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Department of Social Work

SUBJECT: Social Work, C-level: Globalization and Interculturalism.

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ABSTRACT:

This research aimed for an extended knowledge and understanding of young people in stigmatized areas and their construction of group identity. With a focus on Roma youths in Konik, Montenegro, and their involvement in hip-hop we wanted to explore what this culture meant to them in relation to their context. An ethnographic approach was used in collecting the empirical data through observations, interpreting music lyrics and conducting qualitative semi-structured interviews. Five young Roma boys from Konik, all involved in hip-hop, were interviewed. Theoretical perspectives on identity, youth culture and stigmatization were central. In addition, Bourdieu's theory regarding cultural capital was emphasized and connected to youths and hip-hop. The empirical material showed that involvement in hip-hop provided the Roma youths with a group identity that they referred to in positive terms. Contextual factors of stigmatization excluded the Roma group from the majority population and the engagement in hip-hop created a possibility for the youths to be someone. The cultural capital gained through hip-hop was not used to verify and legitimate an authentic Roma identity. It was rather a way for them to create boundaries towards the negative elements in their community.

KEY WORDS: Hip-hop, Roma, identity, stigmatization, youth culture, sub culture, cultural capital.

TITLE: Hip-hop and Construction of Group Identity in a Stigmatized Area. A Field Study regarding Cultural Capital among Roma Youths in Konik, Montenegro.

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During the previous semester at the Mid Sweden University youth cultures in marginalized areas were studied and the complexity of this phenomenon highlighted. One of the researchers that were emphasized was Ove Sernhede. He has for several years studied the hip-hop culture in excluded areas in Sweden and his books have inspired this research. At our practical placement in spring 2007 we worked at youth clubs within the organisation Forum MNE, an NGO working with non-formal education in Montenegro (www.forumsyd.org, www.forum-mne.com). This work with youths led us to the community Konik, a suburb in the outskirts of Podgorica, the capital of Montenegro, and to Roma youths involved in hip-hop.

This study was realized due to the Minor Field Study scholarship provided by SIDA, Swedish International Development Agency. The complete research was accomplished in Montenegro and compiled by both of us. Accordingly we are equally accountable and proud of this paper.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In constructing identity and finding a place within the modern society many young people get involved in sub cultural groups. Hip-hop culture is one such grouping. It started in Northern American ghettos as a protest against discriminating societal structures and aimed to reconstruct respect, dignity and local identity. Today hip-hop is a global culture attracting youths all over the world, mainly living in stigmatized areas (Sernhede, 2002).

By studying the Roma youths in Konik, Montenegro, and their involvement in hip-hop we intended to reach an extended understanding of stigmatized areas and youth culture. Moreover, to highlight the purpose of this study in relation to social work, we want to emphasize on the importance of encompass knowledge about different ethnical groups and cultural expressions. This is an essential factor for a respectful and emphatic approach.

The history of the Roma people is marked by discrimination, marginalization and exclusion. Throughout the past they have been enslaved, persecuted, suffering in the holocaust and even today laws against their existence are present. Under the Nazi regime during the Second World War the Roma were the only other population besides the Jews that were targeted for extermination on racial grounds. All through the history laws of segregation has excluded the Roma people from the educational systems and consequently they are very poor when it comes to reading and writing. Some claim that the Roma people are the least integrated and the most persecuted people of Europe. Their fundamental civil rights are endangered almost everywhere and the discrimination against them is present in most societies (www.geocities.com).

According to Freud (2006) Roma as group has: a strong identity, peculiar way of life and unique culture. They never claimed their own territory but have been living isolated within the host society. Roma people have their roots in India and previous researchers have argued that they were a pariah people who emigrated from India (ibid.). The cast system is still practiced by a major part of the Roma population

around the world and additionally they have different ethnic backgrounds (www.kosovoroma.wordpress.com).

The Roma in Montenegro consists of the three ethnical groupings: Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians (Nadazdin, 2007). All of them are facing more or less severe problems involving level of education, unemployment, undefined constitutional status, low standard of living and bad living conditions (www.osim.cg.yu). For the Roma in Konik life is therefore rough and poverty extended.

In this poor environment the youth club “Multi Cool-T” has become a free zone that offers opportunities for youngsters to develop their talents and interests. Today hip-hop has developed into the clubs main activity and several Roma boys are engaged in break dancing and rapping. Hip-hop has grown to be a significant part of their lives and a way for them to construct group identity.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The Roma population in Montenegro is a stigmatized group and the majority are living in overcrowded areas where the standard and living conditions are very poor. Konik is a multicultural settlement with around 35 000 inhabitants. Many of the Roma in Konik are refugees from Kosovo. Another grouping of Roma has been seeking asylum or lived as illegal refugees in Western Europe for several years. Due to the fact that most Roma living in Montenegro do not have citizenship they lack the personal documents that are needed for social welfare, employment and health insurance and therefore they are excluded from the society’s care (Nadazdin, 2007).

Most data about Konik and the Roma’s situation in Montenegro describes a very negative picture of the community and their living conditions. By emphasizing on the youths and their involvement in hip-hop this research sought to show a brighter side of the Roma population.

1.2 Purpose

The aim of this study is to gain extended knowledge and understanding about young people in a stigmatized area. Our purpose is to explore how these youths create group identity through a specific sub cultural grouping. Additionally we wish to explore how the Roma youth's involvement in hip-hop may connect with their construction of group identity and their contextual environment. Hip-hop as cultural capital will be measured in relation to contextual factors such as: marginalization, exclusion and ethnic minority.

1.3 Research Questions

- How do the informants describe their relation to Konik, their local neighbourhood?
- How do the informants describe themselves and how do they construct their identity?
- How do the informants experience living in Montenegro and what is their relation to the majority population?
- What does hip-hop culture involve for the informants?
- Do the informants experience global or/and local connection?

1.4 Limitations

This research is limited to study individuals in their context and does not dig deeper into other areas. Furthermore the participant's experiences in relation to their specific age will not be discussed since no theories emphasizing on psychological factors are in focus. All the boys that contribute with information to this research are generalized as youth and the main focus considers aspects of; group identity, ethnicity, youth culture and stigmatization. Additionally this study only regards Roma boys that are

performing hip-hop and no girls are mentioned. This is due to the fact that no Roma girls involved in hip-hop were to be found.

1.5 Disposition

Background information concerning Roma and hip-hop will follow in the next chapter. Thereafter, in chapter three, theoretical perspectives are presented that emphasize on; youth culture, identity and stigmatization. In the end of the section Bourdieu's theory concerning social field, habitus and cultural capital is explored in relation to youths and hip-hop culture.

Chapter four concerns the methods of collecting and analyzing data that were used in this research. In this chapter the chosen research perspectives are motivated and the research strategy described. Thereafter follows a critical reflection on the reliability, validity and generalizing aspect of the collected data. Moreover, ethical aspects are also emphasized here. Chapter five presents the empirical data that was collected through interviews and observations. Finally, in the sixth chapter, the central findings that arose through the research are analyzed and discussed in relation to relevant theoretical perspectives.

2. BACKGROUND

The purpose of this research was to investigate how young people from a stigmatized group construct identity through a specific sub cultural expression. In order to do this we have focused on young Roma boys from Konik and their engagement in hip-hop culture. In this chapter the situation for Roma people in Montenegro is presented and followed by an introduction to the hip-hop phenomenon. By highlighting the Roma situation and hip-hop we intend to seek a deeper understanding of the youth's situation and the contents of hip-hop culture.

2.1 Roma in Montenegro

The data concerning education among Roma children has not been regularly updated but it shows that the educational level and the current enrolment of school are very

low. In 2003 61.3% of the population did not have any education, 21.3% incomplete primary school and as little as 9.2% had completed primary school. Only a small number of people have graduated secondary school and for example there were only six Roma students enrolling university studies in 2004-2005, of which four of them dropped out (Nadazdin, 2007).

