

# Global Dichotomies on a Local Scale

A Grounded Theory Approach to Turkish Hip-Hop Culture



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**Abstract:**

The concepts of 'Old School' and 'New School', peculiar to hip-hop's lexicon, have long been framed by theories of subculture heavily drawing on a binary scale of authenticity and inauthenticity. This dichotomy is widely used to characterize a discursive conflict between the authentic aspects of hip-hop music and its excessively commercialized versions undermining hip-hop's counter-hegemonic potential. However, studies applying that binary scale to local hip-hop cultures as an ideal type tend to obscure the contextual nature of hip-hop's terminology. The application of that theoretical framework results in a serious reductionism regarding the in-group/out-group dynamics within hip-hop cultures, namely 'Old School' being the authentic, non-commercial underground, and 'New School' being the inauthentic, commercial mainstream. Building on the principles of grounded theory, this thesis has developed a bottom-up approach, specific to the context of the research, in order to avoid shortcomings stemming from preconceived theories, and has theorized participants' own interpretation of the context. Following the sequential application of textual data gathering and intensive interviews, six discursive dimensions regarding the in-group/out-group conflict between 'Old School' and 'New School' hip-hop in Turkey have been discovered. Consequently, this thesis has made both methodological and contextual contributions to the literature. Methodologically, it has revealed the drawbacks stemming from the deductive nature of subcultural theories, as well as the discursive reductionism that these theories suffer from. Contextually, it has demonstrated that the ways in which people draw in-group/out-group boundaries in hip-hop cultures are more sophisticated than the dichotomy of authenticity and inauthenticity can grasp, by setting Turkey as a counterfactual example.

Keywords: Grounded theory, hip-hop music, subcultures

## **Popular Science Summary:**

Hip-hop music has long been valorized as an insurgent culture rooted in disadvantageous social groups. However, the music of the oppressed has recently been appropriated by diverse social backgrounds and cultures following the spread of hip-hop culture from America to the rest of the world. The globalization of hip-hop as a cultural product has led to severe discussions declared in the name of the real meaning of rap music in various settings, since the genre which was once known as a cultural medium of resistance is now turned into a commercial product. The conflict concerning the essence of hip-hop music has manifested itself in an internal cultural contradiction, namely between the labels ‘Old School’ and ‘New School’ hip-hop, having different interpretations and sets of values regarding rap music.

No sooner than the world-wide proliferation of hip-hop culture, hip-hop’s internal conflicts have been appropriated and interpreted with a local flavor by the youth abroad, meaning that the group conflict between ‘Old School’ and ‘New School’ hip-hop has turned into a global discussion inherent to all hip-hop cultures around the world. These labels have become strong signifiers of one’s relationship between hip-hop music and identity, to an extent that the perceived threat to the cultural interpretation of hip-hop music evolves into reactionary in-group demarcation. The distinction between these labels have often been interpreted from the perspectives of subculture. In other words, in both scholarly and public debates, the in-group/out-group distinction between ‘Old School’ and ‘New School’ hip-hop has been characterized as a conflict arising out of the commercialization of the genre.

This being the case, the concept of ‘Old School’ has been deciphered as the signifier of underground, authentic rap, whereas ‘New School’ has been illustrated as a commercialized, inauthentic version guided by market imperatives. However, considering that hip-hop has been adopted by different cultures outside of its country of birth, treating these terms as if they have universal characteristics, regardless of the context in which they are invoked, would amount to neglecting their local differences. Therefore, in order to reveal local differences concerning the meanings that are associated with the concepts of ‘Old School’ and ‘New School’ peculiar to hip-hop’s lexicon, this study set available frameworks aside. Based on the participants’ own experiences, this study analyzed the dynamics of the in-group/out-group distinction between the ‘Old School’ and ‘New School’ hip-hop in Turkey, and demonstrated that the concepts of ‘Old School’ and ‘New School’ have no fixed or rigid meanings, such as authentic and inauthentic, but rather that the meanings that are associated with them can change depending on the context.

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**Table of Contents:**

**CHAPTER 1: Introduction ..... 7**

1.1 Defining the Problem ..... 7

1.2 Process, Questions, and Contributions ..... 9

1.3 Scope of the Study..... 11

1.4 Outline of the Research ..... 12

**CHAPTER 2: Literature Review ..... 14**

2.1 The Role of Literature Review in Grounded Theory ..... 14

2.2 Foundational Literature Review..... 16

    2.2.1 *Theories of Subculture*..... 16

    2.2.2 *Theories of Authenticity*..... 16

    2.2.3 *Hip-Hop as a Subculture* ..... 17

**CHAPTER 3: Research Methodology ..... 18**

3.1 Validity of Grounded Theory Principles ..... 18

3.2 Adopting Grounded Theory Principles ..... 19

3.3 Coding in Grounded Theory ..... 19

    3.3.1 *Initial Coding*..... 20

    3.3.2 *Focused Coding*..... 20

    3.3.3 *Theoretical Coding*..... 21

    3.3.4 *Memoing*..... 22

    3.3.5 *Constant Comparison*..... 23

3.4 Emerging Theory..... 23

3.5 Constructivism ..... 23

**CHAPTER 4: Data Collection and Sampling ..... 25**

4.1 Gathering Rich Data..... 25

4.2 Methods..... 25

    4.2.1 *Textual Data* ..... 25

    4.2.2 *Intensive Interviews* ..... 26

4.3 Sampling..... 26

    4.3.1 *Textual Data* ..... 26

    4.3.2 *Intensive Interviews* ..... 27

4.4 Ethical Considerations..... 28

**CHAPTER 5: Research Findings of the Textual Data ..... 29**

5.1 Presenting the Emerging Theory From Textual Data ..... 29

5.2 Discovering Category One ..... 29

    5.2.1 *Speech Community* ..... 29

    5.2.2 *Cultural Laborers*..... 30

5.2.3	<i>Cultivating Ethical Selves</i> .....	30
5.2.4	<i>The Category of Community Workers</i> .....	31
5.3	Discovering Category Two .....	32
5.3.1	<i>New Media Technologies</i> .....	32
5.3.2	<i>Representational Bias</i> .....	33
5.3.3	<i>Rootlessness</i> .....	35
5.3.4	<i>The Category of Convergence</i> .....	36
5.4	Discovering the Core Category .....	37
5.4.1	<i>Core Category of Performative Contradiction</i> .....	37
<b>CHAPTER 6: Research Findings of the Interview Data</b> .....		<b>39</b>
6.1	Presenting the Saturated Theory From Interview Data .....	39
6.2	Space, Class, and Hip-Hop Music.....	39
6.3	Poetics and Politics of the Space.....	40
6.4	Poetics of Hip-Hop Music, Territorialization, and Identity .....	41
6.5	Urbanization, Deterritorialization, and the Disappearance of Place-Based Identity....	43
6.6	The Birth of New School Hip-Hop: Reterritorialization, Technology, and the Death of Poetry .....	44
6.7	Rage Against the Machines: The Struggle Over Language and Human Agency in Hip-Hop Music.....	48
<b>CHAPTER 7: Interpreting the Data</b> .....		<b>52</b>
7.1	Presenting Discourses Resulting From the Multi-Method Approach .....	52
7.2	Old School vs. New School.....	52
7.2.1	<i>Artistic Dimension</i> .....	53
7.2.2	<i>Philosophical Dimension</i> .....	53
7.2.3	<i>Political Dimension</i> .....	53
7.2.4	<i>Social-Psychological Dimension</i> .....	53
7.2.5	<i>Cultural Dimension</i> .....	54
7.2.6	<i>Social-Locational Dimension</i> .....	54
<b>CHAPTER 8: Debating the Literature</b> .....		<b>55</b>
8.1	A Critique to the Literature .....	55
8.2	Terminology in the Literature .....	55
8.2.1	<i>Critique I: Shortcomings of Deductive Approaches</i> .....	57
8.2.2	<i>Critique II: Discursive Reductionism</i> .....	57
<b>CHAPTER 9: Conclusion</b> .....		<b>59</b>
9.1	Overall Summary .....	59
9.2	Discussion .....	60
9.3	Suggestions For Future Research.....	63

## **CHAPTER 1: Introduction**

### **1.1 Defining the Problem**

Rap music has spread to every corner of the world. In both scholarly and public debates, it is celebrated and valorized as a creative form of cultural expression with which those on the margins can amplify their voices. For decades, the discourse of marginality ranging from economic and racial inequalities to the devastating effects of urban projects on local communities stayed at the forefront of rap music. However, rap recently branched into sub-genres that are more commercial and mainstream. The stories of the margins are replaced by narratives of financial success, the joy of excessive consumerism, and sexual desires. These commercial ramifications within the genre culminated in severe internal cultural conflicts in the US, where hip-hop was born, namely between ‘Old School’ and ‘New School’ hip-hop having different interpretations, musical styles, and sets of values regarding rap music. However, America’s monopoly on hip-hop warfare was overturned, as with the intense commercialization of hip-hop culture during the 1990s, rap music had turned into a full-fledged commodity to be exported as a cultural product (Price, 2006). As a result, rap music went beyond its national boundaries to be appropriated by youth cultures abroad, and became a ‘‘glocal’’ artefact (Peterson & Bennett, 2004).

What emerged from that cultural hybridization of hip-hop was not only the globalization of US-based cultural elements, received with an emancipatory joy by the youth who found an opportunity to enunciate their experiences of otherness, but also the universalization of the cultural warfare between the ‘Old School’ and ‘New School’ hip-hop that had happened there and its contaminating influence on the youth abroad, eventually leading to severe discussions in various settings declared in the name of the real meaning of hip-hop. Since then, hip-hop’s underlying essence came to be known as being anchored in a state of perpetual combat, constantly seeking an antagonistic element to define itself against; be it the East Coast versus West Coast, activists versus criminals, sell-out records versus the non-commercial spirit of the underground, and finally, ‘‘Old School versus New School’’ (Nelson, 2001, p. 87). Therefore, what hip-hop was and has become turned into a continuous discussion inherent to all hip-hop cultures around the world.

Following the appropriation of hip-hop’s global dichotomies on a national scale, the source of this perpetual combat between ‘Old School’ and ‘New School’ interpretations of hip-hop was mostly

analyzed by scholarly circles who had a deep interest and a firm background in subcultural studies (e.g., Mcleod, 1999; Mitchell, 1998). Growing institutional control over the culture guided by record companies slowly smelling out the potential profits that could be derived from the music of the angry youth, along with the excessive commodification of the genre which paved the way for hip-hop's mainstream consumption, alarmed the scholars of subculture about the ongoing struggle between the authentic aspects of hip-hop music and its commercialized version undermining hip-hop's counter-hegemonic potential. The fact that most of the musical cultures who had once an insurgent potential, such as rock, punk, and grime, shared the same faith of being swallowed by the larger, mainstream culture, it was a piece of cake for those scholars to jump to the conclusion that rap music also suffers from the same subcultural anxiety arising out of the commercialization. Although it was partially true, this perspective had its shortcomings.

The concepts of 'Old School' and 'New School' peculiar to the hip-hop's lexicon have long been framed by the subcultural theories heavily drawing on a binary scale of authenticity and inauthenticity. The scale was so useful that the similar results were produced for almost every hip-hop culture around the world based on that dichotomy, such as the hip-hop cultures in Tanzania (Clark, 2013), Czech Republic (Oravcová, 2013), Germany (Bower, 2011), and Australia (Maxwell, 2001). Each of these studies adopted the same binary framework as their theoretical orientation, resulting in 'Old School' being the authentic, non-commercial underground, and 'New School' being the inauthentic, commercial mainstream. This being the case, the in-group/out-group distinctions within hip-hop cultures were reduced to a simple discursive contrast between authenticity and commercialization. However, when analyzing hip-hop cultures outside of the USA, inheriting that binary scale as an ideal type might obscure the contextual differences in hip-hop's terminology. If hip-hop cultures are glocal artefacts within which specific cultural hybridizations take place, then the discourses that are appropriated to maintain in-group/out-group distinctions between 'Old School' and 'New School' hip-hop may vary depending on the context in which they are invoked. Turkey was chosen to be that context in this study, as Turkish hip-hop began to gain a more prominent position in Turkish popular culture and thus discussions inherent to it recently turned into a field of scholarly debates (e.g., Buhari-Gülmez, 2017; Hintz, 2021; Mişe, 2020) where valuable contributions can be made.

To avoid drawbacks that might be stemming from the structuralist limitations of subcultural theories, which have long concealed contextual differences in local hip-hop cultures, this thesis elaborates on the

in-group/out-group distinctions between ‘Old School’ and ‘New School’ hip-hop in Turkey by adopting a bottom-up approach specific to the contextual area being researched. Instead of repeating the previously conducted studies, fitting the data into preconceived theories of subculture, grounded theory, which would allow the researcher to collect and analyze qualitative data to construct an explanatory theory grounded in the data themselves (Charmaz, 2006), was deemed to be the appropriate methodology for this research. This methodology was considered suitable for two reasons. First of all, the glocal nature of hip-hop communities would have rendered any meta-narrative external to Turkey’s unique contextuality invalid. Secondly, proper research questions must be derived from the collected data in order to dodge the risk of imitating the results of the current literature, and grounded theory provided enough flexibility to derive these questions from collected data.

## **1.2 Process, Questions, and Contributions**

The research process can roughly be divided into five stages, namely the foundational literature review, the collection and analysis of textual data, the conducting and analysis of interviews, the interpretation of the results that emerged from both methods and finally the meta-level discussion regarding the current literature. It is important for the reader to know that the research process had an iterative nature, meaning that the researcher went back and forth between the literature review, data collection, and analysis in order to reach a saturated understanding of the research topic.

