



**‘rap français’; ‘rap en français’;
‘rap de fils d’immigrés’:
French Hip-Hop and Postcolonial
Issues**

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Studying rap?

- Community perspectives (Rose, 1994 ; Boyd, 2002 ; Kitwana, 2002)
- African-American culture (Toop, 1984 ; Gilroy, 1993 ; Ayazi-Hashjin, Wilson, 1999 ; Perry, 2004) ; Latin-American culture (Flores, 2000)
- Postmodern issues (Potter, 1995)
- Political potential (Stapleton, 1998)
- **Cultural geography** (Mitchell, 1998; 2002):
 - Local hip-hop scenes (France, Germany, Bulgaria, Australia...)
 - Fieldwork (vs imitation)
 - Means to express social/political issues

Glocal rap scenes?

SUPPORT

LOCAL

HIP-HOP

local hybrid forms (specific situations)

Glocal :

global networks (dedication to hip-hop culture)

➤ Poetics of place, race and ethnicity

BUT, in the case of France, few studies have taken into account “the actor’s debates about ‘conscious hip-hop’, ‘underground’ hip-hop and ‘pure’ or ‘real hip-hop’ (Guibert, 2004)

Hip-hop studies in France

- Rap as a new way of using French (Lapassade, Rouselot, 1990)
- Hip-hop culture as a hole (Bazin, 1995)
- Music: aesthetics (Béthume, 1999) ; social dimension (Green, Desvérité, 1997; Boucher, 1998; Sberna, 2001) ; artists (Jouvenet, 2006), public policies (Lafargue de Grangeneuve, 2002); sector (Guibert, 2000; Hammou, 2008); publics (Hammou, 2007; Pecqueux, 2007; Molinéro, 2009)
- Global/local perspectives: Dynamics of “creolization” (Martin, 2010); global territories of rap/ local identities (Dubus, 2009); Dakar scene (Moulard-Kouka)
 - « hip-hop ethics and capitalism spirit » (Guibert, 2004)



Mainstream, underground and the question of authenticity

- Forman (2013): “The texts or cultural artefacts associated with the mainstream are ritually engaged, and tend to reflect and reinforce the culturally dominant forms (which, despite this singular term, actually comprise an array of apparatuses that cohere in multiple sites and are extended via multiple practices). Their relative ease of access and ubiquity – in commercial contexts or not – position them within the domain of everyday life as well as within that of conflict and political contestation (...).

The distinction between mainstream and the underground are based on both material and symbolic characteristics, and the contours of such distinctions fall within a general consensus forged among artists, audiences and industry gatekeepers (record label executives, artist agents, producers, TV Producers, radio program directors and DJ, independent intreprenuers, and son on..). ”

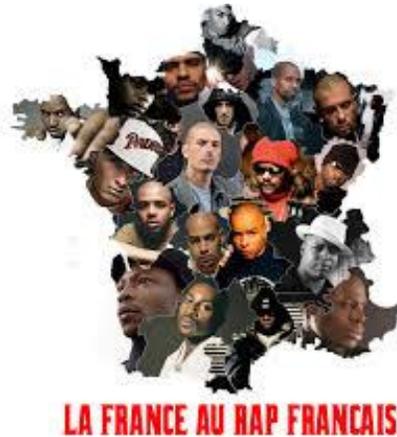
➤ glocal mainstream (rap français / US)

- 1995: rap as a market
- ‘rap families’ (Guibert, 2004) : NTM (IV My People, Boss)/ Secteur Ä / IAM/ Mafia K’1 Fry / La Cliqua / La Time Bombe/ 45 Scientific...
- Skyrock as the symbol of French mainstream rap

Keeping it real?

- In the US: the 'hood' (Foreman, 2002) ; a 'form of cultural capital expressed within black cultural identities' (Clay, 2003)
- In France: a 'Marxist perspective' (Guibert, 2004)
 - authenticity as a contextually and spatially grounded norm

Rap français



Rap en français

« Chanson Française »

> “Being ‘Real’ is a call to authenticity that becomes a political act”
(Perry, 2004)

Postcolonial issues in French rap

Hamé (La Rumeur): « Before us, no one in rap had articulated like we did immigration and the history of colonialism (...) What we brought, is the reappropriation of history (...). We have asked political and social questions, and confronted the French society with what she has done to our parents and grand parents, with what she has done in Africa for the last 5 centuries, and with what she owes us »

> “Rap de fils d’immigrés”

ZEP (“[Nique la France](#)”, 2010): “Fuck France and its colonial past, its smells, its overtones and its paternalistic reflexes / Fuck France and its imperialist history, its walls, ramparts and capitalist delusions”

➤ Rap as way to challenge “colored-blind” republican model

Thank you!

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