Two main explanations for the low level of education are discrimination and poverty. Due to poverty many Roma families are unable to support their children in school and in many cases the children themselves need to contribute to the economic support of the family by working. Because of the lack of personal documents they cannot get benefits in subsidized school fees since these depend on the family receiving welfare assistance from Centres for Social Care. Another issue is that many young Roma have returned from countries in Western Europe as a consequence of not getting asylum. Therefore many children are educated in other languages than Montenegrin/Serbian, which makes it difficult in being integrated into mainstream schools without any proper support (ibid.).

Moreover, Freud (2006) stresses that the parents of Roma children are unable to see the point of education since the labour market is discriminating them anyway. The unemployment rate among the Roma population in Montenegro is extended, 82% is without a job. However, if refugees and internally displaced persons are included the number is even higher (Nadazdin, 2007).

The majority of Roma people in Montenegro are living in segregated suburbs or in inner-city ghettos. A survey from 2003 conducted by the UNDP, United Nations Development Programme, concluded that 48% of Roma lived in makeshift shacks and 61% in houses smaller than 30 square meters. The living conditions within these suburbs are very poor and the settlements are overcrowded. They are often situated in areas that are polluted, flooded by sewage and near garbage dumps (ibid.).

Roma youths in Montenegro are lacking opportunities and since their status is low when it comes to education and employment they are facing many obstacles in the society. Historically involvement in hip-hop has been a way for youths in stigmatized

areas to be someone and achieve something and accordingly the hip-hop phenomenon will be emphasized.

2.2. Hip-Hop a Youth Culture

Hip-hop is a cultural movement that started as a protest among Black youths in the Northern American ghettos due to poverty, segregation and stigmatization. At the beginning the hip-hop was a way for excluded groups of youngsters to reconstruct respect, dignity and local identity in the American society (Lommel, 2000). The labour market and other structures in the society did not offer opportunities. Therefore these young people developed their own interests in order to construct identity and give meaning to their lives (Sernhede, 2002). The early rap lyrics described individual as well as group experiences of Black people, where personal story telling was blended with statements from political leaders. Hip-hop created a dialogue between its producers and consumers and because of its ability to reflect common experiences it attracted Black youths. The meaning of the music became the new voice for young Black America and a way to construct a Black racial identity (Clay, 2003).

Since the 1980's hip-hop has spread all over the world and it has become a global culture that connects people from different parts of the world mainly living in stigmatized areas. The local context additionally mutates the hip-hop culture so it fits into the local setting. Therefore hip-hop can be a way to create a close connection within the local neighbourhood. Sernhede (2002) points out that an upgrading of the own community through hip-hop is an important aspect of youth's interest in the culture. Furthermore he declares that youth from stigmatized areas have a need to defend the neighbourhood and the personal identity. This is a consequence of feeling excluded from the major society (ibid.).

2.2.1 Definition of hip-hop

The former gang leader Africa Bambaataa has often been called the godfather of hip-hop and through the *Zulu Nation*, which he founded in 1975, he wanted to unify young people. His aim was to replace destructive behaviours such as gang fighting

and drug abuse with dance, art and music. Different ways of expressions arose and made it possible for young people to express their personal as well as their community style (Lommel, 2000). The elements of hip-hop culture today relates to; Graffiti, DJ:ing, Rap music and Break dancing.

Graffiti, which origins from Aerosol Art, is a spray can art that in the beginning was used to confirm ones name and existence by writing short statements in public places. Later on the artists developed their own idioms and ways of expression (www.streetzone.com).

DJ (Disc-Jockey) is the name for a person who plays records at clubs and from the start the DJ was assisted by the MC (Master of Ceremony, later on Microphone Controller). The MC helped the DJ to keep the party going during the breaks by speaking short phrases into the microphone. Later these breaks became longer and the rap music emerged in 1979 (ibid.).

The first rap received national attention for its lyrics about war and violence, even though the music also incorporated positive attitudes referred to as *Old School*. Since then rap has developed into incorporating numerous styles. In the beginning of the 1980's the *New School* started and it included rappers such as; Kool Moe Dee who produced the album *Knowledge is King* and Heavy D who rapped about cultural awareness and higher status of black women. During the late 1980's the *Gangsta rap* arose and these rappers expressed hate, sexism and violence. One of the most well known gangster rappers during the 1990's was Tupac who was shot and killed in 1996 (Lommel, 2000).

As the rap culture developed with longer breaks the dancers got more space to perform their skills (www.streetzone.com). Later on the dance floor became the place where the break dancers could express their individuality and create their own style (Sernhede, 2002). The break dancing includes the whole body and dangerous and risky moves such as head spins and somersaults (Lommel, 2000).

3. THEORETICAL APPROACH

Current researches regarding youth scatters over different areas and are accentuating various theoretical perspectives. This chapter presents an overview of central perspectives that we found relevant for our aims and important for youth studies in general.

3.1 Group Identity

Context and place is emphasized by several researchers to have a major meaning for young people in creating their identity. The formation of collective identities can, according to Ålund (1997), be a result of common experiences of discrimination, alienation, marginalization and social disadvantage. Petersson and Robertson (2003) imply that group identity gives a feeling of security and satisfaction to the individual. Accordingly it is always necessary to study identity from a *constructionist* perspective. From this point of view, identity should be observed as; changeable, multidimensional and realized through a context (Petersson & Robertson 2003).

3.2 Youth Culture

One of the most prominent traditions within youth studies today is the *Birmingham school*, which started in England in the late 1970s and arose due to the changes in the British society. It aimed to interpret matters of style and culture that symbolized a specific youth group from a class perspective (Lalander & Johansson, 2007).

The construction of youth culture is described, by Lalander and Johansson, as a way for young people to form their identity in the modern society. Youth culture can additionally be a way to express experiences of exclusion and marginalization and to connect globally with people in other parts of the world who share the same experiences (ibid.). Sernhede has written several books about youth culture and one of them, *AlienNation is My Nation*, regards the hip-hop culture in a marginalized area in Sweden. His research shows that involvement in hip-hop is strengthening the boys and developing their self-confidence (Sernhede, 2002). Another study, regarding hip-hop, was conducted by Cathus (2004). He highlighted the youth's involvement in hip-hop within the French context. Hip-hop was by him referred to as a "Do it yourself

culture” that demands serious efforts and a lot of training and Cathus meant that these aspects are the greatest qualities of hip-hop. The young people that he met during his study pointed out that hip-hop “gets you busy”. For these youngsters this was a very positive aspect since they didn’t have much to do in their spare time (Cathus, 2004).

3.2.1 Sub Culture

Youth sub cultures has since the start been the focus of Birmingham school. These groups are considered as an outcome of frictions with the parents’ culture or a way to process the parents’ culture (Fornäs, Lindberg & Sernhede, 1994). *Style* is viewed as markers for the group in order to make them distinct from the mainstream culture. A group’s style is performed by wearing specific kind of clothes, listening to a certain type of music or having an individual image or hair cut. The attributes point out who the group is and connects it to the social environment within the society. Moreover they are used to process local relations and problems in the neighboring surrounding (Lalander & Johansson, 2007).

Sub culture is moreover presented by Perasović (2004) as a reaction to and criticism of a specific problem that is positioned in the societal class structures. Youngsters from disadvantaged families that do not have the resources to achieve high status create sub cultural groups in order to achieve respect within the group. The creation of sub culture is an interactive process which involves engagement in certain images and styles that is connected to the sphere of free time. It consists of symbolic structures that refer to norms, values, symbols, beliefs and way of life (ibid.).

3.3 Culture and Societal Structures

Pierre Bourdieu is well known for his sociological work and several youth studies with a cultural approach are based on his theory. This perspective underlines culture as a symbolic marker and mechanism for society’s structural order with dominating powers’ agencies (www.blackwellreference.com). For that reason his perspectives was considered as relevant and interesting for this research. By emphasizing on his conceptualization of social field, habitus and cultural capital we aimed to catch the complexity between; youths, hip-hop culture and Roma. Due to our aspiration for a

multifaceted description of the field we focused on Bourdieu's perspective that links society structure, class and individual's behavior. Additionally Clay's (2003) and Carter's (2003) interpretations of cultural capital were incorporated in order to provide a more complex implication.