After conducting the foundational literature review on hip-hop cultures, in the early stage of the study textual data was gathered from the internet with the intent of discovering contextual differences regarding the in-group/out-group distinction between ‘Old School’ and ‘New School’ hip-hop in Turkey. Following the initial coding process performed on the textual data, the findings were found to be strongly similar to the current literature at first glance, as the discontent with commercialization also appeared to be a matter of disagreement in Turkish hip-hop community. However, going back and forth between the literature on hip-hop subcultures and the initial findings, serious contextual differences that could not be grasped by the existing concepts and theories were discovered. To saturate these differences, focused and theoretical coding were consecutively performed on the textual data, while the iterative process between the literature and occurring findings was actuated several times. As a result, the skeleton of the theoretical edifice was built and the following research questions emanated from the textual data:

- (1) *Which norms, values, and practices were constitutive of the Turkish hip-hop community prior to the emergence of in-group/out-group distinction between ‘Old School’ and ‘New School’ hip-hop from the perspective of ‘Old School’ members?*
- (2) *Which social processes may have altered these norms, values, and practices in a way that an in-group/out-group distinction between ‘Old School’ and ‘New School’ hip-hop in Turkish context would occur from the perspective of ‘Old School’ members?*

Following the results derived from the textual data, intensive interviewing was chosen to be a complementary method as it allowed the researcher to decide where to and how to sample next based on his/her analytical needs, so that the knowledge gaps that occurred in the previously collected data could be fulfilled. The initial results of the textual data appeared to be insufficient in determining the range of discourses by which the in-group/out-group distinction was carried out, insofar as it didn't provide enough material to map out social processes that might have led to the emergence of such discourses. In that sense, intensive interviews constituted the middle stage of the study as a follow-up inquiry that would reinforce the analytical power of the previously acquired narrative aiming to fulfill these gaps. Based on the participants' own narratives, the conflict between the 'Old School' and 'New School' hip-hop in Turkey was contextualized in relation to material social processes<sup>1</sup> underlying the emergence of in-group/out-group discourses.

As a result of the multi-method approach, the wide-spread affordance of new media technologies, the expansion of transportation networks all over the urban space, the growing impact of technology in hip-hop music, and finally the intertwining of diverse social backgrounds, were found to be the social processes of hybridization underlying the discursive conflict between the 'Old School' and 'New School' hip-hop in Turkey. Results that emerged from the different methods were presented separately to provide better transparency to the reader as to the process of theory building in grounded theory. In the later stage, the study moved from the material level to the discursive realm in order to identify the discourses concerning the in-group/out-group distinction between the 'Old School' and 'New School' hip-hop that were embedded in the results of both methods. In that sense, six discursive dimensions were discovered in response to the following research question:

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<sup>1</sup> During this study, the word material was used to indicate non-discursive aspects of social reality, in relation to the discursive reductionism that the current literature suffers from.

(3) *Which discursive strategies does the ‘Old School’ hip-hop community in Turkey apprehend to preserve and maintain their group distinctiveness against ‘New School’ hip-hop?*

In the final stage of the study, a meta-level discussion was presented regarding the shortcomings of the available frameworks in the current literature stemming from their over-reliance on theories of subculture. Based on the fact that six discursive dimensions were discovered regarding the in-group/out-group distinction between the ‘Old School’ and ‘New School’ hip-hop in Turkey, it appeared to be that reducing hip-hop’s terminology into a dichotomy of authenticity and inauthenticity suffers from serious drawbacks. First of all, the deductive nature of the available studies tends to force the data to fit into that binary scale, and hence overlooks the contextual nature of the hip-hop’s terminology. Secondly, the theory itself is a reductionist one as it confines social reality into a discursive realm by neglecting the material social processes through which discourses take their shape. In light of these criticisms, the researcher interprets the findings in the discussion section and suggests that not every in-group/out-group distinction in hip-hop cultures might be referring to a subcultural scuffle.

Consequently, this thesis has made both methodological and contextual contributions to the literature. Methodologically, it has revealed the shortcomings stemming from the deductive nature of subcultural theories, as well as the discursive reductionism that these theories suffer from, by taking a bottom-up approach. Contextually, it has demonstrated that the ways in which people draw in-group/out-group distinctions in hip-hop cultures are more sophisticated than the available theories can grasp, by setting Turkey as an empirical example.

### **1.3 Scope of the Study**

The study focused on the in-group/out-group distinction within the Turkish hip-hop community, and revealed the presence of contextual differences in the Turkish hip-hop scene which were not available in the current literature. The emphasis was placed on the ‘Old School’ hip-hop community striving to preserve and maintain their in-group identity by drawing boundaries between insiders and outsiders. It is important to inform the reader beforehand that the data regarding ‘New School’ hip-hop wasn’t collected, as the category itself was created by the ‘Old School’ hip-hop community to indicate more popular forms of hip-hop music whose recipients do not bear any group characteristics under that category. So the

category merely exists as a discursive construct perceived as a threat by the ‘Old School’ hip-hop community.

Another point worth mentioning is that the analysis presented in this study was rooted in participants’ own interpretations. How research participants made sense of their experiences, processes, and actions were of more importance during this study than relying on already existing frameworks to explain the social phenomena at hand. In other words, participants’ own experiences of the context and their own interpretive framework was the primary source of theorization.

Two shortcomings occurred during the data collection. First, no female participants were found for the interviews which posed inclusivity problems, mostly because the Turkish hip-hop community is male-dominated. Second, the travel constraints imposed by the pandemic compelled interviews to be conducted via Zoom, which would normally have had to be conducted in participants’ daily setting as hip-hop is well-known for its celebration of identity in relation to one’s neighborhood (Mitchell, 1998). Each of these shortcomings has had an impact on what the findings represent. All participants were selected from İstanbul’s gentrified periphery and had lower- to middle-class backgrounds. Further methodological issues such as data collection and sampling are discussed under the methodology section.

#### **1.4 Outline of the Research**

The role of the literature review in grounded theory is discussed in Chapter 2, since it is highly contested among the followers of grounded theory as to whether the researcher should conduct the literature review prior or subsequent to the empirical investigation. Following the discussion, the justification is provided for performing the literature review in the early stage of the study. Then, the foundational literature review is briefly presented to provide a contextual background to the reader, and to justify the selected approach. In Chapter 3, the validity of grounded theory principles is discussed, and the process of differentiating the focus of the study from the available frameworks is presented. Moreover, the process of theory building in grounded theory is carefully illustrated.

The details regarding the methods used during this study are given in Chapter 4. The sequential application of textual data and intensive interviews as a multi-method approach is justified based on the requirement of sampling accuracy, and fulfilling the knowledge gaps in the previously acquired data.

Furthermore, the process of data collection and sampling, as well as the ethical considerations concerning the participants' privacy is provided to the reader. In Chapter 5, the results acquired from the textual data are introduced. Norms, values, and practices that are constitutive of the Turkish hip-hop community, and the larger social processes that lead to the in-group/out-group polarization are explored. These social processes through which discourses take their shape are saturated, expanded, and contextualized based on the results of the intensive interviews in Chapter 6.

In Chapter 7, based on the previously acquired results from the multi-method approach, six discursive dimensions are found and presented concerning the in-group/out-group distinction in Turkish hip-hop community. Following the discovery of these dimensions, the current literature and the available frameworks that it provides are debated in relation to the findings of the study in Chapter 8. Accordingly, the shortcomings of deductivism, and discursive reductionism are directed as a meta-level critique to the literature. Finally, an overall summary, discussion, and suggestions for further research are provided in Chapter 9.

## **CHAPTER 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 The Role of Literature Review in Grounded Theory**

As the role of literature review in grounded theory is contested, what kind of part it will play throughout this study has to be discussed. Many researchers assume that delaying the literature review as long as possible is what grounded theory offers to the researcher so as to initiate the study without any prior knowledge (Suddaby, 2006). Hence, fresh theories are expected to emerge as freed from the potency of current ideas, as doing a literature review a priori would force the data to fit into preconceived ideas and would compel researchers to use inherited concepts (Charmaz, 2006). For instance, according to Glaser (1998), doing a literature review prior to data collection and independent analysis could delimit the openness of research and prevent the emergence of concepts, interpretations, and emanation of research questions from the data. This implies that the researcher should not be focused on suggesting hypotheses acquired from existing theories and using the literature review to mind the gap. Rather, “the discovery of theory from data” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 1) is much more valued in grounded theory.

This stance contradicts most conventional social research, which perceives the extensive literature review as a bedrock upon which the rest of the study is built. It is widely accepted that the literature review could detract from the ingenuity of grounded theory research (Dunne, 2011). As Glaser (1992) points out, researchers must learn ‘not-to-know’, meaning that received knowledge from the literature can easily reproduce taken-for-granted assumptions. Dunne (2011, p. 115) categorizes those who argue against an a priori literature review as ‘purists’. As opposed to Glaser’s methodological purism, Johnson and colleagues (2001) argue that grounded theory is a flexible methodology in which researchers can adopt different angles and place the literature review wherever they want according to their purposes. Moreover, Dey (2004) claims that there is no such thing as single grounded theory, considering flexibility as an advantage as long as researchers can justify their analytical orderings.

Having expounded the debates concerning the literature review in grounded theory, the study is placed in what is called the middle-ground. On the one hand, the perspective that can be achieved with the naked eyes is not intended to be distorted. On the other hand, it would be odd to delve deep into the topic without any empirical knowledge, or proceed with free-floating structures. Indeed, grounded theory does not intend to promote a research that would ignore the foundational empirical knowledge, in accordance

with Barley (1990) who emphasizes such an attitude would lead to weaknesses regarding the comprehensibility of the study on behalf of the reader. Although it is very common among grounded theorists to highlight the methodology as the most appropriate if applied with Glaser's skepticism (McCann & Clark, 2003; Payne, 2007), especially for virgin topics to which less attention has been paid by scholars, the study is aligned with other scholars who are in favor of a foundational literature review whose purpose is to give at least a peripheral understanding of the topic to the reader, as well as justification for the selected approach (Coyne & Cowley, 2006; McGhee et al., 2007). Therefore, the a priori literature review is seen as a plus, in the sense that it can contextualize the study (Ibid.).

The literature review is conducted in the early stages of the study to get familiarized as to how the phenomenon has been studied so far, and to acquire 'sensitizing concepts' (Blumer, 1969) to pursue paths that would identify the boundaries of the substantive area (Charmaz, 2006). Lastly, avoiding an a priori endeavor may have caught the study off guard for harsh criticisms. Coffey and Atkinson (1996) point out the dangers of such neglectfulness:

The open-mindedness of the researcher should not be mistaken for the empty-mindedness of the researcher who is not adequately steeped in the research traditions of a discipline. It is after all, not very clever to rediscover the wheel, and the student and the researcher who is ignorant of the relevant literature is always in danger of doing the equivalent (p. 157).

Given the position this study takes regarding the literature, all that has been said under this section can be summarized under four elements. The role of the foundational literature review in this study is to:

- (1) Provide the researcher and reader with a peripheral understanding of the subject.
- (2) Define the boundaries of the substantive area and justify the selected approach for the study.

Following the grounded theory principles, its role is not to:

- (3) Lay the foundations for the emergence of core categories, which on the contrary should be derived from the primary data itself.

- (4) Mind the gap in the current literature by departing from the literature, as doing so may compel the researcher to enter the field with inherited theories, thus neglecting the contextual nature of the terminology.

## **2.2 Foundational Literature Review**

The foundational literature review is not intended to inherit existing theories, or to identify literary gaps. The sole purpose of it is to present available approaches to the subject, to provide contextual background to the reader, and to justify the selected approach. To that end, the foundational literature review is fractured into three small sections. The extensive version within which the findings are compared and contrasted with the current literature will be presented in Chapter 8.

### **2.2.1 Theories of Subculture**

Subcultures possess distinctive shared values and cultural practices that are different from the mainstream (Becker, 1964; Clinard, 1974). Subcultures can often be seen to construct their own versions of the culture exclusive to group members as they seek to preserve their identity against the standardized majority (McLeod, 1999). They are valued as resistant forms of youth agency which have the potential to produce counter hegemonic discourses and practices challenging disciplinary figures in society (Hebdige, 1979). Mass production, commercialization, and the values of corporate culture are often seen as threats by the members of subcultures. The iteration between the initial findings from the textual data and the literature has demonstrated that the Turkish hip-hop community bears subcultural characteristics, such as discontent with commercialization, desire for difference, and distrust of authority. Therefore, the substantive area of this study is rooted in subcultural debates.

### **2.2.2 Theories of Authenticity**

The question of identity in subcultures is approached through individuals' desire for difference, namely authentic individuals striving to perform different sets of values and practices than the rest of the society. Authenticity is described as a "socially agreed upon construct" whose norms and rules are negotiated by its members to demarcate the boundaries of in-group membership (Peterson, 1997, p. 5). The discourses of authenticity are invoked by group members when the subculture that they are the very part of is in

danger of being swallowed by a larger, mainstream culture (Duncombe, 1997). This being the case, the desire to be different from the mass is often constructed through what the particular subculture dislikes; inasmuch as defining an inferior, inauthentic other is a must (Frith, 1981; Garafalo, 1997; Lull, 1987; Thornton, 1996). The discourses of authenticity are invoked as an identity strategy to demarcate the boundaries between authentic insiders and inauthentic outsiders, peculiar to the subculture's world of meaning. As the empirical findings have demonstrated that defining an other to consolidate in-group bonds is also central to the Turkish hip-hop community, and since the concept of identity can be interpreted in different ways, the in-group/out-group framework is maintained as an ideal type throughout the study.

