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globální hiphopová kultura**

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**From real to right: Authenticity, Czech Rap, and  
Global Hip Hop Culture**

BACHELOR THESIS

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Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci vypracoval samostatně s  
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## **ABSTRACT**

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This bachelor thesis deals with the notion of authenticity in hip hop subculture in American, global and Czech contexts. The aim of the thesis was to investigate the notion of authenticity in hip hop subculture and how it is affected by globalisation, localisation and intercultural exchange. The thesis comprises four main chapters. In the first chapter, I write about the general notion of authenticity and authenticity in intercultural exchange. The second chapter deals with the hip hop subculture itself, its elements, its history and the notion of authenticity in it. The third chapter is about globalisation, the spread of hip hop and how it affects the concept of authenticity. In the last chapter, I move to the Czech context and deal with localised Czech hip hop and authenticity in it.

Keywords: hip hop, rap, globalisation, localisation, Czech rap, graffiti, authenticity, intercultural exchange

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## INTRODUCTION

Hip hop is a global cultural movement that took over the world, grew into one of the biggest music industries and influenced millions of people around the globe, including me. Like many of my peers, I grew up identifying myself with the culture and listening to hip hop music. To this day I remember my fascination with how grounded in reality were the lyrics of rappers compared to other musical genres. Rappers talking about their everyday lives and struggles, that were not that dissimilar from mine own. I decided to take this fascination with the realness and look at hip hop subculture and its authenticity within the context of local/global and intercultural exchange.

The thesis comprises 4 main, post-introductory chapters. In the first of them, I deal with the notion of authenticity. I outline what the concept of authenticity means, examine what are issues with the notion and present a definition that will work as the basis for the concept in the thesis. Following that, I also present authenticity as an intercultural concept and other ideas that happen in an intercultural exchange including globalisation and localisation which are terms important for the following chapters.

The next main chapter deals with Hip hop subculture itself. The first subchapters explain hip hop as a subculture, its core elements and their origin, as well as brief history of hip hop presented in decades. This is to explain the culture and also underline the racial, social, economic background of hip hop and demonstrate the spread and commercialisation of the culture. Subsequent subchapters build on this as they talk about authenticity in hip hop, the “Keeping it real” mantra and issues of mainstream and underground hip hop scenes.

As hip hop was still forming and evolving in America it was also spreading across the world. The globalisation of hip hop is a theme of the third chapter, which dives into the spread of hip hop into different cultural contexts. Examining how the culture had to change to become globalised and then localised, what are the global themes and values and how did it affect the concept of authenticity.

The last chapter follows hip hop to the Czech context, finishing the local-global-local model that this thesis is working with. Investigating spread of hip hop to Czech context and local concept of authenticity.

Similarly, to the shift, this thesis is trying to prove, which appears in hip hops authenticity as it becomes globalised and then localised, there was a shift in the name of the thesis. The

original name of the thesis was starting with the phrase “Keeping it real”. This phrase reflects the inherent authenticity in hip hop and is commonly used by rappers and such. However, after some research and inspired by a quote by a founding father of hip hop the phrase “from real to right” seemed to more accurately represent the authenticity in global hip hop as “keeping it real” loses its meaning with the shift to a different cultural context, as argued in appropriate chapters.

## 1 THE NOTION OF AUTHENTICITY

The concept of authenticity seems to be commonly used and generally understood in everyday life. People want their watches or clothes to be authentic, they want to have an authentic experience in a foreign country or they want to enjoy authentic food in a restaurant. We look at artists and ask if their work is authentic or even whether they are authentic themselves. We value if they are true to the genre or the form and judge them when they appear fake or deviate from the norm, standards or roots. It is clear that authenticity has a positive connotation and it is sought after. When something is authentic it is meant to be true, real, genuine, honest, trustworthy or with integrity compared to false, fake or unreal (Moore, 2002; Straub, 2012). Vianni and Williams (2009) argue that authenticity is an inherent quality of some object, person or process and because it is inherent, it is neither negotiable nor achievable and cannot be taken away (p. 2). However, the actual meaning of authenticity can be different depending on the thing of which authenticity is being questioned or even the cultural or personal standpoint of the person that is reviewing it. Or in other words, as Mursic (2013) simply puts it what is authentic for one does not have to be authentic for another one (p 48).

When talking about material things as clothes, paintings or even things like signatures and documents, it is the origin and the legitimacy that are mostly questioned when regarding authenticity. Is it really an original product made by the brand? Is it designed by the designer it is named after? Was it painted by the real painter or is it just a work of an imitator? Generally, we value the real and the authentic material objects because of the inherited quality and craftsmanship but also because of artistry and creativeness. Original art will be more valuable than copy executed with the same amount of quality as we perceive those properties as important. Therefore, we often connect authenticity with the material value of things. However, even this process by which we decide this material value based on authenticity may be subjective at times. And sometimes the value of authenticity maybe even sentimental. A piece of jewellery that was kept in a family for generations may not have any real historical or monetary value but it can have value for the owner as it is something genuine from their ancestors. Either way, this notion of authenticity in this sense is closely connected to the rise of materialist culture and consumerism (Straub, 2012, p. 11). This makes sense as it is in our nature and our best interest in today's society to look for quality, reliability and value. But this is different when judging an object, a piece of art or the whole art form, as well as it is different to being true to oneself in the philosophical view of

existential authenticity – which can be summarised as a state of being and sense of self. That is where the ambiguousness of the notion often comes to light.

When authenticity is judged from the cultural and social narrative, the meaning is different to the material one. In these contexts, authenticity can be relative and broad as it suddenly is not a question of origin or perceived value but a question of being true, consistent or in line with some idea, ideology or form. Vannini and Williams (2009) claim that Authenticity refers to qualities that people in particular space and time choose or agreed to represent the ideal. Meaning that what is authentic changes with the changes of tastes, beliefs and values in society (p. 3). However, this definition seems to be limiting authenticity only to the consensus of people within the society or the form and is disregarding authenticity that comes out of being true to some sort of cultural practice, identity or self-belief. Seeing authenticity as only something that is agreed upon can prove to be fallacious or at least not in line with every definition. For example, in the quickly changing modern world, we often may use authenticity to describe that what stood the test of time and remains. Authentic can be a traditional skill, family custom or an oral tradition passed for generations. Whether people agree about the authenticity of those, doesn't change whether they are inherently authentic or not.

To classify authenticity Moore (2002) comes with a more complex definition directly connected to music but applicable in other forms and to the examples above as well. He sets “First-person authenticity” (authentic to itself), “Third person authenticity” (Being true to traditions, people in the past, and the form), and “Second person authenticity” (Being in line with the listeners and their values). With “the second person authenticity” aligns himself Mursic (2013), who claims that music or any symbolic practice needs to be seen as authentic, to be accepted by and resonate with the listeners. He sees authenticity as a process of acceptance and talks about a range of authenticity from “complete rejection (inauthentic) to full acceptance (authentic) (p.48). Moore's definition is broad enough and will be the basis for authenticity in the next chapters. However, it still only applies to a person acting within some set context. In his original definition that was a musician in a genre. Moore is asking questions about how one compares to standards given by the artist himself, standards given by the origin and traditions of the genre, and standards of the listeners. If the standards are met, we can consider it as authenticity. However, an issue comes up when the standards change as the form or culture travels outside its original context.