3.3.1 Social Field and Habitus

The setting that the society and its institutions are functioning after is by Bourdieu conceptualized as the *social field*. He means that the field is structured according to a hierarchy with positions that separate the dominant from the dominated and that the positioning is enforced on the people who are part of the social field (www.blackwellreference.com).

Each position in the field is predetermined according to the individuals society class and it includes distinguishing characteristics such as lifestyle, way of talking, thinking etc. This distinctiveness is called *habitus* (www.ne.se).

Individual's knowledge and way of behaving originates from their social class and it is intermediated through habitus that is socially constructed and demonstrates a viewpoint in life based on class (Bourdieu, 1992). People become members of and are connected to a specific society class by practicing certain habitus that symbolize different values. The habitus is depending on their hierarchy position (www.blackwellreference.com). These social distinctions are central for understanding how power is created and reproduced and in what way individuals are ranged in a specific social order (www.ne.se). This points out that people by their habitus automatically are integrated into a particular position in the social field and additionally their positioning decides what habitus they encompass (Giddens, 2003).

Bourdieu (2004) implies that social structures do not appear accidentally. Instead he emphasizes that the positioning is based on intended unequal power relations between groups of people. Elites ensure their dominating social position through the practice of habitus. After some time habitus are normalized and the elites no longer have to be directly involved in the reproduction of the social structure. Habitus is consequently

the result of the individual's life but it is also connected to a person from the day he or she is born depending on the social class and background (Bourdieu, 2004). Furthermore Bourdieu points out that habitus will influence the individual's access to and amount of capital such as wealth, music taste, style etc. These things also determine the individual's position in the social structure. In addition, it is the habitus that is influencing the way one collects, invests and converts the capital (Bourdieu, 1990).

3.3.2 Cultural Capital

The *cultural capital*, also described as symbolic capital, refers to a person's or a group's taste and cultural preferences (www.blackwellreference.com). In the article, *Keepin' it Real*, written by Clay (2003) hip-hop is described as a form of cultural capital that can be used to confirm ones identity.

Bourdieu affirms that cultural capital is predetermined by ones class-based habitus. Additionally the cultural capital reflects ones class history and helps to strengthen the distinction between the classes. For that reason Bourdieu emphasizes that cultural capital can be used as a mechanism for exclusion and inclusion and to position people within the social hierarchy. He highlights the importance of taste as a way to create boundaries and indicates that it can work as a classifying system to differentiate people from each other (Huq, 2004).

Clay (2003) agrees with Bourdieu's conclusion that cultural capital is a tool and persons gain profit according to their ability to master it. At the same time she criticises Bourdieu for exclusively viewing cultural capital as a divider of inclusion and exclusion between classes. She means that the capital also can create demarcations within groups. The statement is grounded in her ethnographic observations that focus on Afro-American youth and the construction of identity within an ethnical group. According to Clay there are often tendencies inside a group where individuals put up status markers that are not based on skin colour, ethnicity or class. In her article she examines how Black youth use hip-hop as a form of cultural capital in order to construct boundaries and decide who is an authentic Black. These

hip hoppers performed their culture in their ethnical community through the use of hip-hop symbols such as: clothing, language and gestures. The most popular youths were the ones that could dress and act according to the cultural markers. In this context the cultural capital referred to style that could count within a specific ethnical group but was not valued by the majority population (Clay, 2003).

Bourdieu (2004) states that the societal structure additionally includes institutions which reproduce the classifying system of cultural capital. The educational system is in particular emphasized in his theories. He implies that this organization contributes to the reproduction and distribution of cultural capital and consequently this institution is replicating the structure of the social field. The reproduction is a result of the mechanism that makes the capital search for the capital and the social structures therefore tend to stay the same. Cultural capital is distributed in a construction that is a result of the connection between the families' strategies and the specific logic of the education system. Families with a high capital tend to encourage their children to study and they have knowledge about the educational system, the best schools etc. The ones with lower education and cultural capital are less familiar with the system and due to their lack of social network (*social capital*) within the educational structure they might be restricted in their support. Education can therefore be used to support the social differences and bring about the process of social reproduction of cultural capital and re-bound to the social background and other capitals (Bourdieu, 2004).

The idea of capital, habitus and social field is presenting an interconnected process in which a person's habitus is linked to the positioning in the field that additionally explains the individual's habitus and the way he or she adopts and practices the capital resources (www.blackwellreference.com).

Bourdieu's perspective of divisions in the society with inclusions and exclusions is according to Clay (2003) excessively simple. Groups are dichotomised and observed in relation to each other, for example the black group is studied versus the white. She writes that to understand the complexity of boundaries and cultural capital it is important to look at other values and signals than social class markers. In her article

she illustrates cultural capital within a group, pointing out that ethnical groups use other attributes than skin colour to clarify one's legitimacy. The kind of cultural capital that are valued within a group but not respected by the majority group is by Carter (2003) referred to as non-dominant capital. She means that groups, other than the dominant one, encompass different kinds of cultural capital. Therefore she is furthermore sceptical to Bourdieu's perception for having a dominant cultural approach based on the majority group's preferences.

4. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter the methods of collecting and analyzing data are presented. Moreover ethical aspect and obstacles that arose during the collecting of data are concerned.

4.1 Research Strategy

This research has an ethnographic approach for the collecting of relevant data by observations, qualitative interviews, study of music lyrics and video clips. The ethnographic method was chosen due to the fact that it offers a multifaceted understanding of the informants and their surrounding. A complex point of view was very important since we aimed to study group identity with a contextual approach.

For this research a combined inductive-deductive qualitative strategy has been applied. The inductive method emphasizes that concepts and theories are being produced according to the collected data. In deductive method, on the other hand, theories are studied before the field studies and interview questions are formulated in relation to these theories (Larsson, 2005). This means that concepts were established from the collected data and at the same time questions were formulated through chosen theoretical perspectives.

4.1.1 Ethnographic Method

The most important purpose in ethnographical researches is to learn and therefore it is central to work towards a *holistic perspective*. This means that no observation can be studied in isolation, but have to be understood in relationship to other aspects of the situation. An ethnographer always learns something new and then tries to understand

how it connects with other aspects of the situation in which the new learning occurred. It is also important that the ethnographer tries to connect the new knowledge to other parts, for example to the belief system or the history of the group (Agar, 1996). Concerning this it was essential to use different strategies for collecting data that would capture a contextual understanding and holistic perspective of the hip-hop identity in relation to Konik and Roma. This study therefore includes observations, interviews and analysis of music lyrics.

The aspiration of our field study was to collect data concerning the people involved in hip-hop and to catch their perspective of the reality. Throughout the research the standpoint was that the boys we interviewed and observed were the ones who possessed the information. Kvale (1997) names the group of people that are directly involved in the studied subject *informants* and according to Lalander and Johansson (2007) the term informant is preferable since the interviewed people encompass the information. Therefore the boys that contributed with data through the interviews in this research are called informants.

4.1.2 Observations and Interpretations of Lyrics

Lalander and Johansson (2007) emphasize that it is essential for the researcher in an ethnographic research to approach the informant's perspective by spending time in their area. Researchers have to be in the informant's reality and confront personal subjective thoughts with others values and norms. By spending time in the informant's area the researcher gains a deeper understanding of the informant's world and way of thinking. Observations were also an important issue for us since we aimed to capture the contextual environment and get a comprehensive perspective of hip-hop, group identity and how it connects to the social environment.

Unfortunately due to time limitations the observations were limited but they had an important role for collecting data and to build a trusting relationship. Three longer observations were conducted at the youth club "Multi Cool-T" in Konik where break dance is the main activity. Every Wednesday three break dance groups are practising there and we were present during these activities. Some observations were also

conducted during the practical placement at Forum MNE in spring 2007, a few months before the research. This offered some supplementary pre-understanding of the studied youths and their contextual environment.

Observations and analyses were additionally done on videotapes that demonstrated the hip-hop culture in Konik. In the documentary movie “My Hero” a group of Roma boys from Konik is interviewed about their engagement in hip-hop. The other film is a music video with the band “Boyz in da Hood”, a rap and break dance group from Konik. In addition music lyrics from Boyz in da Hood was translated by our interpreter and thereafter analyzed.