### **2.2.3 Hip-Hop as a Subculture**

Since the birth of hip-hop music is deeply linked to the daily struggles of Black and Latino communities, as well as those of other oppressed groups from all around the world, the majority of studies that are conducted on hip-hop, frames it as a subculture of resistance (e.g., Baxter & Marina, 2008; Mitchell, 2003; Vito, 2014). Just as other musical subcultures struggle with the mainstream culture, the contrast between authenticity and inauthenticity can be seen in hip-hop as well. However, each subculture has their own symbols and signifiers that define the ways by which authenticity can be acquired. The key symbols of hip-hop subcultures are quite different from those of other musical subcultures, and claims of authenticity concerning the identity construction are expressed with distinct values and practices. In that sense, the dichotomy of 'Old School' and 'New School' has a unique position in hip-hop subcultures as they are used to demarcate the boundaries between the authentic and inauthentic (Forman, 2002; George; 2004; Holman, 2004; Neal, 2004). But unlike other musical subcultures, there are no fixed or rigid meanings when it comes to explain these signifiers peculiar to hip-hop's lexicon (McLeod, 1999). Given the glocal nature of the hip-hop community, they are constituted as hybrid cultural forms where hip-hop's conflicts are appropriated and interpreted with a local flavor. Therefore, developing a bottom-up framework specific to the context being researched justifies the usage of grounded theory as to emphasize the unique contextual differences of the in-group/out-group dynamics in the Turkish hip-hop community.

## **CHAPTER 3: Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Validity of Grounded Theory Principles**

It might seem contradictory to the reader that on the one hand, grounded theory promises to offer a fresh perspective grounded in the data itself, while on the other hand, collected data has demonstrated strong similarities to the subculture literature. The desire for difference, discontent with commercialization, and the constant struggle for cultural membership have appeared to be common themes for almost all subcultures, including hip-hop. Indeed, concepts and theories that are discovered during the literature review seemed capable of making sense of the collected data. Therefore, whether the grounded theory is still valid or not is discussed in this section.

First of all, going back and forth between the literature and the findings of initially collected data, intriguing gaps that could not be grasped by the existing concepts and theories were discovered. In the following, the iterative process between the literature and the initial findings was actuated several times. The more the process was actuated, the more the gaps between the available literature and the initial findings occurred. As the incompatibilities were found, subsequent data was gathered through intensive interviews with the intent of fulfilling these gaps. In that sense, the gaps about which the subsequent data was collected differentiated the focus and the theoretical edifice of the study from the available literature.

The contextual terminology peculiar to participants' own interpretive framework was thus revealed, insofar as the theoretical construct that would explain these differences was analytically saturated. As also indicated by the literature that an original framework for each local hip-hop culture is needed (McLeod, 1999; Motley & Henderson, 2008), the principles of grounded theory were found appropriate as they shift their focus from available theoretical constructs that may not be totally relevant or effective, to a focus on subjects' insights and experiences grounded in their lived experiences of the context, and their own terminology interpreting these experiences as opposed to inheriting conceptual toolboxes derived from other contexts.

### **3.2 Adopting Grounded Theory Principles**

The grounded theory method consists of systematic, yet flexible principles for collecting and analyzing qualitative data to build theories grounded in the data themselves (Charmaz, 2006). These principles are adopted as the methodological framework for data collection, analysis, and forming an emergent theory. The principles that are explained here were used to generate an exploratory framework. Through that framework, the ways through which the ‘Old School’ hip-hop community of Turkey attempts to maintain in-group/out-group distinctions were explored. Therefore, the focus is placed on the core process of theory building in grounded theory during this section. As coding, memoing, constant comparison, and emergence are the important stages in grounded theory’s research design, each step is explained consecutively, and in relation to each other.

For the process of theory building, four guiding principles were borrowed from Urquhart (2012, p. 16):

- (1) Build a theory that would be explicatory of the data from which it has been taken.
- (2) Be sure that the prior knowledge of the field does not affect the judgement, as preconceived ideas may hinder the emergence of researcher’s own theoretical edifice.
- (3) Conduct the process iteratively. Analysis and conceptualization are generated through joint data collection and constant comparison, where every piece of data must be compared with the current web of theoretical constructs to see whether it enriches the web points to something that does not fit very well into it. If so, rethink the relationship between the categories.
- (4) Decide where to sample next before moving to another step of the data collection. As the researcher builds a theory, after each comparison between the collected data and the theory, the selection of new samples must be justified through analytical needs.

### **3.3 Coding in Grounded Theory**

Coding shapes the analytic frame from which the researcher builds his/her analysis (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2015). It is an essential point between collecting data and an emergent theory, as it forms the theory that would explain the data and directs further gathering of it (Charmaz, 2006). By attending to coding, the researcher begins to understand what is happening in the data and slowly grasps what it

means (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Through the coding, the researcher can additionally study actions, experiences, and processes. In grounded theory, the coding process has two phases: *initial coding* (1) where each word, line or segment of data is named, followed by *focused coding* (2) to pinpoint the codes that have greater analytic power than others and occur more frequently (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014, pp. 156-158).

### **3.3.1 Initial Coding**

Initial coding is the process of mining early data for analytic ideas to follow and enrich them in further data collection and analysis (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014). During initial coding, the aim is to stay as open as possible to all possible theoretical paths implied by the researcher's reading of the data (Charmaz, 2006). It moves the researcher to the later conclusions for defining core conceptual categories (Ibid.). In this process, what research participants view as problematic appears to the researcher, and the researcher begins to contemplate on it analytically (Glaser, 1978). Most importantly, initial grounded theory coding prompts the researcher to identify the holes in which he/she lacks the needed data. Hence, it points out further data collection to which the researcher should look for filling the holes. In the initial coding process, the researcher assigns brief codes to each line in the early data to sort, synthesize, and analyze them. This is called line-by-line coding, which gives the researcher leads to pursue (Charmaz, 2006).

### **3.3.2 Focused Coding**

Focused coding is the second phase of grounded theory coding. After the researcher establishes certain analytical directions through line-by-line coding, focused coding is used to categorize, synthesize, and explain larger sets of data obtained from initial coding (Glaser, 1978). It basically increases researcher's analytical control over the codes. Focused coding pinpoints the most significant and frequently occurring codes to determine the validity of those codes so that the ones who have greater analytical power can be used for categorizing the data (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2015). Thus from codes, categories occur. Through these categories, the researcher can reveal tacit meanings, experiences, and processes.

### 3.3.3 Theoretical Coding

Theoretical coding is the most important and challenging part in grounded theory methodology. When employing theoretical coding, the researcher evaluates how codes and categories derived from the data might be connected to each other, in order to be incorporated into a theory (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014). Glaser (1978, p. 72) explains theoretical coding as conceptualizing ‘‘how the substantive codes may relate to each other as hypotheses to be integrated into a theory’’. To that end, the researcher uses his/her theoretical codes as tools to organize and conceptualize their own codes and categories to create a theory with explanatory power (Charmaz, 2006). Glaser (1978) further argues that theoretical codes give a form to the focused codes as they help the researcher to tell an analytically coherent story. Initial and focused coding generates codes and categories based on empirical data, by drawing on iterative comparisons of the data, data and codes, codes and codes, and categories and codes. On the contrary, theoretical codes bring ideas and perspectives to the research so as to weave potential relationships between focused codes (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014). Glaser (1978) introduces twelve coding families that might facilitate the researcher’s theoretical coding process, and he urges the researcher to pay attention to these families while coding (see Table 1).

*Table 1: Glaser’s Coding Families*

<i>Coding Families</i>	<i>Theoretical Codes</i>
The Six C’s’	Causes, contexts, contingencies, consequences, covariances and conditions
Process	Phases, progressions, passages, transitions, careers, trajectories
Basic Family	Basic social process, basic social psychological process, basic social structural condition.
Cultural Family	Social norms, social values, social beliefs

Strategy Family	Strategies, tactics, manipulation, dealing with, positioning, dominating
Degree Family	Limit, range, grades, continuum, level
Type Family	Type, kinds, styles, classes, genre
Dimension Family	Dimensions, sector, segment, part, aspect, section
Identity-Self Family	Self-image, self-concept, self-worth, self-evaluation, identity, transformations of self, self-realization
Consensus Family	Agreements, contracts, conformity, homogeneity, heterogeneity, conflict, discensus
Paired Opposite Family	In-group/out-group, in-out, manifest-latent, explicit-implicit, overt-covert, informal-formal
Cutting Point Family	Boundary, cutting-point, breaking point, deviance

*Adapted from Thornberg & Charmaz (2014), based on Glaser's (1978) Theoretical Sensitivity: Advances in the Methodology of Grounded Theory.*

### 3.3.4 Memoing

Memo-writing plays a vital role during each coding process. Memos are short narratives reflecting the researcher's ideas about his/her codes, usually written next to the coded area. These short narratives help the researcher to write down their insights just as ideas occur to him/her. In this way, the researcher avoids losing sparks of his/her insights (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2015). In early memos of initial coding, the researcher explores meanings, actions, and processes that the code may refer to. In later memos of focused coding, certain codes are converged in tentative analytic categories (Charmaz, 2006). Writing memos in grounded theory is crucial as through these short narratives the researcher decides which codes are going to be grouped under which category.

### **3.3.5 Constant Comparison**

Whatever data the researcher begins to code in grounded theory, it is vital that the researcher appeals to constant comparative methods (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Its use is to make comparisons in each layer of the work so as to reveal parallels and distinctions between recently created codes and categories, and the emerging theoretical construct from previously collected data. The comparison is not merely done retrospectively in grounded theory. The researcher must compare the codes and categories within each slice of data added to the aggregate as well (Urquhart, 2012). This is done both for the validity of the emerging theory, and to determine gaps in the data to decide where to sample next.

### **3.4 Emerging Theory**

After performing coding, comparisons, writing memos, and subsequent data collection following this process, the gaps between categories occur. This is why the researcher picks out another sample, to fulfill these gaps, and thus to achieve analytic coherence in his/her story. When the researcher collects a new slice of data, and when he/she does the comparison with the previously acquired knowledge, if there are no gaps between categories, it means the theory can explain the data that has been collected so far. It means that the theory has emerged (Charmaz, 2006).

### **3.5 Constructivism**

Charmaz (2000, 2006) distinguishes between constructivist and objectivist grounded theory. Whereas constructivists see both data and analysis as based on shared experiences and the relationship with participants, objectivists reside in a positivist tradition in which the observer strives to be detached from the social context of data production (Charmaz, 2006). Constructivist grounded theory follows interpretive traditions. It prioritizes the views of research participants, theorizes the way research participants interpret their situation, and most importantly recognizes that the emerging theory is merely an interpretation (Bryant, 2002). In a constructivist approach, the theory is dependent on the researcher's view, it does not stand outside of it as objectivists claim (Charmaz, 2006). The important distinction between these two traditions is that the constructivist grounded theory aims to develop a theory that is contextually situated, while objectivist grounded theory aims to decontextualize the theory to make it more generalizable (Charmaz, 2006, 2015).

In this study, as the emphasis is given to the uniqueness of the contextual area being researched, and to the views of participants living in that context, principles of constructivist grounded theory are adopted. Therefore, the emerging theory should be seen as specific to the context. For researchers adopting objectivist grounded theory, the aim is to produce a substantive theory that could offer a certain level of applicability beyond the research area (Urquhart, 2012). But the aim of the emerging theory here is not to offer generalizability as intended by the objectivist grounded theory. Instead, a theoretical framework that presents a conceptualization of a contextual problem grounded within a particular setting is offered (Creswell, 2002). In that sense, the emerging theory here should be seen as a theory with a lowercase ‘t’ in contrast to a theory with capital ‘T’.

## **CHAPTER 4: Data Collection and Sampling**

### **4.1 Gathering Rich Data**

Gathering rich data is crucial in grounded theory to obtain solid material for building a powerful analysis. Collecting rich data means seeking a ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1973). Grounded theory is often based on diverse kinds of data. Ethnography, intensive interviewing, and textual analysis are the very tools that grounded theory uses to invoke combined data gathering strategies (Glaser, 1978). Rich data is what makes grounded theory stronger than single-acting qualitative methods. To gather rich data, multi-method approaches are often used in grounded theory.

Methods are merely tools, but they do have consequences as the chosen methods influence what the researcher can see. Therefore, multi-methods must be chosen according to the specific requirements of the selected research question. Moreover, as grounded theory encompasses both data gathering as well as theoretical development, the researcher must think about the selected combination of methods in a way that would work the best for both ends. Given the analytic requirements of the selected research question, namely achieving sampling accuracy and fulfilling emerging knowledge gaps, the sequential application of textual data gathering and intensive interviewing was deemed suitable for this study.

### **4.2 Methods**

#### **4.2.1 Textual Data**

All qualitative research ends up with analyzing texts. People produce texts for specific purposes within certain social, economic, historical and cultural contexts. By doing so, they draw on certain discourses providing accounts, explanations, interpretations, justifications, and emotions regarding the phenomena which they are addressing (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). The researcher can study texts that they are partially involved in or they can use texts produced by others. In grounded theory, *elicited texts* refer to written data produced by research participants as requested by the researcher. On the other hand, *extant texts* point to written data that the researcher had no part in producing (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 35-38). For the initial data gathering, collecting *extant texts* was found appropriate to first delve deep into the

intended research area, and then to form the basis and structure for the following intensive interviews designed to fulfill occurred gaps in the initial data.

## **4.2.2 Intensive Interviews**

Intensive interviewing is a dynamic technique by which appropriate questions are often determined as more data are collected (Gray et al., 2012). This means that creative decision making is integrated at every step of the research process based on the researcher's analytical needs. Unlike other forms of interviewing, such as semi-structured ones proceeding as directed conversations (Lofland & Lofland, 1995), intensive interviewing permits an in-depth exploration of a particular topic with the participants' interpretation of his/her experience (Seidman, 1997). In that sense, it's more of a revealing process than providing a direction to conversations. Intensive interviews are iterative in nature, which make them the most appropriate method for grounded theory. As every piece of data must be compared with the current web of theoretical constructs to check its validity, and must lead the researcher to decide where to and how to sample next based on his/her analytical needs (see Chapter 3), the flexibility of intensive interviews allow the researcher to change questions for the next interview to fulfill the knowledge gaps occurred in the previously collected data (Charmaz, 2006). Therefore, it was found appropriate to use intensive interviews in addition to initially collected textual data.