## 1.1 AUTHENTICITY AND INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGE

Another place where authenticity creates a space for discourse is when viewed in the context of intercultural exchange and globalized/localized culture. Each shift of culture into a different context has an impact on how it is perceived and accepted. It all depends on the local cultural standards and the engagement between the intercultural agents. When two intercultural agents engage certain ideas can be distinguished in such participation. These ideas define how the agents interact, understand and exchange within the cultural context they are dealing with.

These agents can have many variations. It can be two people from different cultural backgrounds engaging in a conversation. Or a person engaging with a different culture or a community bound by a certain cultural association or commonality. For example, an expatriate engaging with the culture of the foreign country that he lives in or a tour guide engaging with a group of foreign tourists. The local culture and the group of tourists are bound by their cultural commonality and that will be reflected in the interactions. It can also be any of the mentioned agents dealing or participating in a single part of the external culture. Think of a nation (the agent) appropriating a foreign holiday (the culture), or an Asian person having a haircut that originated in African tribes, appropriation of metal music in Botswana (Tutton & Barnett, 2017), or Korean urban youth imitating American hip hop. In all of these exchanges, we can analyse the exchange of culture and in all of these authenticity plays a role as a question of validity and exactness to the original.

These exchanges can be on many different scales. From mentioned one to one engagement to a massive commercially driven cultural imperialism. Such cultural imperialism can be understood as a process of social influence by which a nation imposes on another one its set of beliefs, knowledge, values or behavioural norms (Beltran, 1978, p.184 as cited in Gray, 2007). This can be easily connected to the era of colonization where nations forced their culture onto colonized nations e.g., Britain forcing their language and culture in India. However, it can be still be applied today, most notably in form of Americanization. In such process, western and particularly American products are influencing other cultures (Gray, 2007). Coca-Cola sells in every country in the world, McDonald is a household name as well and the world consumes American media and entertainment as a global and everyday commodity.

This can be easily connected back to authenticity. Such influence of foreign culture can have impacts on the authenticity of local culture deviating it from its roots. For example, traditional music being forced away or heavily altered by the impact of global American-influenced pop music. But even the globalised “forced” culture can lose parts of its authenticity in order to assimilate or fit into a foreign culture. Using previous examples, McDonald in Japan may have a localized menu that is largely different to the American “authentic” one. This is not the best example as marketability and capitalism take precedence over alleged authenticity in this case. But sometimes even before the culture leaves its original place to become globalised it needs to be commoditised or commercialised, which can lead to loss of authenticity even before any intercultural engagement or exchange. The concept of global becoming local is sometimes called glocalization. Or an adaptation of global or globalized culture into the local context. Glocalization sometimes works as a balancing act, if the local culture cannot be completely overwhelmed. But still, local culture has often more value to people than the culture that was globalised and then localised as people may see the original and local as more authentic or they may have negative presumptions about globalisation and cultural imperialism e.g., destroying local cultures and identities.

For such intercultural exchanges to be successful, the cultures sometimes need to have certain commonalities as completely foreign concepts and ideas may lead to complete exoticization of the culture that is entering the new context. These commonalities can be beneficial in both small scale and big scale intercultural exchanges. In personal exchanges, we call these transcultural commonalities and they can help understand each other's cultures or just create a common ground and be a good starting place for a positive relationship. When talking about bigger scales intercultural exchanges, especially exchanges that include some foreign or global cultural phenomenon entering the local culture, we can distinguish common themes and values. The foreign culture that is trying to enter local culture needs to showcase some set of universal values that can appeal to or be applied in the local context. An example of this can be the success of Americanised and commercialized holiday of Halloween in Japan. The holiday was brought into Japan mostly by big theme parks who made use of the commonality of dressing up in costumes being a favourite pass time of the Japanese, as well as part of the holiday. However, this shows the problem of authenticity in these exchanges as the Japanese holiday is disconnected from the original one as well from the

Americanised/commercialised one and it is simply a fun time for the locals without any previous traditions or meaning.

The process of culture accommodating to a new context is called acculturation. Which is generally a process of culture or its agent assimilating to a new culture. Usually, the more dominant culture prevails in these situations. An expatriate in a foreign culture is much more likely to adopt the culture of everybody around him than force his culture on them. But at the same time, some strong culture or its part may enter a foreign context and instead of changing itself to be in line with local culture, it forces or influences a change onto the local one. As already mentioned, when I talked about cultural imperialism. However, the influence is most likely going to be bilateral and altering authenticity both ways.

## **2 HIP HOP SUBCULTURE, ORIGIN AND AUTHENTICITY**

### **2.1 HIP HOP SUBCULTURE**

It is not exactly easy to precisely define hip-hop as over the years it grew from underground street parties in poor streets of Bronx into a massive global movement and phenomenon for young people, as well as into the multibillion-dollar music industry. At its core hip hop is a culture that consists of its own thinking, fashion, music, dance, lifestyle and more. But not everyone knows the full extension of hip hop as a culture and people are not fully aware of all the core elements hip hop consists of, often mistaking it or using it as a synonym for rap music. This is understandable as hip-hop culture sort of transcended the core elements that were at its inception and became its own self-defined thing with rap music being the most prevalent part of it. However, rap music is only one piece of hip-hop. At its core, and since its creation, hip-hop is a combination of four main street elements: Djing, graffiti, b-boying, and MCing. (Price, 2006; Hess, 2010; Chang, 2005). But with growth and rising popularity other parts of the culture developed as well including beatboxing, specific fashion and own language.

#### **2.1.1 DJING**

DJ or a disc jockey in the simple form is someone that plays pre-recorded audio to an audience. While today we know DJ's to be at concerts behind turntables, originally the first DJs presented music over the radio. Only later with the growth of the music industry, they started playing music live and performing at parties and school dances (Price, 2006, pp. 21-22).

DJing is a core element that was a founding block of hip hop. And it found its realisation within the hip hop movement first. Behind it stood DJ called Kool Herc. DJ Kool Herc emigrated to the Bronx from Jamaica, where he started DJing. However, when he started playing at house parties, he found that the New York crowd would not dance to reggae (Forman & Neal, 2004, p. 224). He stopped playing reggae and, in an attempt, to give dancers what they wanted he started combining the breaks of two records together. He also started talking over the records which would later lead to the creation of MCing. He would play certain parts of the record over and over, cutting from one record to another (Forman & Neal, 2004, p224) creating a unique sound. With two turntables, numerous speakers, and an

extraordinary collection of records, Kool Herc created the backdrop for rap music and the subsequent Hip Hop Culture (Price, 2006, p. 22).