4.1.3 Qualitative Interviews

A strategic selection was performed to choose informants, which means that we deliberately picked out the informants for the interviews. The reason was that we saw it as important and necessary to get hold of the boys that we thought would give us most information.

The interview guide was semi-structured and consisted of a few broad questions with following-up questions that were used when necessary. It aimed to create freedom for the informants own view and make it less influenced by the researcher. Aiming for an individual point of view and trying to grab each person’s perspective the individual interview settings were regarded as appropriate. Five individual interviews were therefore conducted and each interview lasted for approximately one hour. Two of the informants brought the hip-hop culture to Konik from Germany, were they lived as refugees for several years. These boys have been active in the rap and break dance group, Boyz in da hood, since 2005. Three younger informants were selected due to their involvement in break dance at the youth club in Konik, Multi Cool-T, and we thought it would be interesting to get knowledge about the “new” generation’s perspectives of hip-hop.

4.2 Ethical Aspects

Lalander and Johansson (2007) are pointing out the importance of respect and openness to the informant. They stress that the informant is given freedom to decide where and when the interview should be held and that the researcher has to be honest towards the informant. He or she ought to inform about the research and how the collected data will be handled before the interview takes place. Kvale (1997) also writes that it is important to conduct the interviews in an environment where the interviewed person feels secure and relaxed, since this can affect the outcome of the answers. The informant should additionally be informed how the information will be handled, if it will be written down, recorded or videotaped. Nothing should be done without the informant's approval (Petersson & Robertson, 2003).

Consequently it has been considered as central in this research to show respect and openness to the informant during the field study. Every informant was informed about the intentions of the research and told that all the collected data would be confidentially handled. Their names and other personal information would be changed. Additionally we suggested different spaces for the interviews and then allowed the informant to choose. The different settings that were offered to the informant were; Forum MNE's head office in central Podgorica, the youth club in Konik, or in their private home. By pointing out that these settings only were suggestions the informant had the possibility to also choose another space. A copy of the information that was presented to the informants can be found in Appendix I: Information about the research.

A main aspect within ethnographic methods is also to win the informants trust (Lalander & Johansson, 2007). This was therefore something that we tried to create in our relation with the youths. During the observations at the youth club we met the informants several times before the interviews which contributed to a closer relationship. Concerning the informants that we did not see at the club, a meeting was arranged before the interviews aiming to inform them about the interview.

One of the informants was only 14 years old and this matter was discussed with our supervisor on the field. According to her this is not an issue in Montenegro as long as the personal information such as name is changed in the report.

4.3 Processing and Critical Examination of the Collected Data

All the interviews were transcribed word by word from the tape recording. This took place shortly after every interview and was done by the interviewer. Additionally the other person, who made notes during the interview, examined the transcribed interview and together with the interviewer discussed the collected data.

4.3.1 Analysis Method

Furthermore the *Ad hoc* method was used, which is a method that combines different analyzing strategies in structuring and giving meaning to the interview material (Larsson, 2005; Kvale, 1997). The transcribed interviews were categorized into themes concerning self-concept, exclusion, inclusion, local context, role models and different dimension of identity, such as, hip-hop and Roma. The interviews were analyzed in relation to one another through a comparing case analysis, where similar patterns from the different cases were highlighted. These themes were divided in positive and negative features and connected to the presented research questions. As previously mentioned a combination of inductive and deductive methods was used. The results from the categorizing were moreover interpreted and analyzed in relation to theoretical perspectives. A central point of view throughout the analyzing was to emphasize the informant's perspective.

4.3.2 Methodological Obstacles

Every interview was conducted individually and we sensed that it affected the younger boys. All of them appeared at the interview session together with a friend, when they were told that we preferred a private interview they agreed but looked a bit worried. The youths we meet during our observations always socialized in groups and therefore focus groups could have been appropriate. It might have resulted in more honest answers and balanced power relations.

At our first interview we experienced that the interview guide appeared complicated. Therefore two interview guides were created, one for the older boys and one for the younger. This certainly influenced the answers but it was a necessary act and the aim of the interview guides in total stayed the same in both. They were structured with wide questions after the same topics and themes but the second interview guide included some more following-up questions and further explanations (Appendix II: Interview guide – older boys and Appendix III: Interview guide – younger boys).

The plan for the interviews was to create similar settings with five informants with more or less the same background variables; Roma, living in Konik, boy, age (15-20 years), involved in hip-hop. Reality occurred to be a more complicated case and even though the presented variables were more or less the same for all informants their age and grade of involvement varied. This might additionally have influenced the informant's information and perspectives.

Before every interview the informant was asked if a tape recorder could be used and all of them agreed to this. The tape recording was positive in the sense that it made it easier for the researcher to follow the conversation and focus on what the informant said. Furthermore it simplified for following-up questions and the tape recorder tended to sharpen the attention at the interview situation. The negative aspect was that the interview meeting became very formal and that can have resulted in less sincere answers.

4.3.3 Interpreter

During the interviews an interpreter was used and that surely had an effect on the collected data. Nevertheless it was a fundamentally act due to language limitations. One positive aspect with the interpreter we used was his extensive knowledge in different languages. This made it possible for the informants to choose which language they preferred during the interviews; Albanian, Serbian/Montenegrin or German. The fact that the interpreter did not have any previous relationship to the

informants made him a neutral person. At the same time a closer connection between the interpreter and the informants might have created a more relaxed situation.

At the start, the situation with our interpreter was confusing and during the first interview some question marks arose. One reason for this was probably that his role in the process was not discussed concerning our expectations and what he should translate. For example, we had not clarified how the interpreter should act if the informant did not understand the question. Due to this the interpreter reformulated some questions during the first interview without telling the interviewer. This certainly affected the outcome of the answers. After the first interview the interview guide were made clearer and it was concluded that the interpreter should ask the researcher to repeat the question or to re-formulate it if the informant did not understand.

The interpreter was present at one observation at the youth club. It was positive in the sense that he made it possible for us to ask informal questions to the boys but his appearance also created a distance between us and the informants. Moreover there was always someone at the youth club with English knowledge who could translate if it was needed. Therefore it was decided that the interpreter would only be present and translate at the interview sessions.

As mentioned the interpreter also translated music lyrics from Boyz in da Hood. The texts were not written down and consequently the translation was done by listening. Some parts of the lyrics were not so clear and so the interpretation could not be complete. Due to this only shorter parts of the songs were emphasized in the empirical data. Further on we chose to not display the lyrics since only fragments could be obtainable.

4.3.4 Validity, Reliability, and Generalizing Aspect

Validity is commonly used as a mechanism to conclude if the study is measuring what it intends to. Within qualitative researches it is not possible to display any numbers and therefore validity here concerns the methodological use. For a high level

of validity it is essential to perform the research according to the intentions and a high reliability is necessary. Reliability stresses the measuring instruments for collecting and processing the data. High reliability is achieved by systematic method but high validity is not required. The generalizing aspect concerns whether or not the collected data can be viewed as universal facts and applied on a larger population (Kvale, 1997).

To improve the validity in this research the study has been conducted according to our purpose. The methods, theories and the collecting of data were chosen due to our intentions and the informants strategically selected to receive relevant knowledge and experiences of hip-hop, Roma and Konik.

The aim of the interviews was to catch the informant's perspectives and a tape recorder was used. Additionally both of us, the researchers, were present and one asked the questions while the other one took notes. Our attempt with this method was to properly capture the informant's information. The fact that an interpreter was used for the interview sessions made it difficult to entirely know that the interpreted information was totally accurate. We tried to solve this by keeping an open dialogue with the interpreter and explaining our desire for a correct translation.

In interview situations the informant is affected by the researcher and the researchers pre-understanding is continually reflecting the data. Reliability can therefore be a problem. A researcher from outside the country where he or she conducts the study additionally has an *outsider perspective*. That affects the answers and behavior of the informant during interviews and observations. The researcher's age, gender and the surrounding of the interview are furthermore influencing the collected data (Pettersson & Robertson, 2003). To minimize our influence, as researchers, we asked wide questions in order not to lead the interviews and so the informants were given extended possibility to formulate their answers.