## **4.3 Sampling**

### **4.3.1 Textual Data**

In order to reach 'Old School' hip-hop members in Turkey, gathering textual data from an internet discussion group was found suitable for two reasons. First of all, as they generally avoid the mainstream radar, 'Old School' hip-hop members are not easy to locate. Therefore, a medium where these people socialize on a daily basis had to be found. Secondly, to study certain groups, the researcher has to be sure that the category with which the collective characteristics of the group are formed is shared and appropriated by every single participant. The textual data gathered from an internet forum was found to be a perfect fit to find these people who voluntarily accept that category and take an action to be part of the collective. Hence, the sampling accuracy was formed.

From *GitHub.com*, a website where source codes for certain software actions are collectively shared, a prewritten script for a “web scraping” technique was downloaded. Through the integration feature that *R* allows to run prewritten scripts, 242 comments with a length of 98 pages were collected from a private internet discussion forum called *OSForTR* with 556 active, self-proclaimed ‘Old School’ members. This forum is used by its members to discuss a wide range of topics related to the Turkish hip-hop culture. *OSForTR* had multiple discussion boards, but the researcher entered the board in which issues related to ‘New School’ hip-hop were discussed with the intent of gathering data regarding the in-group/out-group conflict. Following the tripartite coding process (initial, focused, theoretical) on the textual data through which the leading research questions were derived and the skeleton of the theoretical edifice was built, a declaration asking forum members to participate in interviews was aired on the forum website.

### 4.3.2 Intensive Interviews

After declaring the call for interviews on the private forum, 41 mails were received in the following days. The respondents were already self-proclaimed ‘Old School’ hip-hop community members, as they were recruited for the interviews from the private internet forum. However, ten people who were and still are the residents of İstanbul’s gentrified periphery were selected on purpose. As certain places that were under gentrification in İstanbul (Kadıköy, Bakırköy, Ataköy and Yeşilköy), where the ‘Old School’ hip-hop culture was claimed to be lived by the members, were frequently mentioned in the collected textual data, volunteers from these places were prioritized in the selection. This decision was made partly because the sense of community in ‘Old School’ hip-hop culture in Turkey was formed through shared experiences of urban disadvantageousness, and partly because of the fact that the cultural symbols of hip-hop culture were first brought to İstanbul by migration flows during the 2000s, namely by kins and family members living in Berlin as part of the migrated labor force (Solomon, 2009). In that sense, the indicated place for the golden age of ‘Old School’ hip-hop culture pointed out İstanbul as a criterion for selection.

Interviews were conducted via Zoom with ten chosen participants due to the travel constraints imposed by COVID-19. The first six interviews lasted about one hour to one hour and a half, and each of them was transcribed right after they had been conducted. The last four interviews were limited to twenty minutes on purpose, as they were designed to ask to-the-point-questions rather than the in-depth exploration of the topic. People who participated in the study were between the age range of thirty to thirty-eight. Consistent with the principles of grounded theory (see Chapter 3), the questions of the

intensive interviews were changed as additional questions emerged after more data was collected. Whenever a new slice of data was added through interviews, an iteration between new data and previously collected ones were carried out. Therefore, the validity of the emerging theoretical construct was checked in each step, and new questions were formed for the upcoming interviews based on the researcher's analytical needs.

#### **4.4 Ethical Considerations**

Prior to textual data collection, it was imperative to consider ethical challenges to ensure the research's legitimacy and credibility. A number of steps were taken to protect the privacy of participants. First of all, the researcher was granted permission to collect the data from the private forum. A notification regarding the research's purposes and how the data would be used was posted on the website. It was also indicated that all information would be anonymous and that participants' names would be replaced with numbers. Members were asked to write a comment below if they didn't want their comments to be used in the research. No objections were mentioned.

After the interviewees were selected, all participants were provided with a Participant Information Sheet (PIS) in Turkish, that detailed the research's particulars including that no personal information would be collected and that the matters discussed in the interviews would not be disclosed to someone else. It was also mentioned that they were allowed to withdraw from the research at any time, without any consequences. All prospective participants agreed to participate in the research and signed the consent form. They were promised that the data would be erased following the finalization of the research. Just in case, the researcher's contact information was provided to all participants.

## **CHAPTER 5: Research Findings of the Textual Data**

### **5.1 Presenting the Emerging Theory From Textual Data**

In this section, the emerging theory from textual data is presented. It was found appropriate that the results that emerged from the different methods are presented separately. Hence, the process was simplified to provide better transparency to the reader as to following the theory building step by step. The reader must be informed beforehand on certain points regarding the presentation of the theory. First of all, codes that were grouped under a single category are explained one by one, and the category that connects these codes are put at the end of the codes that formed it, and is indicated as ‘category’ in the title. Secondly, categories mean nothing by themselves. They acquire their analytical power when they are put in a coherent whole. Therefore, the reader must be patient until the categories are tied to each other under the core category presented at the end of this section. It is important to note here that various other theoretical paths were discovered during the initial coding process (see Chapter 3), but frequently occurring themes in the data were selected as the ones to proceed with.

### **5.2 Discovering Category One**

The coding pattern here drew on Glaser’s Identity/Self and Cultural Family (see Table 1). Category one grouped the codes that contain information regarding the group’s self-image as well as the in-group practices based on their social values, norms, and beliefs.

#### **5.2.1 Speech Community**

The relationship between language and truth was found to be of central importance in the Turkish hip-hop community. The language of hip-hop was described as a tool for expressing the truth of lived experience peculiar to subjects’ local neighborhood. It was often seen as a medium through which the strong symbolic ties are formed and shared by the members of the urban community, where every member has an equal right to use and manipulate the language to draw attention to their personal experience of being oppressed. Consequently, being exposed to the same structural inequalities, the common problems of the local livelihood such as gentrification, poverty, and crime are revealed through hip-hop’s language as a communicative medium in which the exchanges of personal experience reflect

the objective social situation of the community. Hence, the community becomes aware of the problems surrounding their lives. In a speech community, participants draw on hip-hop's language to articulate the truth of their lived experience of struggle with an artistic expression.

### **5.2.2 Cultural Laborers**

Members of the speech community are also known as cultural laborers. They are expected to participate in routine meetings wherein the collective experiences and performs the hip-hop culture. These reunions are announced with restrictive means of communication such as flyers, zines, or through face-to-face contact with peers. Each member is assigned a certain task for organizing the meetings. Some of them are good at writing and drawing, so they are given the responsibility of printed media, whereas others have the musical equipment, and thus are expected to bring CDs, mixers, and controllers. Parking areas, streets, and desolated garages often emerged as the places where these meetings are organized, and speech communities are formed.

A key to being a cultural laborer is that the one spends his/her time and resources not for having financial compensation but to place the self within a larger world of culture. It is a way of committing oneself to a particular culture and its ideas, customs, and artistic values, which in return provide a deep sense of belongingness to the participant as part of the cultural heritage. As they are exposed to severe structural inequalities in İstanbul's gentrified periphery, laboring for hip-hop culture, which provides them with an interactive public space where speech communities can be formed and where everyone can amplify their voices with an artistic expression, is often associated with laboring for the common good of one's community.

### **5.2.3 Cultivating Ethical Selves**

The content of the language in hip-hop music is either imbued with lessons learned from one's mistakes, such as the feeling of remorse for being involved in criminal activity, or it is ridden with harsh political criticisms directed towards authorities. However, in these meetings where speech communities are formed and maintained, also certain didactic elements and normative ethical principles are conveyed through the language of hip-hop music. These principles are expected to provide guidance to the residents of the neighborhood, especially to the ghetto youth. The didactic elements that are embedded in

participants' stories, who are speaking to others from experience, are usually construed and reworked together until ethical controversies are solved. In that sense, speech communities are not just simple groups who share a similar taste in music, but they are the communicative medium where ethical selves are cultivated, the truth of the lived experience is revealed through hip-hop's language, and strong ties are established among the community.

These normative ethical principles in hip-hop's language are often articulated as bearing a collective responsibility for the community, encouraging each other to take political action, keeping the youth away from crime, promoting hard work, giving hope and a sense of belonging to members, providing them with a sense of justice, raising awareness, and stimulating empathy towards others. These principles are highly valued by the members, as they see these values having a positive impact on the youth, namely cultivating them as active political subjects that would challenge the structural inequalities.

#### **5.2.4 The Category of Community Workers**

The three codes above are grouped under the category of community workers. Community workers are described as persons working to promote welfare among the people of a particular area. First of all, as cultural laborers, they form speech communities peculiar to subjects' livelihood without expecting personal compensation. Rather, these places where the communicative medium is constituted and the participation among the residents is encouraged, are dedicated to the collective wellbeing of the community, as they basically aim to open up a space for people who have long been silenced. Secondly, the didactic elements and ethical principles that are negotiated within the speech community are adopted as applied life practices. In that sense, they assign the role of a teacher to themselves. Members are often committed to the duty of protecting the ghetto youth from negative influences, such as from the tendency for criminal activity that might be sparked by the feeling of despair, or from the excessive drug addiction caused by loneliness. To that end, advocating for hip-hop's values system around the neighborhood and inviting ghetto youth to the gatherings are considered as processes of voluntary education.

### 5.3 Discovering Category Two

The coding pattern here drew on Glaser's Process and Six C family (see Table 1). Category two grouped the codes that provide a causal relationship by presenting the factors driving social processes and their consequences on the group's identity, their practices, as well as their surrounding value system.

#### 5.3.1 New Media Technologies

The arrival of new media technologies to Turkey is depicted as a turning point for Turkish hip-hop. Once pertaining to local neighborhoods, the hip-hop community melted into air through increasing flows of cultural exchange provided by new media technologies. Two types of interactions are determined with two different consequences, which together result in one major outcome regarding the aforementioned cultural exchanges. First, the interactions within *local*, *interlocal*, and *global* scenes. Second, the interactions within *vertical* and *horizontal* directions. The first interaction is laid out as follows:

- (1) *Local*: With the increasing accessibility of new media technologies, cultural exchanges within the local hip-hop scenes have increased.
- (2) *Interlocal*: With the increasing accessibility of new media technologies, cultural exchanges between different local scenes in the country have increased.
- (3) *Global*: With the increasing accessibility of new media technologies, cultural exchanges between different hip-hop scenes around the world have increased.

As a result of increasing cultural flows within and between hip-hop scenes, hip-hop as lived experience has turned into a mediated cultural commodity which everyone can consume without having the lived, first-hand experience of the community within which the music itself is produced. Accordingly, the second type of interaction is laid out as follows:

- (1) *Horizontal*: With the increasing accessibility of new media technologies, the cultural exchanges within the social groups have increased.
- (2) *Vertical*: With the increasing accessibility of new media technologies, the cultural exchanges between the social groups have increased.

Given the increasing interactions within and between the lifestyles of diverse class backgrounds, the dynamics of production and consumption in hip-hop music have undergone severe changes. Hip-hop is transformed from being a music that is produced and consumed in small circles to a mediated cultural commodity that can be produced and consumed by different social groups. As a major consequence of these two types of interactions, foreign ideas, values, languages, experiences and worldviews external to the local communities are imported, which result in a representational bias between the lived experiences and articulated stories in hip-hop music.

### 5.3.2 Representational Bias

Representational bias is defined as a form of contradiction between the lived experiences and articulated stories in hip-hop music. Following the occurring representational biases caused by the increasing cultural flows, which had a severe impact on the role of language in hip-hop music and the community, the relationship between language and truth in the Turkish hip-hop community has blurred. Four types of representational bias in Turkish hip-hop music are found and presented as follows:

- (1) *Over-imitation of elements taken from the hip-hop culture of advanced capitalist countries:* A representational bias occurs as hip-hop's language promotes foreign lifestyles instead of focusing on local Turkish realities.
- (2) *Appropriation of elements from upper-class lifestyles by people who have lower-class backgrounds:* A representational bias occurs as hip-hop's language conveys a story of a privileged life instead of accepting one's own reality of being oppressed.
- (3) *Appropriation of elements from lower-class lifestyles by people who have upper-class backgrounds:* A representational bias occurs as hip-hop's language conveys a story of a given social struggle, while actually having a pretty secure bourgeois life.
- (4) *Depiction of criminal activity without having any proven criminal record:* A representational bias occurs as hip-hop's language conveys a story of a gangster life without facing the dangers that come with it.

As a result of these representational biases appearing in hip-hop music, the language of hip-hop, which was once described as a tool for expressing the truth of lived experience peculiar to subjects' local neighborhood, and as a medium through which strong community bonds are formed, does not fulfill the

same function anymore. Hence, it does not play the same role it did within the speech communities, namely to exchange personal experiences of being oppressed, establish symbolic ties among the residents, identify the problems of the community, and to cultivate political subjectivities that would advocate for the common good of one's community. Rather, it becomes an experimental medium in which different identities can be worn and taken out as short-term experiences of being someone else, like managing a fake persona forged with fictional stories. This being the case, these stories, whose aim was to amplify the voices of the oppressed, are transformed into disposable commodities. The category of the oppressed is reified, and its social significance is confined to the discursive level.