This type of record braking and mixing became immensely popular and soon other DJs began copying Herc's style with additional own touches. For example, DJ called Theodor, who was influenced by Herc to become a DJ, invented record scratching to make a unique sound and a new instrument out of the records (Forman & Neal, 2004, p. 224; Price, 2006, p. 24). He moved records back and forward on the turntables to create this sound effect. This record scratching, which Theodor invented by accident, became one of the most recognizable and household symbols of hip hop music in the coming years (Price, 2006).

One of the most popular and influential DJs that were inspired by Kool Herc was Grandmaster Flash. According to Price (2006) if Herc was the architect then Grandmaster Flash was the contractor who developed rap music (p.24). He created a technique called "quick mix theory" to maximize the smoothness of transition between the records. Works of these and more DJs made it possible for other elements like breakdancing and MCing to emerge.

In today's hip hop DJing is still prevalent and influential. Although, DJs these days are often more focused on digital music production than on breaking and mixing live. Technological developments in music are also made DJing more available to the masses, where one can trying mixing and breaking a record for example on a computer or using turntables that do not actually use vinyl records and can work digitally with any record.

### 2.1.2 B-BOYING

B-boying also more often known as breakdancing is an element of hip hop culture focused on movement and dance. Which is composed together into one complete street art form. As with the previous core parts of hip hop culture the b-boying originated before hip hop itself from other dances most notably from disco.

While dancing was already present in the street culture of Bronx and parts of New York from which hip hop emerged, the innovations made by DJ Kool Herc and other DJs were very important to the creation of breakdancing as we know it today. According to Price (2006) dancing previously was connected to gangs where each gang had a group of dancers

but with outside parties staged in safe locations by the DJs without a place for gang violence everybody could participate in this creative form of dancing (p. 32)

Breakdancing is a very acrobatic dance that is trying to push the human body to its limits and it makes use of a combination of footwork and acrobatic floor spins to create an almost martial art look merged into individual and urban expression. (Forman & Neal, 2004, p. 226; Price, 2006, p. 32). This is very easily seen in many of the moves that breakdancing uses. Some moves according to Forman & Neal (2004) are moves like Floor lock where the dancer uses one hand and they would spin their bodies and kick out their legs or moves like hand glide or flow where the dancer is spinning while balancing on elbow (p. 226).

### 2.1.3 MCING

The MC is short for master of ceremonies and can be used for anyone that is hosting a ceremony or an event. In hip hop, MC is often a synonym for a rapper but the original role of MC was just to assist the DJ and keep the crowd engaged (Price, 2006, p. 36). Like DJing, MCing came to existence with the assistance of DJ Kool Herc who was looking for a way to keep the crowd excited and entertained. MC Coke La Rock who started performing with him became the first notable MC (Price, 2006, p. 36). At the start, MCing was closely connected to the other musical elements of hip hop of DJing and B-Boying. MCs would assist the DJ with the crowd and sometimes even directly influence the b-boys by calling their names or the moves they need to do (Forman & Neal, 2004, p. 18).

While their first responsibility was to help the DJ, MCs started to develop their own styles and rhymes coming from preceding oral traditions and they soon started to gain their own popularity and followings. And shortly became equals or even overshadowing the DJs. This was helped by the fact that MCs could also work without a DJ and use a live band or later pre-recorded music on cassettes. (Price, 2006, p. 36). The technology advancements and rising popularity of MCs soon changed the dynamic not just between DJs and MCs but also in the whole hip hop scene. According to Price (2006) popularity of MCing lead to record labels attempting to gain on up-and-coming culture and sought-after talented MCs who became superstars and popular-culture icons and took all the money and credit (p. 36).

This shift in hip hop and its inner relationship led to rap becoming the main driving force of hip hop culture and it largely moved hip hop into the mainstream spotlight. Because of this shift, the MCs or the rappers were in the public eye representing hip hop as a whole culture.

#### 2.1.4 GRAFFITI

Graffiti, street writing or spraying on walls and other public areas like trains, buses, stations etc. is a common sign in pretty much any urban area and can range from simple writings or signatures also called tags to massive colourful artworks covering whole trains or buildings. While many consider it vandalism graffiti at its core is an art of expression and rebellion, as well as one of the main driving forces of hip-hop spread.

Graffiti same as the other key elements of hip-hop precede the creation of hip-hop itself. In a sense, we could trace graffiti back to prehistoric paintings. However, the modern form of graffiti came into existence in the twentieth century (Price, 2006, p. 28). By then graffiti was a product of urban revolutionaries who rebelled against parents, police and other authorities and later it became a tool for gangsters who used graffiti to mark their territories and promote their gangs (Price, 2006, p. 28).

The start of modern-day graffiti is credited to a teenager called CORNBREAD in Philadelphia who was writing his name around Philly subways to attract the attention of a girl. (Chang, 2005). In New York, a tagger called TOP CAT 126, who moved from Philadelphia, introduced the Philly-style tagging to New York City leading to another major growth in graffiti culture (Price, 2006, p. 26).

Graffiti by the 1970s grew into a complex art form and was no longer limited to gangs and their territories (Hess, 2010, p. 152). But with the growth, it also became a growing political issue. Especially when it gained widespread media exposure after New York Times published an article about tagger TAKI 183, which helped spread graffiti into other areas (Price, 2006, p. 30). Cities were actively fighting against graffiti spending big funds to erase it from walls and trains but without a major decrease in the number of graffiti (Forman & Neal, 2004; Hess, 2010).

Today's graffiti is a very diverse and rich art form. With many styles, forms and motives on which artist can lean on when creating their artwork. And while cities are still trying to fight the vandalistic part of graffiti by catching and punishing vandals legally and destroying their

artwork, they are also offering legal alternatives. For example, public places where artists can do graffiti legally. Nonetheless, graffiti is an inherent part of urban culture and look. However, there are some doubts about how is graffiti connected to hip hop as it is not interconnected like the other 3 elements and can exist on its own or even with a connection to different music culture. But the truth is that most graffiti is done by people involved in hip hop culture and in some contexts, it is directly connected to rap.

### 2.1.5 THE FIFTH AND OTHER ELEMENTS

Price (2006) talks about a fifth element that was pushed for during the 1980s by an influential DJ Afrika Bambaataa and his group Universal Zulu Nation. They tried to spread element called “Knowledge, Culture and Overstanding”. They argued that culture moved away from the original intent of activism and individualism to the pursuit of money and fame for selfish gains (p. 37).

As hip hop grew into a massive movement other parts of culture came into existence in complementation to the rest of the elements, and while they are not considered core elements, they are an important part of the culture. Things like fashion connect well to the individualist and expressive site of hip hop, therefore for most of the hip-hop followers, it is an important part of their hip hop expression. Colourful and sporty clothes originated from the need for B-boys for free clothes to move and dance in and exploded into urban fashion on its own. Other elements of hip hop can be things like street language, beatboxing or slam poetry. Hip hop in this sense is not a connection of four elements but a full lifestyle.