It is important to state that this study had an ethnographic approach and therefore did not aim to collect generalizing data. Instead it intended to present the informants point of view and their understanding of the reality. Since the main purpose was to

illustrate the informant's truth and experiences no intention has been made to collect data that can show a universal picture of the reality. Agar (1996) also concludes that ethnographic interviews can mainly show patterns since they have an informal and unstructured character. Qualitative interviews are not able to measure, instead they can contribute to a deeper understanding and a more complex knowledge of the informant's experiences (Petersson & Robertson, 2003).

5. FINDINGS

In this chapter the material from the interviews, observations, video clips and musical lyrics are presented in relation to the aim of this research; to extend the understanding about how young Roma boys from a stigmatized area construct their identity and gain cultural capital through involvement in hip-hop. Firstly follows a short introduction where the informants are presented; their names have been changed to pseudonyms. Thereafter the empirical material is accounted for. Throughout the collecting of data the approach has been to emphasize the informant's perspective. In order to clarify this, the quotations are put in personal pronominal even though an interpreter was used during the interviews.

5.1 The Informants

Three of the informants, Stanko, Boris and Dardan, were chosen at our observations in the youth club. The other two, Ferid and Zoran, were selected due to their involvement in the rap and break dance group Boyz in da Hood. All the boys that were interviewed are Roma living in Konik and involved in hip-hop.

Stanko is 15 years old and he was born in Podgorica. He does not go to school. For three years he has been training break dance and says that he will keep on doing break dance for as long as he will be able to.

Boris is 14 years old and was born in Konik. From age two to eight he stayed in Italy but today he sees Montenegro as his home. He used to go to school but one month ago he was expelled and therefore he does not study at the moment. His wish is to

start school again but maybe in another town. These days he trains break dance everyday for about four hours.

Dardan is 16 years old and originates from Kosovo. His family moved to Montenegro eight or nine years ago. He is working as a cleaner in the centre of Podgorica and also goes to school. Three years ago he saw some older guys doing hip-hop. They inspired him and he gathered a group and started to train break dance.

Ferid is 19 years old and was born in Montenegro. In 1990/1991 he moved to Germany and lived there with his family as a refugee. The time in Germany affected him in several aspects. German became his first language and it was also there he got in contact with hip-hop, seven years ago, when he watched his cousins rapping and doing break dance. In 2004 he moved back to Montenegro and resides today with his wife and their little son.

Zoran is 20 years old and was born in Podgorica. When he was two years old his family moved to Germany where he got involved with hip-hop and R&B music. Three years ago the family was deported back to Montenegro. Until recently Zoran was working but now he is in the process of getting a visa since he plans to move back to Germany, where his wife lives.

5.2 Konik the Hood

The rap and break dance group *Boyz in da Hood* was active from 2005 until recently. It was established by *Ferid*, *Zoran* and three other Roma boys. The members shared the same experience of living in Germany for many years and further on being deported back to Montenegro. In *Konik* they got to know each other and started the group. As they brought the hip-hop culture to the area and introduced it to the younger boys they have played a great role in *Konik*. Many of the songs from *Boyz in da Hood* are about *Konik*, their local neighbourhood. The descriptions are in many aspects pessimistic and the song *Svi znaju* (Everybody knows) describes life in *Konik* as; either you go away or you stay in *Konik* and die.

When we travelled to Konik for our observations, we often took a taxi but since there was no street signs in the area the taxi drivers found it difficult to find the way. We could observe that the infrastructure was very poor and several people lived in shacks. There were a lot of horses walking around the neighbourhood and garbage was frequently spread. The poorest settlements were seen in the very outskirts of Konik, referred to as Camp 1 and 2. In these areas the majority of the population are refugees from Kosovo and their living conditions seemed extremely deprived. They lived in small wooden houses in an undersized area close to the garbage dump.

At our interview with Ferid, he said that life in Konik is hard and that many of the children do not attend school. Poverty is a major problem and people are gathering around trashcans to eat from the garbage. The other informants also portrayed the neighbourhood as an area with many negative elements. Boris expressed his dislike of Konik and he hated that it was so many junkies around. For Stanko the big Roma population and the low level of education was something he connected to Konik. Moreover he stressed that it was not a structural problem, more an issue within the Roma community. Stanko expressed:

“It’s a small town, there are a lot of Roma people here that could go to school, they don’t know how to read and write. And they are not interested in school, they don’t give enough effort to it.”

Konik was described by Ferid and Zoran as a ghetto and for them it was a shock to return from Germany. Zoran let us know that he could not believe that places like Konik really existed before he saw it with his own eyes. Konik is according to them a ghetto because many bad things are going on in the area; they mentioned problems with prostitution, drug abuse and unemployment. Moreover Zoran thought that people in Konik behaved different than people in town and therefore he saw them as abnormal. This is what Zoran said:

“Konik is a ghetto from this town./.../it’s a ghetto because there’s many people who don’t work, there’s lot’s of drugs, lot’s of prostitution and when you go to the city you don’t see that. You see people that know how to act. They have manners, they go to disco it’s a normal life and here it’s like a big difference, here only Roma live in Konik and in the other parts of town different people.”

Ferid additionally stressed that there is a pessimistic atmosphere in Konik and no opportunities is offered. He told us that people in Konik constantly talk about negative incidents, divorcements or fighting, and never that something positive happened. The children in the area have nothing that occupies them and many are not attending school, instead they just hang around in the streets and play gangsters, as Ferid expressed it. He also informed us that many street kids are without one parent and some of them have left home after fights in the family. For him Konik is very different from his experiences in Germany. In the following quotation Ferid emphasize this:

“/.../ in Germany you have lot more perspective, you can chose, you see the break dancers, you see some other groups, you chose, any group you want to hang out with /.../”

To summarize the informants own picturing of Konik, they described the area in unenthusiastic words, pointing out that poverty and drug abuse is occurring. The area does not offer any opportunities and there seemed, according to the informants, to be many children on the streets who do not attend school.

5.3 Identity and Stigmatization

Throughout our stay in Montenegro we faced a lot of pre-thoughts about the Roma population. People in our surrounding told us negative things and there were plenty of stories circulating about the Roma way of life. One such myth was that Roma are assassinating the elderly members if they can not contribute to the family income. As we uttered the reason for our research people questioned our motive, they did not know about any Roma involved in hip-hop. Most of the majority group had never put their foot in Konik but we had the impression that they thought they knew the area.

The informants were asked about their national identity during the interview sessions and they gave us different answers. Zoran said that he was German and that people in the Roma community and in the Montenegrin society saw him like that. Ferid expressed that he was Montenegrin and that he could not runaway from his nationality. Dardan meant that he was not Montenegrin because of his religion, being a Muslim. After a while Dardan changed his answer and told us that there were also

Muslims in Podgorica so that could not be the reason for him not being Montenegrin. It seemed like he felt different from the majority but did not know exactly why. Boris also mentioned that he was Muslim but he added that being a Muslim was not what made him different. Instead he said that his dark skin colour made it impossible for him to be a Montenegrin. Finally he added that he was a Roma from Montenegro but he could not pretend to be Montenegrin.

Two of the break dance groups that we met in the youth club had taken names including the word “Black”. One of these groups chose the name “Black Boys” while we were present. As we asked them why they picked that name, they answered that they were boys and they were black.