A short description of a member's frustration regarding his relationship to hip-hop's language, and a written memo of the researcher regarding the description is presented in the table below to provide a better understanding to the reader:

*Table 2: Memo Excerpt Relating to Representational Bias*

<b>Memo #19</b>
<p>... It showed us that it is possible to raise our voices despite all difficulties, it showed us that we don't need fancy equipment, or education to express ourselves in the most artistic sense, but only hip-hop's language... Let me explain what happens in hip-hop today, a twenty year old kid living with his parents in a gated community releases a song, it pops up on Youtube, millions of people watch it, he talks about how hip-hop changed his f*cking life, he tells that before he had to steal things from the market because he was hungry, living on streets, playing with needles and guns as if they were his toys, and now he made it, having girls and money, bullshit... Hip-hop was our tool to blow the covers of racism, poverty, injustice in our community, now I feel like this opportunity is taken away from us. The hip-hop we used to criticize the people who put us in this situation has turned into an entertainment for them...</p> <p>[...]</p> <p>Hip-hop's language, that was once used to express one's history of being oppressed, unmask the structural inequalities, and criticize the elite, is now appropriated by those very elite people for entertainment purposes. The difficulties and dangers of which he was the subject are imitated by someone else who is not exposed to these in his real life, but acts as if he did in his songs, while actually living a very privileged life. The discontent arises as his reality is depicted like these things are a joke to millions of people watching it on Youtube, that his experience of painful otherness has a commercial value for someone else. The kid has girls and money now, his life is changed. A story of individual success is emphasized, starting from the bottom, and going to the top. But the story does not reflect the reality again, it is only produced as a commodity for entertainment purposes. Someone's reality of being oppressed is a fictional story ending up with a luxury life for another. As a result, the biased language of hip-hop reproduces hegemonic lifestyles with the very tool that hip-hoppers were using to address social pathologies.</p>

### 5.3.3 Rootlessness

Alienation of ghetto youth from the values of the community that they are the very part of is described as rootlessness. Rootlessness emerges as new media technologies pave the way for various cultural elements to flow between social groups, as well as hip-hop scenes. Indeed, this process of cultural permeability entails over-hybridization. Hybridization is usually known as a cultural mixing of elements that were once known as separate entities, and hip-hop music spreading from America to the rest of the world is among the most striking examples of cultural hybridization. However, the discontent with the importation of foreign elements to an extent that they would swallow the local marks in the hybrid forms is interpreted as the disappearance of local existence in the cultural mix.

The language that once represented the lived reality of diverse experiences is now standardized due to the over-hybridization of hip-hop culture. In other words, as different worlds are intertwined into each other, the diversity of the content and experiences in language are assembled under the same roof of a unified worldview, which is often addressed as liberal individualist discourse. The new language of liberal individualism prevailing in hip-hop music is deemed dangerous for the survival of the local hip-hop community, as it reinforces the representational biases in hip-hop's language, and has a negative impact on the ghetto youth. These negative effects emanating from hip-hop's new language are articulated as excessive drug usage, toxic masculinity, violence, financial success, unrealistic sexual desires, and a competitive worldview. As the new language of hip-hop communicates an individualized worldview in which self-interest prevails over collective wellbeing, the idea of empowering the ghetto community in hip-hop music is replaced by the idea of finding a ticket for getting out of the ghetto. The ghetto youth is not rooted in the local community anymore, but they belong to the global village.

Table 3: Memo Excerpt Relating to Rootlessness

**Memo #11**

...look at the lyrics and video clips today, violence, extortion, consumerism, drugs, and degradation of women, 'look at my golden chain, it's that much of a money, look at me homie, I have million dollar life insurance on my flesh, I did it cause I was born different, I am blessed, look how much b\*tches I have around me, and look at my blood-thirsty pitbull, if you do wrong to me, you'll be a meal for him, your d\*ck is small, mine is bigger'. What the f\*ck dude? Haven't you learned anything from hip-hop? It's all narcissistic, it's an inferiority complex. 'You are afraid of my art Mr. President, because my poetry pumps blood to the brains of the ghetto children, not as your words spilling blood of a million' remember? ...What kind of a role model these people are for our ghetto children? The ones that don't care about each other, declaring a victory over stepping on each other, the ones that only think of themselves, the ones that see money and worldly pleasure as an escape from the ghetto reality, we weren't like that, we were against the system, but youth doesn't want to take responsibility for the community, they want to be superstars...

[...]

The changing content of hip-hop music is worriedly depicted as it reflects a wrong role model to the ghetto youth. On the contrary, hip-hop music must be a true role model for them. The new lyrics are egotistical, sexist, materialistic, competitive, and enmeshed in worldly pleasures. It contradicts with the philosophy of hip-hop whose purpose was once known as political criticism, and apparently to enforce the idea of solidarity among the audience. However, the new face of hip-hop reflects an individualized worldview which provides an escape from collective responsibility, the ghetto youth doesn't consider the wellbeing of their own community but only themselves as successful individuals. Hip-hop was a matter of resistance, but now it's a matter of social mobility (?)

### 5.3.4 The Category of Convergence

The three codes above are grouped under the category of convergence. The convergence is described as moving toward uniformity, namely multiple realities joining together and evolving into one. Interactions that are made possible by new media technologies have intertwined local hip-hop communities, as well as the experiences from diverse social backgrounds. Therefore, worldviews, experiences, and values that were once external to the local lifeworlds are imported. Several representational biases in the language of hip-hop music have occurred due to the multidirectional cultural flows. As a result, hip-hop as lived experience within the speech community peculiar to the local lifeworld is transformed into a mediated cultural commodity circulating in a wider spatial setting.

Following this, larger cultural components in the process of unification have altered the value systems held in smaller hip-hop communities. Especially the impact of advanced capitalist countries and the class biases are depicted as the most influential ones regarding the changing aspects of the Turkish hip-hop community, in the sense that it deprives the victim of his/her language (bias 3, memo #19), and leads

young people to a false consciousness as they try to imitate an imaginary lifestyle which in return entails an alienation toward their own reality (bias 2, memo #11). However, within the new cultural uniformity of hip-hop music, the idea of community seems to be controversial. On the one hand, as over-hybridization grows, the ghetto youth who now have superior means of communication, unlike the previous generations whose lifeworlds had to be rooted in small neighborhoods due to the restricted means of communication, don't identify themselves with the idea of the neighborhood as a community.

Consequently, the process of convergence points to the evaporation of fractured communities who had their own native lifeworlds with a certain degree of autonomy, and wherein the role of hip-hop's language was to establish a kind of public sphere, through which the symbolic ties would be reinforced among the neighborhood's youth. By virtue of convergence, the symbolic ties are weakened, and the idea of an actual community turns out to be an imagined one (Anderson, 1983), whereas the ghetto youth seems to embrace a translocal identity. For a local hip-hop community that is evaporating in the face of convergence, the labels of 'Old School' and 'New School' seem to come into play so as to redefine the boundaries of cultural membership.

#### **5.4 Discovering the Core Category**

The core category puts the previously acquired data into an order. In other words, from a descriptive level where subjects' own views are highlighted, the researcher moved into a reflective level where the available information is synthesized to create a coherent conclusion. The categories derived from the data are connected to each other through the researcher's own theoretical ideas conceptualizing the relationship between them.

##### **5.4.1 Core Category of Performative Contradiction**

The performative contradiction occurs as the social role that maintains group ties cannot be fulfilled. As a result, the ties get weaker and the group tends to dissolve. Therefore, it becomes a requisite to build a new value system that would refresh the ties and provide the group with a shared sense of purpose. Since the process of convergence has transformed the idea of an actual community, that once was synonymous to people sharing the same neighborhood, into an imagined one, the performative contradiction has surrounded the Turkish hip-hop community as the envisioned role of community worker whose purpose

was to promote welfare among the people of a particular neighborhood can't be fulfilled anymore. In that sense, convergence forces the group to redefine certain boundaries that would protect its identity from being torn apart as convergence evolves communities into uniformity, and thus threatens the group's distinctiveness.

As local communities were gradually opened up to a broader world, the label 'Old School' appears to be the result of a set of discursive strategies that are used to preserve the group's distinctiveness against larger cultural flows posing a threat to the existence of the local Turkish hip-hop community. On the other hand, the label 'New School' is often attributed to the outer-group. So far the textual data indicates, everyone who produces and consumes popular forms of hip-hop music that reinforces representational biases in hip-hop's language, and reproduces liberal individualist worldview that would further alienate the ghetto youth from their roots is considered 'New School'.

The results of the textual data have demonstrated that the labels 'Old School' and 'New School' in the Turkish hip-hop community were invented to cope with the performative contradiction, as the group's self-image of community workers no longer has an actual function due to the convergence transforming the idea of neighborhood as a community in hip-hop cultures. However, the textual data didn't provide sufficient material to map out the social processes that these discourses are emanating from, and hence how the Turkish 'Old School' hip-hop community deals with the performative contradiction remains obscured. Consequently, the interviews were designed to conduct a follow-up inquiry that would map out these social processes shaping the discourses by which the group's distinctiveness is preserved and maintained.

## **CHAPTER 6: Research Findings of the Interview Data**

### **6.1 Presenting the Saturated Theory From Interview Data**

In this section, the saturated theory from interview data is presented. Intensive interviews were conducted to gather more information regarding the gaps that had to be fulfilled in the initial theoretical construct based on the researcher's analytical needs. Hence, the emerging theory from the textual data was saturated. The purpose of intensive interviews was not to create new categories, but rather to reinforce the analytical power of the whole narrative based on participants' experiences. The discourses adopted by the 'Old School' hip-hop audience in Turkey to preserve and maintain their group distinctiveness were identified in relation to social processes. To that end, the relationship between technology, space, hip-hop music, and identity was explored, and accordingly the categories emanated from the textual data were reinforced. It is important to note that here the researcher played a more active role about reflecting on the data collected from the participants to present an analytically coherent narrative rather than mostly being descriptive, as it was the other way around in the analysis of textual data.

### **6.2 Space, Class, and Hip-Hop Music**

Participants often described rap music as rhythm and poetry, as the word rap implies. However, poetry is found to be of more importance than the rhythm, considering its relationship to ghetto youth and politics. Participants narrated stories about their first contact with hip-hop music in relation to their class backgrounds and spatial locations, as if they were thrown into the world of hip-hop out of exigence. Participant 2 stated his story as follows:

Back in the days, the education system was not so privatized yet. So we all had to go to the public high school with people coming from different places in İstanbul. There were not many options. In high school, there was a great distinction and rivalry between rappers, rockers, and jazz players. Rockers and jazz players were mostly the kids of rich families. They were dressed better, behaved better, and had higher grades than us. They were bringing their guitars, amplifiers and saxophones to the class, playing their music in the breaks, teachers and girls would look at them with admiration. One day I asked my

mom if we could get a guitar, that I want to play rock music. She said that we couldn't afford one, that she had to take a couple of means of public transportation to go to the center, plus pay for the guitar itself. Later on, I met with kids from my neighborhood, they told me, 'it's called hip-hop, why don't you come and say something?' Poetry was more important in hip-hop, rhythms didn't matter. I didn't choose hip-hop, it chose me.

First of all, he describes a moment where he felt the class disadvantageousness among his peers, that he was coming from a poor family, and the rich ones shared a different cultural taste. The class advantage looks obvious to him, in a way that they have better grades, and a better outfit. Then he draws attention to the equipment that they brought to the class, and how their musical performance attracted attention of his teachers and the opposite sex. He wants to learn to play rock music so he can be a part of that attention, and be a part of the hegemonic group. But when he asks for the guitar, his mom denies it, arguing that being located on the periphery requires her to go to the center which would cost her a lot of money, plus there would be the guitar's costs. Then he finds another group of friends in his ghetto, the ones that share the same habitus with him, and without being in need of any equipment that he can't afford, he participates into hip-hop's poetic world. In other words, he finds himself a speech community (see Chapter 5, 5.1.2).

### **6.3 Poetics and Politics of the Space**

The class, in the sense of being deprived of the chance to get necessary equipment for another kind of music, and space, in the sense of being rooted in the periphery of the city with less opportunities for mobility are found to be the reason that the language in hip-hop music has a primary importance. Being excluded from other forms of social expression, a music merely based on language was the only choice for ghetto youth to raise their voices against structural inequalities. In that sense, hip-hop music was appropriated by the ghetto youth located in the periphery as a poetic response to the "dangers pressing on their external boundaries" (Douglas, 1966, p. 124), as a resilience to the urban renewal projects that would further push them away. It appears to be that the aesthetics of hip-hop music were deeply influenced by urban space. A narrative concerning the role of space on the production of poetics in hip-hop music was articulated by Participant 3 as follows:

In Çıksalın, we had an older brother, Hakan, he was recording his rap songs in his home studio, and then he was distributing them around the neighborhood for free. Back then, we had MP3s and wired headphones to listen to music, and not everybody could afford one. That's why he was also inviting us to Osmanlı Park on Friday nights, saying that he would have a live performance there. Me and my bigger cousin decided to step by, there were more than fifty people, an incredibly enthusiastic crowd like I had never seen before. (...) In his songs, he was talking about how luxurious residences were built on the field where we used to play football, and the subway train that was planned to be built soon, right in the Osmanlı Park we were standing and waving our hands with the crowd. I had no idea that the park would be gone soon. Following his performance, I approached Hakan, and asked what I could do to stop this. He said that I could stand by him when the bulldozers came, and believe me, we all did.