## 2.2 HISTORY OF HIP HOP

### 2.2.1 THE 1970s

As mentioned previously the core elements of hip hop preceded the notion itself. There was already graffiti in the streets, dancers on the blocks and DJs were playing at parties. However, it is generally the start of hip hop is attributed to Jamaican DJ Kool Herc, also known as the father of hip hop, who in 1973 started DJing at his sister block party in Bronx New York (Hess, 2010, p. xxxii). That, together with his creation of record-breaking, lead to fusing the first core elements and starting hip hop. Other DJs started imitating and expanding his style most notable names were DJ Afrika Bambaataa and Grandmaster Flash who complemented and extended his vision (Forman, M., & Neal, 2004, p.45). Price (2006)

considers the creation of Universal Zulu Nation by Afrika Bambaata, also called the godfather of hip hop, as a formal beginning of hip hop culture (p. 108). From there the culture began to spread. While considered predominantly black culture Latinos are considered to be central to Hip Hop (Kelley et al., 2006), as well as Whites' participation in the culture is acknowledged (Alim, 2010).

Price (2006) in his chronological view of the history of hip hop is tracking how in following years hip hop grew, DJs were expanding and innovating their turntable techniques and in 1975 MCing evolves with Coke La Rock and Clark Kent being the first MC team. And in 1978 the industry starts using the term rap (pp. 108-109).

Hess (2010) then tracks the first rap record released in 1979 in New York and Philadelphia one of which was Sugarhill Gang's "Rapper's Delight", which was the first international Hip hop hit, as well as he mentions the first transitions of hip hop to the west coast (p. xxxiii). Price (2006) also mentions the creation of the group Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five and the creation of the first record label dedicated to rap music and the first known female rapper Sweet Tee recording her first single in 1979 (p. 111).

### 2.2.2 THE 1980S

The 1980s were full of important names and influential artists as the mid-1980s marked a start of an era that is today considered to be the golden age of hip hop. It is also a decade during which hip hop was heavily spread thanks to interest from radios, magazines and filmmakers. With the spread of hip hop, the 1980s saw another massive explosion of hip hop records, the first records coming from places like Chicago, Atlanta, Oakland, Cleveland or Miami (Hess 2010, pp. xxxiv-xxxix). The early 1980s gave birth to the first West Coast single, as well as many notable names. In 1982 the first international hip hop tour happened. Kurtis Blow had the first gold-certified gold single in 1981, in the same year the first white hip hop group called Beastie Boys was formed. Run-DMC is formed a few years later. In 1983 Ice-T with his raps gave birth to West Coast gangsta rap, which was later popularized in 1988 by N.W.A with their record and album "Straight out of Compton" in the same year public enemy releases their "It Takes a Nation to Hold Us Back" album (Price, 2006, pp. 112-120).

### 2.2.3 THE 1990S

The 1990s were following the success of the previous decade continuing the golden age of hip hop. Hip hop artists rose to fame and were becoming popular-culture icons (Price, 2006, p. 16). It was also time when hip hop was breaking the language barriers as Spanish speaking artists started to have a big success in Latin America (Forman, M., & Neal, 2004, p. 69). During this time, we also saw the peak of the gangsta coast rivalry. With two major labels of Bad Boy Records and Death Row Records and most notably Tupac Shakur and The Notorious B.I.G engaging in a conflict. During the 1990s we saw a rise of many household names like Eminem, 50 cent, Wu-Tang Clan, Jay-Z, Cypress Hill, Mobb Deep, Coolio, Snoop Dogg, Nas and more. In 1991 NWA has broken up and its members Ice Cube, Eazy-E and Dr Dre engaged in a diss track battle. The 1990s were also a peak time for the business side of hip hop. Massive corporations used hip hop in their marketing strategies and a lot of hip-hop oriented labels and recording studios were started during this period often by artists themselves. There was massive media attention on the hip hop scene most notably due to the conflicts and marketability of the genre.

### 2.2.4 THE 2000S AND THE PRESENT

The turmoil of the 1990s left hip hop in a strange place as it over this, and the previous time periods grew from local movement in the Bronx to global billion-dollar music industry. Hip hop by this time could be found everywhere in television, films, fashion or video games and was often used as a marketing tool for young people all over the world. Hip hop artists were winning awards for their music and were enjoying a life full of stardom and money, creating a disconnect from the original culture. Yet, on the other side of this industry were still kids from the streets trying to express themselves in hip hop, the same way the generation before them did, but this time often with more monetary vision than before. Of course, many artists from the previous decades continued with their successful careers in the 2000s and to the present. And new artists are still emerging and hip hop is still present in the streets. But this shift in hip hop to the mainstream dynamically changed the culture and created many questions about its authenticity. Hip hop is still going strong today. Although, some argue that it is already past its peak and many look at the old rap as the “true” rap. In the 2010s hip hop was still evolving and many new styles like trap rap, mumble rap, emo rap and more came into existence. Some of these yet again create a discourse of authenticity as they are disconnected from the original culture or are connected to a different one.

## 2.3 AUTHENTICITY IN HIP HOP

Authenticity within hip hop is a complex issue that is deeply rooted in the culture and has been almost since its creation. It is highly debated in hip hop studies, as well as among people playing their active role within the culture, yet it is still ambiguous and it is hard to properly define what is authentic and what is not. This uncertainty follows well the first chapter of the thesis where I discussed the notion of authenticity. To answer whether something or someone is authentic within hip hop culture is to ask the right question without having a way of judging the answer as the answer itself may not be authentic, it is impossible to verify or up to interpretation. If following Moore's classification of authenticity, the rapper's authenticity will be dependent on what type of authenticity are we examining. If the rapper is a student of old school hip hop, creates music well-fitting the rap genre and his music evokes the right feelings in the listeners, yet the content of his rap is not consistent with his upbringing experience or race, can he be considered authentic?

The questions of authenticity in hip hop are tightly connected to race, origin, perception, self-identity, underground and mainstream, and the global music industry. It also seems to work on a scale as not many people can be authentic in every mentioned way. Also, the questions of authenticity can be different based on the period of hip hop. Price (2006) is tracing the first notion of questioning the authenticity to the first spread of hip hop outside its local epicentre. With hip hop starting to travel outside the original neighbourhoods, city and demographic, subtle differences in styles and sounds started to emerge, creating the first background for the issue of authenticity within hip hop culture (pp. 45-46).

### 2.3.1 KEEPING IT REAL

When The notorious B.I.G got asked what advice would he give to the hip hop community he said "Just to keep it real, stay real to yourself" (Loyal Productions, 2015). And while somewhat cliché answer within the hip hops circles to a cliché question, it is this phrase of "keeping it real" that has been always strictly following the academic discourse of authenticity within the hip hop culture and music.