When questioning the informants about their life in Montenegro they all told us that it was not so bad, it could be better or maybe in the future it will be better. None of the boys expressed that it was really bad. Although when they started to talk about their familiarity with people in Montenegro they all, with one exception, described stigmatization. The one that told us that he did not experience bad response from the majority grouping was Zoran, who spent most of his life in Germany. He also, as declared, initially considered himself as German and notified us that people in Montenegro and in Konik saw him like that. When he went to a café in town he had a polite approach and was therefore respected, Zoran told us:

“They see me as normal, because it’s all in the culture, in the act, in the talk. For example Roma people go to the town and say; *where is the free place?* And I go there and say; *good day, good afternoon, can you show me where a free place is?*”

All the others exemplified negative experiences from Montenegrin people that portrayed lots of prejudices and racism towards Roma as a group. They had been called gypsies and Dardan said that other people considered Roma as filthy. Boris, as mentioned, saw himself as different from the majority population due to the fact that he was Roma, which he connected to his dark skin colour. Furthermore he incorporated his distinction from the majority with the way he was treated. Boris explained this by stating:

“/.../ they don’t like us because our skin is dark, they are also Muslims and we are Muslims but they still treat us bad because of our skin /.../ they just say this gypsy and all /.../”

The Roma are, according to Ferid, seen as a homogeny group by the majority and by that judged as a lower class and stigmatized as uneducated without any manners. He told us that people in the city do not notice that he is a good person instead they immediately observe him as Roma and are avoiding him, Ferid said:

*“/.../ maybe the future will be better but right now it’s not that good. Here I try to teach young people something but when I go to the city people that don’t have any manners they think that I am the one who has no manners and they treat me like that, maybe in the future, but right now it’s very bad. /.../ Montenegrin people look at me and they say; *he’s too stupid for me, he has no school, I want nothing, I want to have nothing to do with him. /.../* They think that every Roma person is the same. /.../”*

Moreover Ferid told us about a previous girlfriend of his. She was from the majority group and he felt that she was ashamed to show their relationship in public. He was convinced that she picked places where nobody could see them because of him, being Roma. Ferid explained this incident:

“/.../people have prejudices, once I was with this girl, Serb girl, and we went out together and the thing is that when we were together we were all okay but when we wanted to go somewhere she was ashamed, I felt something. She was ashamed to show people that I was her boyfriend /.../”

This section has been concerned with empirical data regarding identity and stigmatization. To sum up the material, it is firstly relevant to conclude that all the informants except for Zoran described experiences of stigmatization. Nevertheless all the informants, apart from Zoran, portrayed themselves as Roma and furthermore different from the majority grouping. Finally they made a connection between their Roma identity and the way people treated them in the Montenegrin society.

5.4 Hip-hop Power

In spite of the negative episodes that Ferid experienced in the Montenegrin society he still believed in the future. During the interview session, he told us that life was not static and that it was possible to change things. He said that even if many Roma today are without education it does not automatically mean that the next generation should

be without school. He also emphasized that he wanted a different life than his parents, who lived poorly as refugees, and he hoped for his son to have a better existence than him. Ferid stated:

“/.../ there is a mentality that says that if the parents are without a school they don't let the children go to school because they think it is unnecessary and it's not like that, why do I have to go through to what my parents went through /.../”

One of the aims with *Boyz in da Hood*, according to Ferid, was to show people that they, as Roma, were capable of doing something. Their ambition was to break the prejudices that the major society has towards Roma. *Boyz in da Hood* are as well upgrading themselves in one of their lyrics by saying that they are the “real thing” among so many fakes. Zoran moreover expressed the German rap as false and the American Black music as authentic. He meant that it reflected real experiences from people that lived in misery but still kept struggling. Zoran declared:

“/.../ when you don't have a work or a place to live in America then you live on the streets and you gather your experience and you still fight, you still show people what you can do. And that you can do something, you have a future.”

When Dardan was interviewed in the film “*My Hero*” he pointed out that he was a break dancer because he wanted the Roma to know something. Ferid also saw it as important for the Roma children to have a passion in a neighbourhood like Konik. Without a passion it is easy to go the wrong way, to be a gangster or using drugs, as he puts it. Furthermore he stated that hip-hop therefore is an essential activity for the youths in the area and the involvement in break dance makes them someone and pulls the kids from the streets. Ferid expressed:

“/.../ I wish for every child to go the right way, to use his talent and drop the gangster shit and just be independent, work a proper job, because everybody that wanted to be a gangster is either in jail or dead.”

At observations, that were carried out earlier (throughout our practical placement in spring 2007), we saw that the break dance performance awarded the Roma boys with positive feedback outside the group. Several Roma boys were, at this occasion, doing break dance in the central youth club in Podgorica and they consequently received a great amount of positive attention from the non-Roma youth. The youths from the

town were fascinated by their tricks and showed appreciation by clapping hands and giving them friendly comments.

When the boys practiced break dance during our observations at the youth club in Konik they showed a lot of energy, happiness and self-confidence. The dancers seemed proud over their skills and they did not want to stop dancing when their time for training was ending. Each and every one of the boys that were interviewed strongly wanted to emphasize hip-hop as the major part in their lives and in constructing identity. Ferid described himself firstly as a rapper and then added that he was a nice person and not a gangster. The informants expressed that they had become somebody through their involvement in hip-hop and that it brought meaning to their lives. Before their engagement to hip-hop they did not do much, just walked around, but now they had an interest and they paid all their free time to hip-hop. Moreover they told us that break dance and the way they danced made them into whom they were. Stanko uttered:

“Life was different before I started to do break dance. Before it was not this good because I was just walking around town and that’s it. /.../ I feel that I achieved something in life because they (Boyz in da Hood) tried with me. They made me give an effort. They taught me break dance and hip-hop which I really wanted to.”

When the informants were asked if they had any role models, they all referred to persons involved in hip-hop. The younger ones pointed out the local group Boyz in da Hood as their heroes and at the youth club their music was regularly played and danced to. Boris told us that he admired his best friend Stanko because he was the best break dancer and had good style. Additionally he mentioned the American rapper Eminem. He could not say that he had any Roma idol but if he must choose one it would be Giovanni, a local Roma musician. Tupac, an American gangsta rapper, was Ferid’s biggest idol, although, he strongly pointed out that he disagreed with Tupac’s gangster style.

5.4.1 Positive Energy

For Ferid the involvement in hip-hop has resulted in a lot of new friendships and strong alliances. He pointed out that Boyz in da Hood was like a team and the

members supported each other and shared the same interests and goals in life, to be someone on the rap and break dance scene. Both Zoran and Ferid are sad that Boyz in da Hood do not exist anymore but Ferid said that each one of the original members represented a part of the group and they can not restart without them. Boyz in da Hood has, as previously mentioned, influenced the younger boys and it was obvious in our observations and at the interviews that Ferid represented a role model for them. Additionally he was the first break dance teacher at the youth club and he described to us why he started to coach. He says that one day when he was sitting outside his house a group of children passed by, they wanted him to train them and so he did. When he taught them break dance his heart became bigger and he loved to see them dancing.

The informants spent a lot of time dancing or rapping, Dardan, Stanko and Boris trained break dance as often they could because it made them happy. When Dardan's dance group was training they got applause from the other youths present at the club. Dardan also told us during the interview that he gained confidence through the dance. In the beginning when he learned a new dance move he was scared and felt fear but after some time he got better and more secure. Break dancing additionally gave Ferid a feeling of power and being on the top of the world. The two boys, Stanko and Boris, who are leading break dance groups at the youth club enjoyed the coaching and said that the boys were listening to them. Stank told us:

“I used to have role models, Ferid and the guys, and I love to watch them dance and now I remember how I felt before and I look at these kids and I know they feel the same about me.”

We observed that Stanko danced quite a lot himself when he had his classes and his students watched him. He did extremely advanced moves on the floor and received a lot of attention both from his learners and from other youths at the club. His performance made a great impression on the spectators, even the ones that were not engaged in the hip-hop activities. All of them were frozen.

5.4.2 Status in the Group

Ferid stated that he loved break dance because it offered the possibility to dance all together by the beat and simultaneously provided individual space for each person to create his own style. Break dance groups at the club performed both individual and collective break dance. The sessions of Black Magic, one of the dance groups, always started with individual dancing, which meant that one group member entered the dance floor while the others watched him. Although the solo dancing involved many advanced tricks and risky dance moves like somersaults and head spins, each one of the boys had an individual style. During the gatherings it seemed to always be the same members that danced during the solo sessions. One third of the group was at our observations always standing in one corner of the room with their back close to the wall; these boys never did any solo. Later on when they danced all together these participated but were always in the back of the room. In front of the room, close to a big mirror, stood the boys that during the individual dancing had demonstrated their break dance talents. Dardan had most knowledge about different dance moves and he was always at the very front of everyone. Dancing style and advanced break dance moves additionally positioned the boys in a hierarchy; the ones that could do risky and complex performances received high status. A main thing in the group was to show off, and by that get credit for the skills you perform. If you did not prove what you could do, you did not get any attention and the ones that did not perform individual dance stayed unnoticed in the background.