The excerpt begins with Hakan's effort to produce and distribute his music for free, whose lyrics are about the external threats pressing on their neighborhood. In a way, he acts like a community worker (see Chapter 5, 5.1.5), he labors to spread cultural elements of hip-hop without having an expectation of financial compensation. He invites ghetto youth to an open public space to disseminate a political message that would establish solidarity networks against Çıksalın's transforming urban scape. The violation of the spatial order of their ghetto constitutes the content of his song. In that sense, the poetics of hip-hop music are enmeshed in urban configurations, and hence the poetics are linked to the politics of space. Hakan's artistic expression in the park recruits active political subjects that would stand against the external dangers. Therefore, the truth of lived experience concerning the violation of ghetto's spatial order manifests itself in hip-hop's language as political dissidence (see Chapter 5, 5.1.2)

#### **6.4 Poetics of Hip-Hop Music, Territorialization, and Identity**

Hip-hop music is already well-known for its celebration of one's identity in relation to neighborhood (Mitchell, 1998). Insofar as space influences aesthetic production, the poetics of hip-hop music embody how space is experienced. In other words, hip-hop constitutes spaces of belonging and dwelling where subjects would feel at ease together with others with whom they share a life. Heidegger describes such dwelling and belonging as "worldhood of the world" (Heidegger, 2008, pp. 91-92), meaning that the subject perceives his/her surrounding world and himself/herself through the meanings that are invested

into that world. A memory regarding the relationship between hip-hop music, territory, and identity was shared by Participant 3 as follows:

I have never had something in my life that I could describe as my own environment. But when I went there like an adult independent of his family, listened to freestyle of others, I felt myself belonging there. Hip-hop music was there, and I was doing an activity independent from my family, even as a child. There were people I felt myself belonging to, almost like I had a second home, a second family there. I also used to freestyle, many times. (...) I was part of Çıksalın's crew, Alibeyköy crew were the owners of the venue, and there were also the people of Yeşilpınar, it was a very tense atmosphere. That day, my friends chose me as the representative of Çıksalın for the freestyle battle that was going to happen between crews. I remember how proud I was of myself, being part of the neighborhood, accepted by my second family. I think the sense of belongingness was more important than what was done there, because I couldn't fit into school, and into my family's home as who I am.

The participant describes a period of his life when he couldn't find a place to identify himself with. But he finds the sense of belongingness he needs in hip-hop gatherings, as a grown adult who can take his own decisions. These gatherings where hip-hop music is performed seem to be an escape from his parental supervision, as he celebrates his independence. He finds people like him there, identifying himself with the other members of the community through the language of hip-hop (see Chapter 5, 5.1.4), as if they are his second family, and as if the streets where they freestyle are his second home. Then he talks about other hip-hop crews which he identifies with the territory they are coming from, while at the same time associating himself with his neighborhood Çıksalın. He feels proud of representing Çıksalın in a hip-hop competition, that he is trusted and accepted by his second family, that is, by the ghetto youth identifying themselves with the same territory. Finally, he puts an emphasis on the importance of being part of his territory, as he can't find the same belongingness in different social circles such as family and school.

## 6.5 Urbanization, Deterritorialization, and the Disappearance of Place-Based Identity

The intrusion of distant events and realities into the space of domesticity through new media technologies, that turned hip-hop music from lived experience to a mediated cultural commodity, and the process of cultural flux that threatened territory-based identities in hip-hop cultures, namely the idea of community as neighborhood, already resulted from the textual data (see Chapter 5, 5.2.1). However, the causality that was presented regarding the evaporation of fractured communities seemed quite fragile, as though the electronic forms of communication were the only driving forces behind the convergence (see Chapter 5, 5.2.5). To put it another way, the circulation of hip-hop as a cultural commodity among various geographies was already implied, but the circulation of people within the geography was not adequately explored. Therefore, narratives concerning the physical movement of people were specifically sought. When asked what happened to the hip-hop community that he was a part of, followed by a few complementary questions, Participant 4 replied as follows:

There was no transportation in Sultanbeyli. Only a few dolmushes<sup>2</sup> were there, and to go to the center, you had to find a few neighbors to cover the costs. I remember that me and my friends were going to Taksim sometimes, perhaps one or two times in a month. Some kids would give some money to their friends to buy some stuff, and wait exactly where the dolmush left until it came back. It was so hard to commute to the center. (...) In the following years, subway trains were built, and bus stations were placed almost in every street of Sultanbeyli. I think transportation was a game changer. One of my friends found a job at McDonalds, the other one became a salesman for cosmetic products in the Carousel Shopping Mall on the other side of the city, and found a girlfriend for himself. My best friend Emre decided to try the vocational school once again. One by one, people lost their interest in hip-hop, I mean, probably they didn't have the time for it anymore.

First of all, the participant emphasizes the inadequacy of transportation networks in his neighborhood, and how hard it was to go from the periphery to the center as it would require one to collaborate with others to cover the costs of transportation. He notes that accessing certain goods was not an easy task, meaning that the exchange between center and periphery was restricted (see also Participant 2, 6.1.1).

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<sup>2</sup> Dolmushes are a kind of collective taxi in Turkey.

Then with the expansion of transportation networks across the city, his friends who were involved in hip-hop acquired new identities, such as being an employee, someone's boyfriend, or a student. Once the possibility for physical movement was increased, hip-hop was no longer the only option for ghetto youth to socialize, and the self-identification with one's territory became less important. In other words, the realm of the far pervaded the realm of the near (Bauman, 1995), and accordingly deterritorialized place-based identities.

The analysis given above particularly contributes to the previously acquired code named as rootlessness, and accordingly to the category of convergence (see Chapter 5, 5.2.4, 5.2.5). Rootlessness was defined as the alienation of ghetto youth from the values of the community (see Chapter 5, 5.2.4), and the ground for such alienation was depicted as the over-hybridization between social groups and local music scenes driven by new media technologies (see Chapter 5, 5.2.3). Following the over-hybridization, discontent regarding the representational biases that occurred in the language of hip-hop was observed, and the negative effects from that liberal individualist language on ghetto youth were laid out as excessive drug usage, toxic masculinity, violence, financial success, unrealistic sexual desires, and a competitive worldview (see Chapter 5, 5.2.4). However, the importation of foreign elements into the local livelihoods through digital technologies can't be the only reason for rootlessness, and the increasing popularity of a globalized worldview among the ghetto youth. Convergence goes beyond the dynamics of cyberspace as the expanding transportation networks in İstanbul allowed ghetto youth to access the opportunities that were not available in the periphery before. Therefore, the increasing physical mobility over the urban space is also a determinant in the detachment of youth from the ghetto, as well as in the changing language of hip-hop music, since the poetics that were once enmeshed in ghetto are now reterritorialized in a new spatial configuration (for the relationship between hip-hop music and space, see 6.1.2).

## **6.6 The Birth of New School Hip-Hop: Reterritorialization, Technology, and the Death of Poetry**

As the poetics of hip-hop, which once were rooted in the ghetto, are reterritorialized in a new spatial configuration, the musical composition of hip-hop has undergone severe changes. Hip-hop music, whose purpose was to give a poetic response to the "dangers pressing on their external boundaries" (Douglas, 1966, p. 124) as a resilience to the urban renewal projects threatening their place-based identities (see 6.1.2), is now threatened by the "dangers from internal contradiction" (Douglas, 1966, p. 122). That is,

by the ‘New School’ hip-hop furthering the interests of the center (of hegemonical groups, meanings, and lifestyles) and thus communicating a liberal individualist worldview upon the ghetto youth, while depriving the ones from the periphery who want to raise their voices of the language of hip-hop.

The language of hip-hop, whose poetics were deeply anchored in the small ghetto territory, is now drawing its artistic influence from a wider spatial configuration in which the cultural flows between the center and the periphery of İstanbul are immensely increased. This being the case, foreign ideas, values, and experiences are not only imported to local communities through new media technologies, which in return entail representational biases in hip-hop’s language (see Chapter 5, 5.2.3), but also the hybridization between physical spaces of the city via transportation technologies influences the poetics of hip-hop. In that sense, the ghetto’s hip-hop music is shaped by the new experiences, tastes, and opportunities of the center, as much as the center is possessed by the charm of ghetto’s hip-hop. In addition to new media technologies (see Chapter 5, 5.2.2), two types of technology having an impact both on the hip-hop community and its poetics, can be listed as follows:

- (1) *Transportation Technologies*: With the increasing mobility between the center and the periphery, the ghetto youth is gradually detached from their local communities, and hence their previously held place-based identities. Moreover, hip-hop music is reterritorialized, and accordingly its poetics is adjusted to the values of the center.
- (2) *Musical Technologies*: With the reterritorialization, hip-hop music, which was based solely on the presence of language, is transformed by the advanced musical technologies that are offered by the center. In return, the language slowly disappears from hip-hop music, and the weight of technology prevails.

A narrative regarding the reterritorialization, and its influence on the nature of hip-hop music is shared by Participant 4 as follows:

Until 2005-2006, the music of the center was mostly pop, disco, and a little bit of techno. The youth there didn’t know about rap at all. They had the money to spend in clubs, bars, and cafes in Ortaköy, Bebek, and Nişantaşı, and those were the only places where you would hear such music. These genres represented a completely different lifestyle than we had, more secular, an upper-class one, a lifestyle that we were not part of. (...) After 2006,

I remember that the following news, or let's say advertisements, began to appear on newspapers and TVs, such as 'Hip-Hop Nights at Club X, Hip-Hop Nights at Club Y' I couldn't believe it, because the general perception about people who listened rap was that they were vagabonds, suburbans, you know, something very dirty that you must stay away from. (...) When we went there, all we heard was a weird mix of techno and hip-hop, catchy, amusive lyrics, written on catchy techno beats, more like entertainment, you know, girls and boys were dancing together, drinking cocktails, and having fun. It was something we had never seen before, that hip-hop music became club music, and entertained people. For us, as you already know, it meant something different...

The participant begins with an historical periodization, arguing that the types of music which were consumed in the center before were different, and that rap music was unknown to the center's youth. Then he draws attention to the relationship between musical taste, space, and class (see also Participant 2, 6.1.1). He attributes techno, pop and disco music to the center, while implying that rap music represented a different lifestyle than the other genres, one which is not upper-class, located on the periphery, and probably a bit more conservative as opposed to secular in this case. Following 2006, he notes that advertisements began to appear on conventional media channels, broadcasting to a wider audience, inviting people to hip-hop nights at the nightclubs of the center. A latent indication is that hip-hop as a resistance culture, once performed on the streets of the periphery, is adopted by the center's entertainment industry. He couldn't believe it, as back then the image of people who listened to rap music was considered a danger to the center's lifestyle.

Intrigued by the advertisements, he goes to one of those clubs, and then he describes the type of music that he heard in the club as 'a weird mix of techno and hip-hop', a symbolic proof of the hybridization between the people of different backgrounds, spaces, and genres. Speaking of 'amusive lyrics', he subtly implies that the language of hip-hop is purified of its dangerous, rebellious, anti-authority content, that the poetics of hip-hop are reorganized within the new territorial order of the center's nightclubs, namely being adjusted for the practices of upper-class socialization; dancing, drinking, and having fun. The narrative given above corresponds to the textual data as it clearly refers to an occurring representational bias in hip-hop's new language (see Chapter 5, 5.2.3), resulting in the appropriation and adjustment of the music of the oppressed for the upper-class taste. In that sense, hip-hop's language, that was used to 'blow the covers of racism, poverty, and injustice in the community' (see Chapter 5, memo #19), has been

depoliticized. However, putting the consequences emerging out of the transportation networks aside, the crisis of language in hip-hop music in relation to the growing impact of musical technologies is underlined by all participants. But Participant 1 uttered the most thorough reasoning as to the poetry, technology, and the current state of Turkish hip-hop music when he was asked to elaborate on the distinctive qualities of ‘New School’ hip-hop:

In one word, technologization, how should I put it, loss of language. The weight of techno music has increased in hip-hop music, especially when you look at Ben Fero, and Mary Jane. As I said, rap should tell me something, it has to contain a part from me, it has to be sincere. (...) I’ll give you an example: Çağrı Sinci, Lobotomi. He has no technological input, his story stands at the forefront, only a simple two-beat on the background, he is a poet. Ben Fero can’t tell me the same sh\*t no matter how much he tries, you would only hear fast breakbeats with heavy bass, sub-bass lines, synthesizers, strong kicks and snares, he is not a poet, he is a DJ, this is what I am trying to say. There is a very sensitive issue here, let me put it that way: isn't rap a genre of music that opens up a space for the oppressed to have their own voice? Yes. Then what happens if all these machines prevail over language in hip-hop music, auto-tunes, drum-machines, and many other equipment, and by the way each of which would cost you a hell lot of money, the poetry dies. In my opinion, this is an extortion of language and extortion of people’s rights over that language, this is what happens today.

The participant describes ‘New School’ as the technologized version of hip-hop, in which the language has no priority anymore. He notes that hip-hop becomes more of a techno, in a way that the role of human agency is removed from the music as machines prevail over the human voice. Instead, he expects to hear life stories in hip-hop music that would make it possible to draw parallels between these stories and his own experiences. In that sense, the importance of the language, which is expected to reflect the truth of the subject’s lived experience, is once again emphasized (see Chapter 5, 5.1.2).

In the following, he articulates the distinction between a poet and a DJ. Whereas the former prioritizes stories, and hence poetry, the latter relies on the sound of the technology. At that point, the issue becomes political, as machines wipe away the poetry in hip-hop music, whose purpose is to raise the voices of the oppressed. Judging from that logic, the death of poetry in hip-hop music amounts to the erosion of that

aesthetic space where human agency is vitalized, and political dissidence is expressed. Since ‘New School’ hip-hop leaves no room for poetry, the technological input is contrasted with the existence of human agency in hip-hop music and characterized as depoliticization resulting from the eradication of language.

Consequently, considering that the mobility of goods, cultures, and people between center and periphery is increased due to the transportation technologies, it can be said that hip-hop music is hybridized with the center’s value system, which as a result altered hip-hop’s peripheral value system (see Participant 4, 6.1.4; also Participant 1, 6.1.5). The poetics of hip-hop music are subjected to severe changes as the spatial configuration wherein the hip-hop music is produced has been reterritorialized. Firstly, as hip-hop music is relocated to the city center, where hip-hop is redesigned for the upper-class consumption with the spirit of techno, the language of hip-hop is purified from its explicit content. Secondly, the poetry of hip-hop is swallowed by the machines, as over-hybridization between the two genres occurs following the imitation of techno-esque elements that are rendered possible by the accessibility of musical technologies in the center, to an extent that the hybridization does not create biases, but eradicates the language (for narratives regarding the restricted exchange of goods between center and periphery, see Participant 4, 6.1.4; also Participant 2, 6.1.1).