The general concept of authenticity in hip hop and rap is often concealed behind this phrase. Yet, what does it mean to "keep it real"? A simple answer is being true to something. But it is this something that remains hidden behind semantics and interpretations when talking

about authenticity in hip hop. McLeod (1999) in his article and study of authenticity claims that while keepin' it real is the popular phrase it does not have rigid or fixed meaning and its meaning is changed depending on the context (p. 139). Tickner (2008) thinks that the phrase reflects hip hop's attempt to put itself as a frontier of musical authenticity, activism and representation of poverty, violence and discrimination among urban youth (p. 124). This creates another way of thinking about the mantra. Instead of "I keep it real" as in individual being true to hip hop cultural form or just staying true to myself, we can have "We keep it real" where "we" means hip hop community and keeping it real means being a true representation of social, economic and political issues of the streets. This possibly divides the hip hop community as only a certain group or part of the culture may consider themselves the true representation e.g., mainstream versus underground. But this division can exist locally as well. "We" from this street, district, a city know better about the struggles than the others from other streets, districts or cities. Therefore "we" are the real. This is often seen in connection to the big cities like Los Angeles or New York. Where rappers consider themselves something more because they are from the streets of these hip hop epicentres.

Rappers love to use this phrase or connection to realness in their lyrics in all situations. Prodigy of Mobb Deep starts his verse to the legendary song Shook Ones Part II from 1995 dedicating his song to "the real ones" and immediately presenting himself with his own "realness" as a reference to being tough. The Game has a song called "Keepin it real", where he is talking about life, claiming he is saying it as it is or, in his words, keeping it real. In a song with the same name, Shaggy tells the listener to keep it real as in "stay true to yourself". These two songs with the same name are showing how the phrase can be used differently. Nas called himself "the last real nigga alive" in a song with the same title. Tupac mentioned being real several times in one of the most brutal disses ever produced "Hit 'em Up" in fact calling yourself real and the other one fake is quite typical for rap conflicts, which are quite common practice among rappers. Being real or keeping it real is not just a reference to authenticity but seems to be a tool of self-validation as well. The way rappers may brag about their money, girls or drugs they brag about how real they are compared to the rest.

Many more artists made connections to these concepts in their lyrics. Keeping it real and realness is a concept that has been on the minds and in the lyrics of rappers for a long time. To a degree when many artists started to hate it and consider it overused (McLeod, 1999). And it was arguably used by some only as a catchphrase or an attempt to paint themselves in a better light. DJ Kool Herc thinks that the phrase sounds cute. But it has been pimped

and perverted. (Chang, 2005; "Introduction", para. 8) and Hess (2007) in his book renders the phrase as archaic (p. 60).

With that being said value of authenticity can still be seen in responses that rappers can get when they are proven to be fake. A notorious example of this is a white rapper Vanilla Ice, who was exposed for lying in his autobiography claiming he is from Miami Ghetto when in reality he grew up in suburbs in Dallas, which followed serious backlash and created tough times for future white rappers (Hess, 2010, pp. 158, 398). Many other rappers and artists were caught lying about their background to appear more connected with the street origin of the hip hop culture. Lying about gang connections like Lil Wayne (Wintemute, 2021) or even fabricating whole criminal careers like Akon (Akon's Con Job, 2008). Interestingly many of these lies and fabrication did not have any major impacts on the actual careers of the artists or they never got enough attention to do so in the first place. Showing that this type of authenticity is not necessarily that important to the average listener of hip hop. Yet, it is enough important to the hip hop community to talk and write about and is important enough to the artists to lie about.

Either way, there seems to be a strange line between what is considered true and fake. Many artists get away with being insincere in their lyrics in the name of artistic expression. Edwards (2012) in his rapping guide is claiming that while a lot of rap has autobiographical nature, plenty of the things said in rap text are made up in the name of creativity – rappers do not go out killing every day, even though it may appear so in their lyrics (p. 9). And the truth is that most hip hop listeners do not have issues with this. As an example, can be mentioned Coolio's "Gangster Paradise" from 1995, one of the most decorated hip hop songs of all time is about gangster life that Coolio, the author, never lived nor claimed to ever live. This comes back to the question of what keeping it real means. In his search for an archetype of a rapper McLeod (1999) concluded that aspects of being authentic or keeping it real is to be true to yourself, be black and hard, represent the underground and the streets, and be in touch with hip hop's legacy (p. 145). According to Forman & Neal (2004) Artists who gain success in hip hop are expected to stay connected to the streets or the "hood" and thematically present it in their lyrics to stay real (p. 207). Highlighting the connection between authenticity and staying true to the streets. Harkness (2011) puts the archetypal rapper as a black male from the urban core, who is non-commercial, highly skilled and true to himself. However, he mentions that there is some room for variations and rappers that lack in one aspect of "realness" put emphasis on a different one (p. 288). For example, a

white rapper from suburbs may emphasize being true to himself and his rapping skillset, while a female black rapper may embrace her blackness and street origin as a way to compensate for her gender.

This variation seems to be accepted by hip hop audience. So, while still ingrained in hip hop, “keeping it real” partially lost its meaning in the modern global hip hop landscape. And, in many eyes, it is not considered relevant. Some are still calling for the aforementioned street and racial authenticity but the truth is modern artists are often coming from many different economical and racial backgrounds. And they are not only black gangsters from the streets of Bronx and Compton and the average listener and the mainstream scene seems to accept it.

### 2.3.2 MAINSTREAM, UNDERGROUND AND SELLING OUT

Another issue connected to hip hop and its authenticity is the concepts of mainstream and underground hip hop scenes. While this is still connected to the issue of realness discussed previously, it is also a separate topic on its own. The concept of “keeping it real” is mostly connected to individuals and their expressions and how it is relevant to the core concepts of hip hop in regards to authenticity. But the problem of hip hop becoming mainstream is a battle between the whole entertainment industry, marketing, consumerism, exploitation of artists and how one can stay true to the form without selling out. The influence of hip hop can be seen in films, videogames or commercials, many brands use hip hop to sell their products or they make products directly for the hip hop community. This usage of hip hop created separation from its origin in streets rendering mainstream and therefore it many eyes inauthentic.

It can be hard drawing a line between mainstream and underground. There is no precise amount of fame or record sold that would make one considered to be mainstream as there is no precise time when hip hop became mainstream itself. The creation of the underground hip hop scene is somewhat backwards moving as hip hop started as an underground local movement. Price (2006) contributes this to it being a response to growing mainstream influence on hip hop and to a rise of gangsta rap, a subgenre that showed very little of the other core elements of hip hop apart from MCing (p. 149). DJing, graffiti and breakdancing did not have the monetary possibilities of rap music and were moved by the participants to an underground community that is trying to preserve and grow the culture (Price 2006, p.149).

But hip hop is not meant to be hidden. It is a form of expression and lifestyle that is there to be seen and heard. However, with the massive growth of rap music and following interference from major record labels, there was an effort to stay true to the form without selling out as those, who sold out are not considered authentic as they represent money and not the streets. McLeod (1999) selling out strictly as going “commercial” or removing self from an independently owned network of distribution (p. 141). However, Hess (2007) makes a distinction between selling (records) and selling out. Selling out means giving part of self-identity for-profit and sacrificing artistic control and integrity to a record label (pp. 60-61). In this case, if an artist can remain in his artistic control and stays true to himself, he can be considered authentic while still being successful and therefore part of the mainstream. While

the underground artist may talk about the social issues in his neighbourhood, the mainstream rapper may rap about his money and success. If both are true, they can be rendered authentic from the first-person perspective but it can be argued that the mainstream rapper is not authentic to the form anymore in the sense of the “third person authenticity”.

