moment that shape how actors are positioned
689 and how they reposition themselves within the globally informed and locally situated Delhi
690 hip hop scene.

691 While the two authors initially intended to focus on the theme of neo-colonialism in this
692 article, our ethical and political commitments and investments in the hip hop community
693 ultimately led us to re-evaluate the ways we write about our ethnographic interlocutors. We
694 felt that a framing of cultural interventions as neo-colonial endeavors ultimately portrays
695 internationally travelling hip hop educators as long arms of governments and as perpetuating
696 global inequalities. However, as Pardue (2012) makes clear, and we wholeheartedly agree
697 with, we “do not intend to impose monolithic moral judgments on either the state or hip-hop
698 or, for that matter, the ‘popular’” (p. 94). Rather our discussions show that hip hop informed
699 international pedagogy is complexly intertwined in “power structures and historical
700 dynamism” (p. 95) that need to be appreciated more fully by actors involved in such
701 pedagogy to recognize and possibly subvert, if they wish to, some of the dilemmatic upshots
702 of hip hop as it enters and infiltrates international development work.

703 This essay, in addition to detailing the theoretical and political treatment of how the
704 discourse of internationalization is interjected within hip hop, thus also serves as a cautionary
705 note to hip hop practitioners who choose to work within institutional settings, particularly

706 those that bring them across national borders. Our reflection and rumination on the
707 complexities of a ‘job’ that calls for the deployment of a formalized hip hop pedagogy in a
708 relatively new hip hop context like Delhi may help to avoid some of the dangers of such
709 work. Thus hip hop ambassadors need to critically acknowledge their entangled identities and
710 their repositioning practices in international contexts. This we suggest helps to articulate a
711 critical outlook on the discursive repositioning *as* pedagogy that takes into account, and
712 potentially subverts, the twin discourses of internationalization and hip hop authenticity that
713 are at play.

714 We conclude by suggesting that hip hop educators who wish to travel to and teach in the
715 global south, whether under the auspices of a formal institution or by themselves, can begin
716 to develop a critical outlook on their work by acknowledging and possibly subverting the
717 effects of rescaling. An acknowledgement that repositionings are unavoidable when working
718 in international contexts and that the twin discourses of hip hop authenticity and
719 internationalization limit the pedagogues’ engagements on the ground, can engender new and
720 creative possibilities for working with these limited resources. Hip hop’s cutting and mixing,
721 sampling, juggling and scratching seem appropriate metaphors to think of such possibilities.
722 Just as DJs and turntablists are using the limited possibilities of two turntables and a mixer as
723 an instrument to switch back and forth between records to create new musical patterns out of
724 existing ones, hip hop pedagogues working internationally can use their repositioning
725 practices strategically and creatively, passionately, to create a new form of pedagogy – one
726 that is invested in overstanding the rough and rugged multiscalar context of global hip hop.

727

728 **Acknowledgements**

729 We are grateful to the editors of this Special Issue, as well as to two anonymous reviewers,
730 for their excellent and insightful comments on earlier drafts of this article. Also, we are

731 indebted to Zebster and Rawdr, not only for taking the time to conduct extended ethnographic
732 interviews with Singh, but also for reviewing this article and making critical interpretations
733 and providing us with additional and clarifying information. We hope we have represented
734 them accurately enough. All remaining flaws and inaccuracies are surely our own.
735 Furthermore, Singh would like to thank the Economic and Social Research Council for
736 supporting his doctoral project and Dattatreyan would like to thank Wenner-Gren Foundation
737 for their support while he conducted fieldwork in Delhi.

738

739 **Transcription conventions**

740	TEXT	loud, emphatic speech
741	“text”	Direct speech
742	(.)	Micropause
743	?	Rising intonation (question or uncertainty)
744	.	Falling intonation (end of utterance)
745	((text))	Transcriber’s comments

746

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