### **6.7 Rage Against the Machines: The Struggle Over Language and Human Agency in Hip-Hop Music**

Members of the ‘Old School’ community are described as the guardians of the poetic heritage in hip-hop music, whereas ‘New School’ hip-hop is characterized as hip-hop’s technologized version. The weight of technology in hip-hop music is often found to be problematic by participants, as it is considered to be a threat to the existence of language, which should have the precedence, since it is expected to represent the voice of the oppressed. This contrast between poetry and technology seems to be discussed mainly in terms of mind and body dualism. Whereas poetry is associated with the mind, technology is related to the body by participants. A short excerpt in which Participant 5 distinguishes active from passive listening is particularly interesting in that regard:

If a person knows that he has done a bad deed, and he listens to those Old School songs I mentioned, his crimes would hit him in his face. He would not want to listen to them,

because listening to them is difficult, you should have a character for it, you have to spend time on it to understand them, digest them. So we can distinguish passive and active listening here. What I call passive listening is the way of listening to these New School pieces. While you are listening to Küvet, you don't really have to think, you can shut down your mind, you can be passive. So it means that active listening is an endeavour to understand the poetry, lyrics, internalizing them while critically judging their shortcomings, just as if construing a philosophical text, contemplating on it. When I hear Old School hip-hop, I think. What is this guy trying to say, what does it mean, from which context does he speak to me, then I check his personal history. This is how active listening works for us. If you are into New School, this just tells me that you are trying to avoid something.

The participant describes the act of listening to 'Old School' hip-hop as a process of self-reflection, that the music reflects harsh realities back on to you, and not everyone is in a position to take it, as it requires a strong personality to face it. It is an attitude of decoding the text for reflexivity, which recalls the results from the textual data, where the language of hip-hop was described as a communicative medium through which didactic elements and normative ethical principles are conveyed to members to rework on it (Chapter 5, 5.1.4). Then he distinguishes active from passive listening. He associates 'New School' hip-hop with passive listening in which the mind is shut, and hence the act of contemplation disappears, as opposed to 'Old School' hip-hop, which forces you to keep your mind active to contemplate, construe the poetry, internalizing the lessons given by it while critical thinking guides you through the whole process. In that sense, listening to 'New School' appears to be an escapist act, a denial of harsh realities by shutting down your mind, and submitting your body to the control of technology, as Participant 6 expressed as follows:

(...) actually you don't want it, but it feeds your instincts, it reveals all the evil feelings that you are struggling to suppress, it tricks your mind, twist your thoughts, catches you, it's ecstatic to the ears, you can flow with it, when you close down your eyes it makes you move, you surrender yourself to it, like a drug, irresistible. Almost like I lose control when I listen to New School hip-hop, the rhythms and synths in the music possess your body, you do not worry about anything, because it's about getting positive vibes and moving your body along, and I think the loss of control is scary, because you are not in charge

anymore, instincts, desires, passions drive you, and that's why I think this is why New School hip-hop is dangerous. It appeals to people's suppressed instincts that they shouldn't be displaying for a healthy society, like selfishness, egoism, hedonism, nihilism, a total purposelessness. (...) The youth today don't want to think, they look for a guidance to which they can deliver their will, and in my opinion the best way to catch them is to remove the lyrics, so the reality does not disturb you anymore, you do not have to spend effort for it, like the sound of technology tells you what to do with your body.

The participant shares his internal struggle to resist the instincts that are provoked by 'New School' hip-hop music, saying that it deceives his mind, inciting his evil instincts by its ecstatic impact taking control of his body. He is possessed by it, like a drug addiction. The rhythmic composition of music brings a sense of comfort, as being in control of yourself all the time is exhausting. Therefore, submitting your body to the sounds of technology is a kind of relief. But at the same time, he is scared, as his mind is not the point of reference anymore; instincts, desires, and passions take over, his body is directed toward the world of pleasures, the mind is deactivated. This is why he finds it dangerous, being caught off guard for the intrusion of ideology, of selfishness, hedonism, nihilism, a total purposelessness contradicting with the idea of hip-hop, whose purpose is to cultivate active political subjects through poetry against the "dangers pressing on external boundaries" (Douglas, 1966, p.124; see also Chapter 5, 5.1.4; Chapter 6, 6.1.2). Moreover, the values that 'New School' hip-hop represents are at variance with 'Old School' hip-hop's vision of a healthy society, which again associates hip-hop with a kind of community work (see Chapter 5, 5.1.5).

The participant's emphasis on nihilism and the sense of purposelessness is quite interesting as well, since 'Old School' hip-hop music is previously described as poetry and a philosophical text from which the subject should extract the meanings inherent to it and internalize them as guiding principles, with the intent of diffusing the purpose of taking collective responsibility toward one's community (see Chapter 5, 5.1.5). But the problem comes back to the youth, they don't want to think, but rather to deactivate their minds to avoid responsibility. They look for a comfort zone where they can be passive subjects without making an effort, avoiding the disturbing reality. Once again, a description that refers to the escapist attitude (see Participant 5, 6.1.6). Human agency is symbolically assigned to the reign of machines in hip-hop's new expression, and this accordingly pacificizes subjects, as the poetry that triggers thinking and cultivates political subjects is removed from the music. In the participant's opinion, 'New School' hip-

hip-hop alienates people from themselves to an extent that they would not have the control over themselves anymore, insofar as it alienates people from others and from their rights over artistic expression, as technology downgrades the role of human agency in hip-hop music (for the relationship between language and rights, see Participant 1, 6.1.5).

Judging from the participants' narratives, several conclusions can be drawn. First of all, the loss of control over the body, as a metaphor of being possessed by technology, being passive, and being alienated seems to be an indication that 'New School' hip-hop is a leisure consumerism having ideological effects on youth, such as alienation, depoliticization and individualization. Conversely, 'Old School' hip-hop is associated with the mind, as a thought-provoking activity through which active, politically aware subjects are cultivated on the basis of a collectivist worldview. Due to the growing presence of technology in hip-hop music replacing poetry, the language of hip-hop, which was once known as a tool by which ghetto residents communicate their shared experiences of oppression to each other, establish community ties, and develop a sense of belonging, disappears from hip-hop music. As a result, the extortion of language is perceived as a threat by the 'Old School' hip-hop community, as subjects are deprived of their artistic medium wherewith poetic expression is realized. Accordingly, 'New School' hip-hop is found ideological as the disappearance of language amounts to the erosion of ethical directions, didactic elements, and the ideas of resistance that are provided by that language, resulting in alienation, depoliticization and individualization.

Secondly, the emphasis on providing the right direction to the youth seems persistent both in the results of the textual data and the interviews. It appears to be that the 'Old School' hip-hop community strives to maintain its self-image of community workers (see Chapter 5, 5.1.5). However, while the community work for Turkish hip-hop community was about to recruit ghetto youth as political subjects that would stand against the urban renewal projects, and to protect them from bad habits such as excessive drug usage or violent crimes, it is now about to save the youth from the 'false consciousness' alienating them from the values of the community (see Chapter 5, 5.2.4), that is, from the 'New School' hip-hop communicating a liberal individualist worldview. In that sense, protecting the poetic heritage against technologization in hip-hop music, which would rather convey an alternative value system that is more political, contemplative, and collectivist in their musical production, seems to be embraced as a new direction in their community work as a response to the performative contradiction (see Chapter 5, 5.3.1).

## CHAPTER 7: Interpreting the Data

### 7.1 Presenting Discourses Resulting From the Multi-Method Approach

The discourses adopted by the ‘Old School’ hip-hop community to preserve and maintain their group distinctiveness against the internal cultural contradictions threatening the group’s self-image are identified in this chapter. Based on the previously acquired results, six discursive dimensions are found and presented concerning the in-group/out-group distinction in the Turkish hip-hop community. In this chapter, the researcher moved from material social processes presented in the previous chapter to a discursive realm. The purpose of this short chapter was not to discover discourses by seeking additional information, but to reveal the ones that were already embedded in the results into a comprehensible order. In that sense, a preparation is made for the following chapter where the current literature on hip-hop music and subcultures in general will be discussed in relation to the findings.

### 7.2 Old School vs. New School

Table 4: *Old School vs. New School*

	<i>Old School</i>	<i>New School</i>
Artistic	Poetic	Technological
Philosophical	Mind-oriented	Body-oriented
Political	Active	Passive
Social-Psychological	Strong	Weak
Cultural	Collectivist	Individualist
Social-Locational	Peripheral	Central

### **7.2.1 Artistic Dimension**

‘Old School’ hip-hop members appeal to aesthetic differences in their artistic expression to draw in-group/out-group distinctions. In their music, poetry has the priority as the main purpose is to disseminate messages to the audience, and to reveal the stories of oppression experienced by people, whereas ‘New School’ hip-hop prioritizes technological elements in the music, and hence removes the language from it.

### **7.2.2 Philosophical Dimension**

‘Old School’ hip-hop members emphasize that their music is mind-oriented, that it triggers the audience to contemplate, be reflexive about themselves, construe meanings inherent to the poetry, and invites them to critical thinking. On the other hand, they associate ‘New School’ hip-hop with the body, as a leisure activity enmeshed in selfish, worldly pleasures, in which thinking is replaced by instincts.

### **7.2.3 Political Dimension**

Since their music is characterized as contemplative and critical, ‘Old School’ hip-hop members suggest that their music cultivates active subjects who would have a greater political awareness and agential capacity. On the contrary, they degrade ‘New School’ hip-hop as it promotes pacifism and purposelessness, as the music is deprived of its political content, language, and accordingly of human agency.

### **7.2.4 Social-Psychological Dimension**

‘Old School’ hip-hop members express that listening to their music requires strong personality characteristics, as the music would reflect harsh realities back on to the listener, and not everyone is capable of taking it in a reflexive way. In that sense, they find people who are listening to ‘New School’ hip-hop weak, as the consumption of such music is related to the escapist attitude that the subjects are embracing to avoid the disturbing reality.

### **7.2.5 Cultural Dimension**

‘Old School’ hip-hop members highly valorize collectivism, both in their musical production and in their everyday life. They see what they are doing as community work. Working for the collective wellbeing of the community is their primary goal. To that end, they strive to educate the ghetto youth in their own way. In that sense, they claim that their music and way of life are the representatives of collectivist ideals, whereas they depict ‘New School’ hip-hop as the representative of liberal individualism, and therefore find it dangerous to their idea of community.

### **7.2.6 Social-Locational Dimension**

‘Old School’ hip-hop members describe their music as the voice rising from the periphery of the city, whereas they describe ‘New School’ hip-hop as the music emerging out of the values of the center. In that sense, they represent the values and stories of the periphery in their music, while ‘New School’ hip-hop represents the center’s hegemonical value system.

## **CHAPTER 8: Debating the Literature**

### **8.1 A Critique to the Literature**

The literature review regarding the theories of subculture that was introduced in the second chapter is detailed here so as to direct a meta-level critique to the available literature. It is argued that hip-hop cultures can be so complex that the inheritance of subcultural theories might obscure their contextual differences, as the deductive nature of these theories would force the data to fit into preconceived ideas and theories. It is also suggested that these theories might be suffering from discursive reductionism, as the complexity of the conflict between the 'Old School' and 'New School' is reduced to a simple dichotomy of authenticity and inauthenticity in the literature. On the contrary, as shown in the results, social reality does not solely emanate from discourses, but these discourses are deeply embedded in material social processes (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p.19), and therefore their meaning may vary to a great extent depending on the context in which they are invoked.

### **8.2 Terminology in the Literature**

The terms 'Old School' and 'New School' in various hip-hop cultures around the world have long been interpreted through a simple dichotomy inherited from the theories of subculture, which is authenticity and inauthenticity. The logic of this categorization is based on the members' desire for being different from the rest of society as a response to the danger of being swallowed by a larger, mainstream culture (Duncombe, 1997). Therefore, it is widely accepted in the literature that authenticity is invoked by the subjects of any subculture as an objection to commercialization, and accordingly to the standardization of their differences. There are a few fundamental works on the theories of subculture, inherited as a conceptual toolbox by the majority of empirical studies, that are conducted on the terms 'Old School' and 'New School' in hip-hop cultures.

The first of these is Frith's study on the politics of rock 'n' roll. Frith (1981) argued that the ideology of rock music in the 1960s was to oppose the business-oriented worldview, and that this opposition was the legitimization of rock music as subculture against other forms of popular music that were thought to be reproducing commercial lifestyles. In that sense, authenticity is contrasted with commercialization, and the British youth's desire to be different. Indeed, Lull (1987, p. 277) found similar practices of in-group

demarcation among the members of punk rock communities, where the concept of authenticity was found appropriate by the researcher vis-a-vis the 'commodification of punk ethic', perceived as a contradiction to the anti-capitalist stance of the group's envisioned identity.

In another study conducted on zine-makers, Duncombe (1997) appealed to the term authenticity, as he observed that the members of the zine subculture strived to distinguish themselves from the mainstream culture; while defining mainstream as suburban, conformist, and those who operate under the reign of corporate capitalism. Drawing on Frith's study (1981), Chapple and Garofalo (1997) examined how major record companies' appropriation of the resistant culture of 1960s rock turned the genre into a commodified enterprise and paved the way for authenticity invocations among people who considered themselves real members of the rock community, regarding others as bystanders. Thornton's (1996) study on the British rave subcultures also applied the same terminology to separate the authentic way of being from commercialized selves, considering that the rave subcultures were the youth's way of resistance against standardization.