Price (2006) also talks about the growth of technology like MP3 and digital file-sharing which allows an artist to distribute their music in a way that was previously reserved for mainstream media (p. 50). Thus, allowing even underground music to be shared and enjoyed by a large mass of people and therefore blurring the line between mainstream and underground.

### 3 GLOBALISATION OF HIP HOP

Hip hop took the world by storm. At the same time, it was still making its ways through the US and still searching and fighting for its own identity, it was already spreading into a global context. Mostly with early hip hop films, early global tours from groups like Public Enemy and then with the following explosion of media.

In an introduction to Chang's (2005) book, DJ Kool Herc says "Hip-hop is the voice of this generation. Even if you didn't grow up in the Bronx in the '70s, hip-hop is there for you. It has become a powerful force. Hip hop binds all of these people, all of these nationalities, all over the world together." ("Introduction", para. 6)

These words of hip hop's father well reflect the globalisation of hip hop as it went from local block parties in the Bronx to a global mass culture that can be found in most urban places around the globe. Hip hop transcended its original roots and became a way of expressing themselves, their everyday reality or a form of activism and protest for street youth everywhere. But with such globalisation, there was an inherited shift in authenticity. In global hip hop, the archetypal American rapper is losing its meaning and with him is losing its meaning even the phrase "keep it real". Dj Kool Herc following the quote, above when discussing the aforementioned phrase, said something that inspired the name of this thesis. He thinks that "Keeping it real" has become just another fad word. It sounds cute. But it has been pimped and perverted. It ain't about keeping it real. It's got to be about keeping it right (Chang, 2005; "Introduction", para. 8). This shift from real to right is a shift that somewhat well summarizes hip hop authenticity and its globalisation. As the movement went global the authenticity goalpost moved. Authenticity will be different for an American rapper from the ghetto to a white rapper from Germany. The German rapper cannot "keep it real" the same way American rapper can but he is able to use the hip hop platform the "right" way as a form of activism or expression.

But as hinted before for a culture to become global, it needs to have certain universal values, themes and appeals that can surpass the original cultural, social and economic context it rose from and be again applied in a different cultural environment. In simpler words, it needs to be first globalized and then localized. However, when a culture travels from one context to another, the means by its travels, as well as the different cultural settings it enters can influence it and shift certain concepts within. When considering hip hop and rap globally and locally we are most likely to find certain deviations in the implementation and

appropriation of the culture in local contexts in contrast to the global/general idea and the original “authentic” one. The social and economic conditions of the streets of Paris will be different to the streets of Toyko and both will differ from the streets of the Bronx in the 1970s of which hip hop originated. The means by which the culture travels to those places is also important as it can influence the form or the form itself has to be altered before it can travel to a foreign context. This creates another way of looking at the concept of authenticity in Hip hop. This time the question is not from an individualistic point of view in connection to the original culture nor is questioning the impact of capitalistically oriented mainstream industry on it. But it is rather looking at the whole culture as it travelled and asking how did it have to change for the intercultural exchange to be successful, how close did it remain to the original and what were themes and values could be applied in the new cultural context.

### 3.1 SPREADING OF HIP HOP TO GLOBAL AND EUROPEAN CONTEXT

Similarly, to its spread in the US from the mid-1980s hip hop travelled around the world gaining a mass of non-English speaking fans (Brooks & Conroy, 2010, p.7). The commercialisation of the scene and the existence of means by which global culture could travel lead to hip hop entering many different countries around the world, where it could become localized. Hip hop so rapidly entered channels and networks of international commerce and cultural exchanges through which cultures and commodities became globalized that today there is almost no place that hip hop didn't penetrate (Hall, 2015). The spread of hip hop globally leads to the creation of new epicentres and leading scenes of hip hop. Mitchell (1999) thinks that for a sense of innovation, surprise, and musical substance in rap one even needs to look outside of the US to countries like France, England, Germany, Italy and Japan (p. 3). All these countries developed their unique hip hop scenes reflecting their own cultural hip hop identity.

Tickner (2008) contributes the extensive travel of hip hop to distinct geographical locations to two ways of travel which are mass media and migration and also suggests that hip hop in both exhibits a series of shared meanings confirming an existence of a trans-local network of cultural practices (p. 128). In her work, she tracks the spread of hip hop to Latin American countries of Colombia, Cuba and Mexico. A big part of this spread were migrants that were around the US. They interacted or got in contact with hip hop culture in places where African-Americans and Latino mixed. And then brought aspects of hip hop back to the

countries of their origin. However, quite a big impact on the spread of hip hop in those places had media as well. Most notably films, TV shows and radio broadcast from the US. The spread through migration is going to be more applicable for countries that are close to the US or some other hip hop epicentre and the spread through media is more prominent in the rest of the world. Bennet (1999) attributes hip hop in Germany to the US rap groups featured on radios and MTV Europe (p. 81). This can be applied to the rest of western Europe as well. In eastern Europe, the spread was a little bit tougher due to political situations but after the fall of the Iron Curtain, hip hop eventually got even there. This trend of spread by media is also true for the rest of the world. Hare (2017) puts the spread of hip hop in Korea on the shoulders of technological innovations and the internet. Alfian (2013) in a study tracking hip hop in a city in Indonesia concludes that most hip hop fans there get their information about hip hop from the internet followed by TV and radio. But of course, as expressed before this spread and its means creates an issue of authenticity.

### 3.2 AUTHENTICITY IN GLOBAL HIP HOP

As mentioned in previous chapters hip hop has a rich racial and cultural history, Caribbean and Latino influence on the culture is especially notable. However, as part of the commercialisation of hip hop, the culture was reflected predominantly black in an attempt to make the culture more marketable (Tickner, 2008, p. 124). But due to hip hop becoming this tool and vehicle for global youth all over the world seeing it as an expression of African American culture is simplistic (Mitchell, 1999). According to Hall (2015), some analysts saw hip hop spreading to Africa as a sort of homecoming. Despite the previously mentioned white and Latino influence and the African-American culture being heavily diverted by that point from its African roots. Mitchell (2001) mentions Bulgarian rap groups that are imitating black rappers. But while local hip rap can sometimes be seen as an appropriation of African-American culture, the local context, in which it evolves, may engage in different cultural and political forms that can include anti-globalisation and anti-Americanism (Pennycook, 2009, p. 192).