The dancing was not exclusively what ranked the boys, also attributes like clothing and accessories appeared to play a main role, according to our observations. At the youth club it seemed central to wear different attributes, one such symbol was a glove. Many of the boys wore a glove, on one hand and when we asked them about this glove they said it was used for doing break dancing. It certainly had a practical reason, making it less harmful to spin on the hand, but far more boys than the ones able to do that trick wore a glove.

While the break dance group Black Magic was practising a row of different attributes circulated, such as; caps with American hip-hop logos and dark sunglasses. As the

members got the chance to wear them they made a tuff looking face into the mirror. Dardan, at one occasion, had a new hair cut. The style of it was original and on the left side of his head the statement “don’t touch” was written. When he arrived at the club he received a lot of attention and several of the others showed a major interest in his new look. He seemed satisfied and proud to be in the centre.

Style was furthermore expressed by all informants as an important part of being a real hip hopper and get acceptance from the group. For Boris and Dardan, style involved; body language, taste of music, way of dressing and other attributes like earrings and hair cuts. It was very important for Dardan to show that he was a break dancer and he could detect a break dancer by the style. Dardan said:

“You can notice a break dancer by his walk and his dressing style.”

Ferid viewed style as a way of expression and he told us that he did not respect a break dancer without the right style. Furthermore he expressed very strongly that he disliked people that did not know how to dress correctly and Ferid declared:

“Style means very much, the dressing style, the hair cut style, because if somebody would come to me and I would be like, okay he has talent, he knows how to break dance, but if I don’t see him dressed as a break dancer I don’t like him. He is not a break dancer to me. The style means a lot to me, because it’s a way of expression.”

In this part hip-hop was described as an encouraging factor for the youths engaged in it. Additionally hip-hop has been stated as a constructive engagement that involves a good behaviour. The following quotation from Boris illustrate that he viewed hip hoppers as a positive element in the neighbourhood.

“/.../here in Konik it’s very bad, drugs and stuff. /.../ I don’t like it very much because there is all these junkies around the place and I like to see somebody rapping but I hate to see somebody stealing, when I heard that my friend had beaten up his brother I stopped hanging around with him /.../“

Ferid also added that you can either be a gangster or you can do something with your life, for example get involved in hip-hop. He additionally stated that hip-hop could make a difference for the youth in Konik. It could be a way for them to be someone and give them a purpose in life. The informants pointed out hip-hop as an important

part of their lives and from our observations we could see that they gained confidence. Ability to master break dance skills and using the right attributes also positioned the boys in a hierarchy. Style was central for the informants to receive respect. Even though the informants described hip-hop as a life changer the empirical data illustrated that they are continuously negatively labelled in the Montenegrin society, due to their Roma identity. The only one that did not experience stigmatization was Zoran, who considered himself as German.

6. DISCUSSION

Central findings from the empirical data will firstly be presented. Thereafter follows an analysis based on the previous presented theoretical perspectives.

6.1 Summary of Main Findings

To summarize the empirical material it can be pointed out that Konik was described by the informants as an area with major issues of poverty, drug abuse, unemployment and low level of education. The informants moreover declared the lack of opportunities and expressed that before their engagement in hip-hop they did not have anything that occupied them. All the informants, except for Zoran, highlighted experiences of stigmatization from the majority group. Nevertheless they all, apart from Zoran, portrayed themselves as Roma and furthermore excluded from the majority grouping. They connected their Roma identity with the way people treated them. Additionally the informants uttered that there were many negative characteristics in their ethnical grouping, they mentioned that Roma people acted roughly, but they did not identify themselves with that. Instead they pointed out that hip hoppers were the good guys in the Roma community and hip-hop was portrayed as a positive and encouraging factor. Style was central for the informants in order to receive respect within the hip-hop grouping. In addition the ability to master break dance skills positioned the boys in a hierarchy. The informants said that they became someone through hip-hop and spent all their free time practicing break dance or rapping. Hip-hop was demonstrated by the informants as an engagement that got them busy and the way in which these activities were described can be referred to what Cathus (2004) labeled as a “do it yourself culture”.

6.2 Stigmatized Groups and Cultural Capital

Collective experiences of discrimination and exclusion is something that Ålund (1997) points out, as important in the construction of group identity. Hip-hop culture originates from stigmatized Black youths in North American ghettos. Due to exclusion from the major society they formed new ways of inclusion. The Roma youth's experiences in Montenegro are in many aspects similar to the contextual environment of the Black youngsters. Their situation is colored by constant discrimination and exclusion from the major society. In order to underline the central findings in our empirical material it is appropriate to furthermore compare the Roma youths in Konik with the Black youths in America.

Based on Bourdieu's (2004) theory the Roma group have a low positioning in the social field and their habitus is negatively labelled; their manners are considered odd and the Roma are generalized as a homogenous group that lack education. Consequently as a big number of Roma are unemployed and the poverty is extended, they possess a low amount of the resources that Bourdieu label as capitals. Bourdieu furthermore express that it is easier to gain new capital if you already have capital. Due to this the Roma youths have limited resources to increase their capital.

The fact that Roma have low capital and a negatively labeled habitus is according to Bourdieu typical since these aspects are interrelated. One's habitus influences the access, amount and type of capital. Nevertheless Carter (2003) declares that groups who are not part of the majority population can gain an alternative cultural capital and by that upgrade themselves in their own ethnical grouping. She refers to this as non-dominant cultural capital. The Roma youth's engagement to hip-hop provided them with cultural capital since it offered them status, self-confidence and strong group identity. As the empirical data showed the hip-hop nevertheless did not change their position in the society. Their capital can therefore be referred to as a non-dominant cultural capital. Sernhede (2002) additionally points out that hip-hop through out the history have offered cultural capital to stigmatized groups with a low positioning in the social field.

6.2.1 Gaining Status

Roma youth's involvement in hip-hop relates to what the Birmingham school describes as sub culture. These cultural groupings are outcomes of frictions with the parents' culture or a way to process the parents' culture (Fornäs, Lindberg & Sernhede, 1994). In this study it refers to the fact that the informants viewed hip-hop as a way to differ from the negative label of the Roma identity and develop a personal expression connected to positive attributes. Moreover Perasović (2004) is stressing that sub cultural groupings provide young people from deprived contexts with status. The informants additionally emphasized that they became someone by engaging in hip-hop.

As Clay (2003) described hip-hop in her article it was used by the youths to reconstruct respect, status and local identity. Rap music became a voice for them and a way to construct a Black racial identity (ibid.). Our empirical data showed that the youths in Konik gained higher self esteem and confidence through hip-hop. In that sense their involvement in hip-hop provided them with status, similar to what Clay mentioned. Nevertheless, it seemed as if the Roma youth's intentions for engagement in hip-hop differed from the youths in America.

For the Black Americans, hip-hop has developed to be a part of their ethnical identity. The Roma on the other hand viewed their hip-hop identity and their Roma characteristics as two separate parts. The Black youths that Clay (2003) studied in America used the cultural capital to strengthen and raise the status of Black identity. Hip-hop in Konik did not, according to the empirical data, primarily appear to seek for a higher Roma status. It was more of a divider and a separate identity within the group. The informants furthermore pointed out that the commitment to hip-hop provided them with an additional identity associated with positive characteristics.