McLeod (1999) appears to be the first scholar in the literature who appropriated this dichotomy from these studies, and applied it in the field of hip-hop. Although he warned that hip-hop's terminology might contextually differ, he drew on the available contextual toolbox and concluded that being 'Old School' is an authentic response to commercialization, whereas 'New School' remains inauthentic. This is probably because his study merely focused on the US, and hence remained within the borders of the Western context. Clark (2013), whose study was influenced a lot by McLeod and by the same conceptual toolbox, arrived at a similar conclusion about Tanzanian hip-hop culture. That is, the commercialized version being the inauthentic 'New School', while the underground version is the authentic 'Old School' hip-hop. Oravcová (2013) reproduced the same findings regarding the Czech context, Bower (2011) regarding Germany, as Maxwell (2001) did for the Australian hip-hop culture.

George (2004) argued that the relationship between these two terms resembles the one between a creditor and a debtor. He demonstrated that the self-proclaimed 'Old School' pioneers of hip-hop culture see themselves as the originators whose efforts and sacrifices are the proven indicators of given social struggle. In return, they bear a latent expectation from 'New School' rappers and their audience to pay respect and gratitude back to them for paving their way to the mainstream throne, but since this is not the case, they feel that their role in hip-hop's success is neglected (George, 2004). However, the dichotomy

of authenticity and inauthenticity appears again in determining who is mainstream and who is underground, ending up with another reductionism. Consequently, two critiques are given on the current literature. The first one concerns the limitations of deductive approaches, and the second one concerns the reduction of social reality into a discursive realm.

### **8.2.1 Critique I: Shortcomings of Deductive Approaches**

Deductivism can simply be described as making inferences from a general law. Deductive approaches usually begin with a theory-driven hypothesis which guides data collection and analysis. From the theory, predictions are made and in the following, they are subjected to empirical tests to prove the validity of the hypothesis. It's a reasoning of backing up theoretical statements with specific scenarios. However, they may ignite serious perspective biases as deductivism bears the risk of fitting the data into the theory, and hence may render the researcher blind to the spots in the contextual area being researched that can't be grasped with the theory. The current literature on hip-hop's internal contradiction suffers from that bias, as it obscures the contextual differences every time it inherits the theories of subculture to fit everything into a simple dichotomy of authenticity and inauthenticity. On the contrary, results have shown that there is more to that.

In this study, an inductive approach was adopted. Grounded theory was found appropriate to avoid such drawbacks as it suggests to begin with data collection and analysis to construct an explanatory theory grounded in the data themselves. In that sense, the meta-narratives external to the contextual area were dodged thanks to the inductive nature of grounded theory. Instead of proving the validity of the hypothesis derived from a preconceived theory, participants' own experiences of the context and their own interpretive framework were theorized. As a result, the contextual differences regarding the conflict between 'Old School' and 'New School' hip-hop was revealed, as well as the discourses that were adopted by the 'Old School' hip-hop community to maintain an in-group/out-group distinction, each of which would have remained obscured if the subject wasn't being analyzed with a fresh theoretical edifice.

### **8.2.2 Critique II: Discursive Reductionism**

Discursive reductionism can be described as the isolation of material social processes from the emergence of discourses to an extent that complex social phenomena are confined to a discursive realm.

In other words, discourses are treated as the only constitutive elements of social reality. However, they are always in a dialectical relationship with accompanying social, cultural, political and economical developments in a broader context (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 60-62). Previous studies on hip-hop cultures fail to grasp that broader context from which discourses are emanated, and since social processes that would be peculiar to the context are excluded, it becomes easier to apply the discourses of authenticity and inauthenticity as the yardstick with which in-group demarcations are drawn without paying attention to the unique contextual differences. This being the case, the same results can be reproduced everywhere as long as the researcher neglects social processes paving the way for the availability of certain discourses to subjects.

For instance, throughout the coding process of the textual data, the discontent with mass production, commercialization, and being subsumed by the values of corporate culture appeared to be one possible theoretical path that the study could have taken, and by taking it, it would have been easier to draw on available theories and restrain the subject to the discursive realm of the same dichotomy once again. But different theoretical paths were also discovered due to the inductive nature of grounded theory methodology, and the larger social processes underlying the discourses adopted by the subjects were thus discovered, such as technologization, hybridization, and urbanization. Once the discourses concerning in-group/out-group distinctions in hip-hop cultures are tackled through social processes surrounding them, it would appear that the ways people draw in-group/out-group distinctions in hip-hop cultures are more sophisticated than the available theories can grasp. Therefore, the concepts of 'Old School' and 'New School', peculiar to hip-hop cultures, shouldn't be treated as having fixed or rigid meanings, such as authentic and inauthentic, but rather should be grasped as floating signifiers whose meanings can change depending on the context.

## **CHAPTER 9: Conclusion**

The conclusion consists of three sub-sections. The overall summary of the research is presented in the first section. Then, the researcher's own interpretation of the findings is given in the discussion part. Finally, suggestions for further research are made.

### **9.1 Overall Summary**

The in-group/out-group distinctions within the Turkish hip-hop community were elaborated throughout the study, and the presence of contextual differences regarding the conflict between 'Old School' and 'New School' hip-hop were revealed, which were not available in the current literature. Unlike other studies concerning hip-hop's internal conflict, a bottom-up approach was adopted to theorize and analyze the topic from the subjects' own interpretive framework. As a result, six discursive dimensions were discovered in relation to social processes underlying these discourses adopted by the 'Old School' hip-hop members. The technologies of communication, transportation, and musical production were found to be of key importance in the emergence of these discursive strategies that are appropriated to maintain and preserve the group's distinctiveness. The importation of foreign elements to the local lifeworlds through new media, the transformation of spatial order through transportation, and the erosion of language in hip-hop music through technologization appeared to be the social processes of hybridization from which these reactionary discourses emanated.

In the following, based on the findings acquired through the inductive approach, two constructive criticisms were given to the current literature. Firstly, the shortcomings stemming from deductive approaches were highlighted, since the contextual differences regarding the conflict between 'Old School' and 'New School' hip-hop were obscured due to the inheritance of preconceived theories of subculture. Secondly, the confinement of such a complex social phenomenon into a discursive realm was criticized as the material social processes were neglected, and hence the social reality was reduced to a simple dichotomy of authenticity and inauthenticity. In that sense, contributions were made to the literature as the contextuality of hip-hop's terminology in Turkey was disclosed, and the limitations stemming from the deductive approaches were uncovered.

## 9.2 Discussion

Whether the ‘Old School’ hip-hop community in Turkey can be characterized as a subculture or not remains to be a tricky question, as this discussion seems to be taking a different direction as well. It might be argued that destabilizing effects of globalization, which have given rise to the widely perceived loss of certainty, security and safety, might have led people to retreat into group closure. For instance, Bauman (2001) argues that in a world where insecurity is constantly increasing, people may search for safety in ideas of community. The widespread discontent with technologization, individualization, and the disappearance of place-based identities in the ‘Old School’ hip-hop community might be related to a growing ontological insecurity in the age of undamped globalization. In the face of these developments, it seems that any search for a sense of belongingness and group membership must necessarily be reactionary, given the fact that the discourses against ‘New School’ hip-hop and the values that it represents also emerged as a reaction to the social processes of hybridization transforming the idea of neighborhood as a community.

There is also another angle that could be discussed in relation to the destabilizing effects of globalization. Insofar as the erosion of language from hip-hop music has a political aspect, it is also interesting that the members are longing for the human presence that is gradually removed from hip-hop music due to the growing presence of technology. Members often expressed their discontent regarding the death of poetry in hip-hop music, as they no longer can identify themselves with another human being through the language of hip-hop, which was once known as a communicative medium for establishing strong ties among the members of the ghetto community. This brings a crucial discussion to the table. Since hip-hop culture used to serve as an interactive public sphere where physical contact between ghetto residents took place and tight relationships were formed (see Chapter 5, 5.1.3), it might be argued that in the era of globalization, during which local lifeworlds are dismantling, the pursuit for an affinitive community might be a nostalgic yearning for relationship intimacy in a world where ties between people are more fluid and every relationship is mediated through technology. If this is the case, the idea of the ghetto as a community can be interpreted as a phantasmagoric space that the ‘Old School’ hip-hop members are striving to hold on to in order to consolidate and fix their sense of identity.

In light of these interpretations, the main question appears to be whether the desire for roots, belonging or essence in ‘Old School’ hip-hop culture is a politically regressive form of reactionary nostalgia against

the deterritorializing effects of globalization, or if it is a subcultural practice posing a challenge to the hegemonic establishment? If the answer is only one of them, how can the former be distinguished from the latter? Or if the answer is both, would it be fair to say that all subcultures contain a reactionary nostalgia to some extent? If so, the relationship between deterritorialization, nostalgia, identity, and subcultures is yet to be explored.

Another intriguing aspect of the study is that the ‘Old School’ hip-hop members are quite old to be placed into definitions of subcultures as a form of youth socialization practices. People who participated in the study were between the age range of thirty to thirty-eight. They were youngsters once, and they had a political motivation in their music as well as in their everyday experience of the ghetto. But their main concern today is that the ghetto youth do not act as they did, and what they are trying to do is basically to provide parental guidance to them as being community workers. It is intriguing, because while Hebdige (1979) argues that subcultural practices occur when youngsters look for a way out from the parenting culture in a disciplinary society, the ‘Old School’ hip-hop community’s endeavor to impose certain values, duties, and responsibilities on the ghetto youth seems like an act of any other disciplinary figure. In that case, if the ‘Old School’ hip-hop community in Turkey were still to be called a subculture, would it be emancipatory or oppressive? To put it another way, is it possible to observe oppressive practices in subcultures, such as the in-group disciplining of members? Or do subcultures always end up exercising oppression upon its own members? Like they can only be formed as temporary autonomous zones.

This brings us to the issue of whether the ‘Old School’ hip-hop community in Turkey can be characterized as a subculture or not once again. It can be said that Turkish hip-hop culture contained subcultural practices as ghetto residents were part of an insurgent musical culture that was standing against the urban renewal projects threatening their place-based identities. In other words, hip-hop was appropriated as a subcultural practice based on the shared experience of urban disadvantageousness. But once the idea of territory, belonging, and public sphere was transformed by new media and transportation technologies, and the disadvantageousness stemming from being located on the periphery became less noticeable for the ghetto residents who have now wider opportunities of mobility and communication, the subcultural identity, which was deeply anchored in the existence of external dangers, gradually dissolved. As a result, ‘New School’ hip-hop was defined as the new rising internal danger whose influence is not based on the politics of the ghetto but on the values of liberal individualism, seen as a threat to hip-hop’s territorial imagination of identity.

Although the in-group/out-group distinction between the labels ‘Old School’ and ‘New School’ in Turkish hip-hop culture resembles any other subcultural debate in which discussions regarding the demarcation of group boundaries for cultural membership takes place, the fact that ‘Old School’ hip-hop members strive to keep their music and personal relationships as intact as possible, and their endeavor to protect hip-hop’s cultural heritage against larger cultural flows, seems more likely to be a reactionary response given to the changing dynamics of social life, imbued with a certain sense of nostalgia. The appearance of ‘New School’ hip-hop as an outer group is a discursive construct of an other, established by ‘Old School’ members, directed as a response to the social processes of hybridization inducing an identity crisis regarding the group’s previously held self-image of community workers (see Chapter 5, 5.1.5). In that sense, the in-group closure of the ‘Old School’ hip-hop community in Turkey seems like a search for a solid foundation to fix their identity in highly destabilized ‘risk societies’, in which feelings of distrust, insecurity, and uncertainty are constantly growing and result in exclusionary attitudes towards differences, foreigners, outsiders, and newcomers (Beck, 1992).

It is barely the case that the in-group/out-group distinction in the Turkish hip-hop community is a subcultural one. By the time Turkish hip-hop was a subcultural practice, there were no such distinctions at all, but they emerged following the social processes of hybridization transforming the idea of community, space, and identity. The context within which the terminology is invoked, demonstrates that these discourses are reactionary responses to the changing aspects of everyday social life, set off by the expansion of transportation networks, the proliferation of new media technologies, the growing impact of technology in hip-hop music, and accordingly the intertwining of diverse social backgrounds, whereas the current literature obscures these social processes peculiar to contexts by applying the terminology of the signifiers of authenticity and inauthenticity. Unlike other musical subcultures, such as punk or grime, hip-hop has a unique cultural aspect, since the sense of identity is strongly linked to one’s territorial background (Mitchell, 1998). Therefore, the disappearance of place-based identities due to the deterritorializing effects of globalization might be the main reason for the ‘Old School’ hip-hop community to adopt a set of discursive strategies that would anchor their identity into solid grounds.

Consequently, it can be concluded that not every in-group/out-group distinction in hip-hop cultures might be an indicator of subcultural authenticity based on the group’s desire for being different from the mass, but that there might be more complex social processes underlying boundary drawing practices in

hip-hop cultures, as the territory being the main pillar of hip-hop cultures is now challenged by the evaporation of spatially-bounded lifeworlds.

### **9.3 Suggestions For Future Research**

As argued in the conclusion, more bottom-up approaches in hip-hop studies are needed to reveal contextual differences regarding the in-group/out-group distinctions between the 'Old School' and 'New School' hip-hop. Available frameworks in the literature bear the risk of reducing these terms to universal definitions, neglecting their socio-historical development, and hence missing their contextual uniqueness. The general tendency of categorizing hip-hop as a subculture is a risky one, because hip-hop's subcultural aspect is mostly based on urban disadvantageousness. For instance, even in the US, where hip-hop music was born, hip-hop's birth was a matter of resistance against the construction of the Cross Bronx Express which changed the urban landscape of the South Bronx and pushed Black and Hispanic communities away from their place (Chang, 2005). Therefore, without studying the dynamics transforming the spatial configuration within which certain hip-hop culture is blossomed, it would be an early judgement to say whether the in-group/out-group distinction between the 'Old School' and 'New School' hip-hop refers to a subcultural conflict or not. In that regard, studies that would take a historical approach on the development of these terms in relation to larger social processes by which 'Old School' and 'New School' acquire its contextual meaning are needed.

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