This paradoxical usage of hip hop and can be seen as an attempt to distinguish itself from the original or the mainstream. An example of the paradoxical evolution in hip hop and rap can be Grime music in the United Kingdom. While not necessarily part of hip hop as its musical origins are in UK club music, Grime and its evolution was heavily influenced by

rap music. Many of the current UK artists are operating on an edge between what would be UK rap and Grime. Proven by seamless collaborations between UK grime artists and American rappers. Yet, many of them, in an attempt to remain truthful to their form, would appear anti-rap or anti-hip hop with slogans like “this is grime, not hip hop” despite the obvious influence and similarities between the two genres. Disconnect from the American form is quite a common theme among foreign rappers to establish their own image or authenticity.

Mitchell (1999) in his book *Global Noise* which tracks hip hop outside of the USA mentions that in the initial stages of foreign hip hop often mimicked the U.S one but soon rapidly developed (p. 11). Implying that at first, it was a mere imitation of the original rather than implementation of some transnational values. Hip hop arrival to the Czech context, which will be talked about in the later chapter follows this model as well. But can also be found elsewhere. Tickner (2008) mentions that the first at the Cuban hip hop festival all the lyrics and music were imitations of U.S rap and the first rappers were rapping in English only to later implement their own language. But some cultures stayed with just imitation for example Hip hop in Korea is to this day just a trendy imitation of black culture (Hare, 2017). While there is no authority that can call inauthenticity in this imitation, in connection to the origins, the hip hop that was implemented as the voice of marginalized youth and reflects real social situations is generally going to be rendered more authentic or sincere.

Implementation is how most of the world took hip hop in. And while the form that travelled through media, was commoditized to be stereotypically black and commercialised. It still managed to keep its values and transform them into global themes to be localised in such implementations. Hip hop is the voice of street youth, it is a way of expressing the everyday struggles of the streets, poverty, violence, political activism, racism or just a way of artistic expression. These seem to be universal global values that are being implemented by local youth based on their needs and environment. Mexican rapper may talk about the violence of urban youth or the struggles of living poor and near the U.S-Mexican border (Tickner, 2008, p. 133). In Germany, hip hop can be used as a voice of migrant youth that is dealing with cultural and social struggles (Bennet, 1999). The UK has a problem with gang violence but one that is different to gun violence in the US as there are very few firearms in the UK and it is mostly knife gang violence. This reality will be reflected in the rap texts. In peaceful countries like Japan, the focus of artists may be on criticising oppressive systems (Mitchell, 2001) and so on. One global common theme is also hip hop language. Alim (2010) identifies

something called Hip Hop National Language, which creates a commonality in the usage of hip hop specific language among participants of hip hop culture worldwide.

In conclusion, hip hop changed before going global as it had to become a commodity to travel beyond the US context. It was presented as black music despite the mixed origin and was disconnected from its background by the mainstream media. Yet, it managed to keep its general core values of representing the struggles of street youth, as well as parts of the original language.

## 4 HIP HOP IN CZECH CONTEXT

### 4.1 THE SPREAD AND HISTORY OF CZECH HIP HOP

The origin of Czech hip hop can be traced back to 1984 when Lesík Hajdovský with his group Manželé records first hip hop demo called Jížák, named after one of the songs included. Lesík however, did not even know he was attempting hip hop. He heard “New York, New York” by Grandmaster Flash & The Furious five on German radio and inspired by the music he decided to recreate this unknown genre. He figured the theme of the original text and decided instead of New York to rap about South City (Jižní město or Jížák) in Prague where he lived. But Lesík was just imitating the sounds and general idea, he didn't know or wasn't interested in any of the cultural meanings behind the music he was trying to copy. Proven by the group's venture to hip hop being short-lived and only experimental. Despite that, the group's attempts are considered to be the first hip hop in the Czech context.

Some other groups tried the way of imitating after the Lesík as well. Group Piráti (Pirates) tried to implement rap and metal together in the late 1980s after listening to rap mix brought from the UK. However, the proper cultural move of hip hop as a complete subculture to the Czech context did not come in a form of imitation American music as it did for Lesík but it came mostly on the back of graffiti. Graffiti in Czechoslovakia came after the revolution in 1989. Of course, some previous forms of writings on the walls existed before that (Smolík, 2010, p. 198). But after the revolution young people could travel, mostly to Germany, where graffiti already was present and inspired by what they saw brought the art style home. Graffiti is inherently connected to early Czech rap. Rap often played only a supporting role to graffiti artists and it was a common theme in Czech rap texts during its rise. The post-revolution situation allowed for other means by which hip hop could travel to the Czech context. Czech youth could listen to records of American and other rap music on radios and TV channels and a big part in the development of the culture had also internet in the late 90s.

In the mid-1990s a Czech hip hop Prague group Chaozz experienced mainstream interest and success. Becoming the first mainstream hip hop artists in the Czech context. They appeared on TV, held high positions in charts and were signed under a commercial label. But while successful, the true emergence of Czech hip hop and its identity came with the underground. On its front was a group called PSH (Peneři strýčka Homeboye) who put down the groundwork from which could the rest of the scene emerge. Under their independent label, they were releasing demo records as far back as 1993 but most notable was their first

studio album *Repertoár* in 2001, which was highly successful and allowed PSH to rise to the top of the scene. Other prominent groups and rappers started emerging around that era. Names like Indy and Wich, LA4, P.H.A.T and later Supecroo, Tafrob, Rest and many more rappers rose to prominence in the following years. A string of independent labels created mostly by artists started emerging during the late 2000s. In a similar timeline grew Slovakian rap as well, with which is Czech hip hop strongly connected.

Today hip hop is still popular among Czech youth today and became an integral part of musical culture. It also became part of European and Global hip hop flows. An example of this can be Czech Hip Hop Kemp which attracts people from around Europe to come every year to see European, as well as American hip hop stars (Oravcová, 2016). Other examples can be many collaborations between American and Czech artists.

## 4.2 AUTHENTICITY IN THE CZECH HIP HOP

Due to social and demographical differences, the means it travelled and the previously mentioned form of globalised hip hop it comes as no surprise that Czech hip hop is different from the American “original” one. Rappers seem to acknowledge this and they place their texts into the correct setting and disconnect themselves from the American image. *“I’ve never lived in a ghetto, I am from South city, I live in a block of flats, I don’t need guns, whores or pockets full of money, that’s not what hip hop is about”* raps Orion in a song called *Penerský desert* from the year 2000. *“We are not gangsters, we don’t shoot cops, we don’t smoke crack, sometimes we spray a train”* shows similar thoughts Indy on a song called *My 3* from 2002, as well as underlining the importance of graffiti. Orion and Indy are talking about how the American version of hip hop, which is most likely presented in media, does not apply to them in the Czech context. Despite this awareness of this disconnect Czech rappers still like to pay homages to the American scene and like to compare themselves to American legendary rappers and their slang. Oravcová (2017) who has done extensive research on authenticity in Czech hip hop concludes that knowledge of the history of hip hop culture is very important to the rappers and helps listeners to know with which era given rappers identify (p. 269-270). The use of language inspired by American hip hop is quite common. Supporting the existence of National Hip Hop Language. Phrases like “big up”, “whack”, “flow” are commonly used in Czech Texts.