6.2.2 Boundaries: Inclusion and Exclusion

The use of different symbols is central in sub cultures for creating a specific group style and design boundaries for inclusion and exclusion (Lalander & Johansson, 2007). According to Clay (2003) the hip hoppers are using symbols to make these

kinds of distinctions. Moreover the capacity to use symbols for creating a style provides the group members with cultural capital not based on skin colour or ethnicity. Style was a marker among the Black youth to legitimate their ethnicity and create inclusion and exclusion by stating who was authentic. Clay described that the ability to master the capital consequently also resulted in a ranking. The hip hoppers performed their culture through using hip-hop symbols such as clothing, language and gestures and by that gained capital (Clay, 2003). Amongst the Roma youths style was also stressed as an important aspect of hip-hop but they did not use it to clarify the Roma ethnicity. Since the hip-hop culture was viewed as a separate part within the Roma group the cultural capital, gained by hip-hop, was not ranking all Roma. Instead the informants referred to style as a marker within the hip-hop community to grade the members and to exclude bad elements from the Roma group. They clearly pointed out their differences from the gangsters in their community, they were good guys and they were hip hoppers.

6.3 Conclusions

The youth's involvement in hip-hop provided them with a positive group identity and it contributed to strengthen their confidence. Their stigmatized background seemed to have had a major importance in why they connected and identified with hip-hop. Roma in Konik did express similar contextual occurrences as the Black American youths who felt excluded in the society and lacked capital. Originally it was the feeling of exclusion that formed the hip-hop culture in America that aimed for inclusion and to strengthen the ethnical group identity. Although the Roma youths did not use the hip-hop to upgrade and support their ethnical identity the feeling of exclusion appeared to be central. Engagement in hip-hop for the youths in Konik seemed to originate from the need to be someone and achieve something. Their interest in hip-hop included them in a union where their skills were appreciated and they were noticed. Additionally, hip-hop gave them possibilities to differ from the negative elements in their ethnical grouping. Although the Roma youth's involvement in hip-hop provided them with a cultural capital valued within the hip-hop community it was not practiced to transform their habitus. Hip-hop capital was rather used to

show who was a real hip hoper and not to verify and legitimate an authentic Roma identity.

6.4 Directions for Future Research

Although we could observe that the hip-hop appeared to influence the youth's social networks the social capital was not in our focus. For future studies it would be of importance to further investigate the Roma youths social capital. Our empirical material showed that the boys established friendships and gained positive attention from other youths. This moreover could illustrate that the involvement in hip-hop can contribute with social capital to the boys involved.

Additionally we find it fascinating that the Roma youths do not use their hip-hop identity to strengthen their ethnical group. In this way they use hip-hop differently than how it originally was expressed. We are grappling with the reasons for this. Perhaps it can be grounded in the fact that the Roma population never claimed their own territory. Due to this they might not have been able to build a strong ethnical identity with specific features. Another reason might be based on the intra-ethnical division inside the Roma group. It would be interesting to further explore if this is a common practise within other Roma communities or something specific for Konik or the Roma in Montenegro.

Finally it is essential to state that this research did not aim for a gender perspective and it is a fact that all the Roma youths, in Konik, involved in hip-hop were male. It would therefore be interesting for future researchers to address if and how Roma girls engage in sub cultural groupings. That would contribute to an in-depth understanding of sub cultural groups and their value for stigmatized groups.

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APPENDIX I: Information about the research

We, Sofia and Elin, are studying social work at the Mid Sweden University and are at the moment conducting a research for our bachelor degree. The purpose of our study is to get knowledge about Roma youths in Konik and hip-hop (rap and break dance). We plan to interview five people.

The essay that we are writing is on an academically level and therefore everything that you tell us during the interviews will be treated confidentially. This means that your name will be changed in the report and all other facts about you are treated with confidentiality. The interviews will be recorded on tape if that is okay with you and during the interview both of us (Sofia and Elin) will be present in company with our interpreter. One of us will ask the questions and the other one have a more passive role, taking notes during the interview.

We suggest that the interview takes place in your home, in the youth club in Konik or in the office of Forum MNE. This are suggestions, maybe you have another proposal?

The report will be published within our university in Sweden, and students from our faculty will be able to read it. We will also give a copy to Forum MNE and to the people that has participated.

If you feel that you no longer want to take part it is okay, just tell us. And if there are certain things that you tell us that you do not want us to write in our report it is okay.

Thanks!

/Sofia and Elin

APPENDIX II: Interview guide - older boys

Beginning questions

1. Could you start to tell me your name and how old you are?
 - Where do you come from?
 - Where do you live today?
 - What do you do?

Main interview starts

Part 1: Focus on hip hop culture

2. Can you tell me about your relationship to hip-hop culture?
 - When and why did you start with hip-hop?
 - What is your experience from performing your skills?
3. What did/do the band “Boyz in da hood” mean to u?
 - Why did u choose the name Boyz in da hood?
 - What is your music about?
4. What does break dance mean to you?
5. If you meet somebody, can you see if that person is a break dancer or not?
 - If yes: in what way, is it something with that person’s style?
6. How was your life before you got involved in hip-hop and how is it today?
 - Is something different?
7. Who are your role models?

Part 2: Focus on stigmatization, identity, inclusion and exclusion

8. How would you describe yourself?
 - Who are you?
 - How do you see yourself?
 - If you would need to tell to someone who you are in only one word, what would you say?
9. Could you describe what yesterday was like?
 - What you did, who you met, what you experienced?
 - Would you say that yesterday is picturing a normal day in your life? If not: What was different or what was similar to any other day?
10. Can you describe Konik?
 - What is your relationship to Konik?
 - What do you associate with Konik?
 - How do you experience that people from outside are viewing Konik?

11. How do you experience living in Montenegro?

- What is good, what could be better?
- Do you feel connected to the country? If no: Why not? If yes: In what way?
- How are you treated in Montenegro?

Part 3: Identity, roots and traditions

12. How would you describe your family?

- Could you tell something about your relationship to your family?

13. What was your parents life like when they were at your age?

- Is it or do you think it was different from your life?

14. In what environment and with who do you feel comfortable?

Part 4: Future

15. How do you picture your life 10 years from today?

- What do you do and how do you feel?
- What do you dream about?

Part 5: Closing the interview

I have no further questions; do you want to add something?

APPENDIX III: Interview guide – younger boys

Beginning questions

1. Could you start to tell me your name and how old you are?
 - Where do you come from?
 - Where do you live today?
 - What do you do?

Main interview starts

Part 1: Focus on hip hop culture

2. Can you tell me about your relationship to hip-hop culture?
 - When and why did you start with hip-hop?
 - What is your experience from performing your skills?
3. What did/do the band “Boyz in da hood” mean to u?
 - What is their music about?
4. What does break dance mean to you?
5. If you meet somebody, can you see if that person is a break dancer or not?
 - If yes: in what way, is it something with that person’s style?
6. How was your life before you got involved in hip-hop and how is it today?
 - Is something different?
7. Who are your role models?

Part 2: Focus on stigmatization, identity, inclusion and exclusion

8. How would you describe yourself?
 - If you meet someone for the first time and that person asks: So who are you? What would you say then?
 - If you would need to tell to someone who you are in only one word, what would you say?
9. Could you describe what yesterday was like?
 - You woke up and what did you do then? And after that...?
 - What you did, who you met, what you experienced?
 - Was yesterday a normal day for you? If not. What was different or what was similar to any other day?
10. Can you tell me what kind of place/area Konik is?
 - Is it good or bad?
 - Who are living there?

- Did you ever hear people from other parts of Podgorica talking about Konik? What did they say?

11. Do you feel like a Montenegrin?

- If no: Why not? If yes: In what way?
- What do you think about Montenegro?
- What do you think is good in Montenegro?
- What do you think is bad in Montenegro?

Part 3: Identity, roots and traditions

12. Who do you live with?

- How many members are there in your family?
- Are they all living in Montenegro, in Konik?
- What do you do with your family in your home?
- Are your parents working?

13. What did your parents do when they were teenagers?

- Do you think their life was different from your life today?
- In what ways?

14. Could you tell me what people you feel happy, secure and comfortable around?

Part 4: Future

15. If we could meet in the future where would we meet 2017?

- What do you do then and what would we talk about?
- Let's say that you had millions euros and you could choose to do anything you wanted. What would you do?

Part 5: Closing the interview

I have no further questions; do you want to add something?