During the early times of hip hop imitation, it was even in the Czech context understood as black music. But later with the aforementioned spread of hip hop through Graffiti, forming own identity took precedence. As previously mentioned, hip hop even in its globalised form remained its position as a frontier of expression for troubled urban youth. However, Oravcová (2017) thinks that message in the Czech context had a secondary role as there was no social urge for such expressions and the primary reasons for the implementation of hip hop were aesthetics and it being something new and fresh. Instead, she puts as the number one rule of authenticity in Czech rap usage of Czech slang (p. 269). The very early Czech rap was not necessarily shallow but it was not a true representation of the everyday struggles of the streets. That changed as hip hop grew and the underground scene became prominent in the late 1990s and early 2000s. In those time rap lyrics became more accurate representations of the rappers' lives. Talking about their graffiti art and struggles with the police or just rapping about the lives in Czech cities. It also became a way for minorities like gypsies to express their struggles connected to living in a ghetto (Ruzicka et al., 2017). Rapper Gipsy and his group Gipsy.CZ gained popularity by combining hip hop and traditional Roma music, as well as implementing being a minority into their image and message. Despite the lack of need to express themselves, hip hop became a medium for all kind of messages including political criticism and satire.

Similarly, to the American scene, in Czech hip hop, there seems to be an issue of authenticity in distinguishment between mainstream and underground. It is easy to come across an opinion that today's modern rap is too commercialised or too much about money or bragging and it is underground where the "real" hip hop is. Similar opinions can be found in regards to the old school rap in comparison to the modern one. According to Oravcová (2017), the issue of authenticity in commercial success is the degree to which rappers are "selling out" to gain and satisfy the broadest audience. To an extent, it compromises the integrity of the lyrics (p. 271). Similarly, to the trends in the US, modern Czech rap often turns in topics to money, success, showing off cars or talking about drugs, girls and partying. In contrast to the underground or old school rap that talks about graffiti, streets and everyday struggles, often taking critical stances to the aforementioned mainstream.

Czech hip hop lacks the lengthy history and racial background of the American one. It also isn't necessarily bound any to any location. Although hip hop started and grew mainly in Prague, rappers come from all over the country. And they are not often questioned based on their origins or city. Oravcová (2017) based on her interviews puts archetypical Czech rapper

as a strong man who comes out of the streets, is cursing a lot, and is selling weed or some other drugs (p. 274). However, selling drugs came to rap later following the American trends. Some rappers are even anti-drug, although weed is a quite common theme, whether the Rapper is rapping about his involvement in selling drugs or not. With this lack of racial background, history or location. Authenticity in Czech rap usually comes back to a battle between mainstream and underground.

## CONCLUSION

The goal of this thesis was to explain hip hop culture and investigate the notion of authenticity in it. First within itself and then in the context of intercultural exchange. The focus was on hip hop in its original American context, in its globalised form and then in the again localised Czech context. Following a model of local culture becoming global and then local again to fit a foreign cultural context.

It is hard to precisely define authenticity, despite its everyday use, as it is at its core a deeply philosophical concept and it is easy to go through a rabbit hole of academic literature debating this topic without drawing any solid conclusions or definitions. For our purposes, authenticity is something that is inherently given but also depends on from which point of view it is being questioned. For inspecting authenticity in hip hop the thesis uses a model that looks at authenticity in three ways. How is the artist authentic or honest to himself, how is he true to the form and its tradition and how is he in line with the consensus of listeners or other participants in the culture and their values. This is however only applicable only in a specific given context. For cultural global phenomenon like hip hop the context changes with each country it appears in. And for it to become global it needs to shed its bounds to the local and original context and become commoditised to a general form that can easily travel and be localised. It also needs to contain a set of universal values that can appeal to a wide variety of people in different cultures. Otherwise, it would become exoticized.

For hip hop, the original context is the Bronx in the 1970s from which it emerged. It came as a way for mostly Black and Latino youth in economically troubled areas to express themselves. But swiftly spread across America and then across the world into all kinds of social and economic environments. Hip hop consists of 4 core elements. DJing – the art of creating and mixing music using turntables, MCing- also known as rapping is a way of rhymic spoken lyric on a beat, Graffiti – a street art form of writing and spraying on walls and other public surfaces, and breakdance – and acrobatic hip hop dance. Hip hop started with DJing in hands of DJ Kool Herc. However, soon MCing or Rapping became the most prominent part of hip hop. Hip hop and mainly rap grew commercially and became a part of mainstream American and global culture. The underground vs Mainstream is one part of authenticity discourse in hip hop. Authenticity is a topic tightly connected to hip hop since its first variations and is often hidden behind the cliché phrase “Keep it real”. The phrase itself is vague and according to some, it is overused, without meaning or archaic. Realness is however priced commodity among rappers and a way of self-validation but it is not

necessarily that important for the listeners of the modern rap music landscape. As hip hop grew commercially the importance of authenticity seemed to fade away. In underground scenes, it seems to be still valued, together with the other elements of hip hop, which were not that commercially viable and therefore were pushed to seclusion.

Hip hop spread across the world and touched urban youth everywhere. The social and economic conditions however vary across different cities and countries and with them what is local hip hop about. For hip hop to become global it needed to be commoditised. Hip hop was spread by migration and mostly by media. The version media version of hip hop was highly commercialised and was trying to sell an image of black culture. The early foreign hip hop were mere attempts to imitate American hip hop but shortly it implemented itself in the local context using the commonality of being the voice for troubled urban youth to express their problems. Localised hip hop often tries to create its own image and authenticity disconnected from the original American one often held American hip hop to high standards. A similar route had Czech hip hop as well. First attempts were imitations of the sounds without any cultural meaning and the following spread was also motivated by mostly aesthetics, instead of the need to express a message. But soon enough, with the growth of the underground and the spread of graffiti, hip hop became a way of expressing issues or lives struggles even of the Czech youth. Czech rappers disconnect themselves from the American image but value the original roots. And hip hop in the Czech context also created its own archetypes, issues of authenticity and mainstream against the underground. Authenticity however is not that deeply rooted in Czech hip hop like it is in the US one due to it being much younger, without racial background and by the means and reasons it travelled to the Czech context.

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## SUMMARY IN CZECH

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá tématem autenticity v subkultuře hip hop v Americkém, globálním a českém kontextu. Cílem práce bylo zkoumat pojem autenticita v hip hopové a jak je ovlivněna globalizací, lokalizací a mezikulturní výměnou. Bakalářská práce obsahuje 4 kapitol. V první kapitole píše o obecném pojmu autenticita a autenticita v mezikulturní výměně. V následující, druhé kapitole se zabývám subkulturou hip hop, jejími elementy, historií a pojmem autenticity v ní. Zaměřením třetí kapitoly je globalizace hip hopu, jeho šíření a jejich vlivy na koncept autenticity. Poslední kapitole se věnuji přesunu hip hopu do Českého kontextu a zaměřuji se na lokalizovaný Český hip hop a jeho autenticitu.