

A Place in the World

MH20's Construction of a
Peripheral Identity

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Abstract

A Place in the World: MH2O's Construction of a Peripheral Identity

Hip Hop and, more specifically, Rap music, has been a culture rooted in the notion of the social periphery, the section of society excluded from mainstream, capitalist, bourgeois society. It has historically been a way for this voiceless, disenfranchised, and alienated population to criticize, question, and protest its societal position. The *Movimento do Hip-Hop Organizado* uses this medium as a way of politicizing and mobilizing the excluded members of Brazilian society. Using Hip-Hop, the organization constructs a socially informed, politically aware, and critically conscious community that is united through their common identification with Hip-Hop culture and MH2O. The case is made for this hypothesis by highlighting the movement use of a common relation to the history of Hip-Hop, the reflective capabilities of Rap music, the appropriation of the culture to fit local surroundings, members of the movement as a source of inspiration, and events to enter into direct dialogue with the people in order to create a peripheral community. I conclude that the establishment of this community among disenfranchised and rebellious youth not only demonstrates the effectiveness of MH2O, but also the power of Hip-Hop as a means of affecting real social change.

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Glossary of Terms

Favela: Though this term is typically used to describe extremely poor shantytowns in Brazil, this term has a different usage in this report. The term *favela* is used as an umbrella term to encompass poor urban communities. The reason for this is that when interviews with the members of the various neighborhoods was conducted, they all classified their area as a *favela*.

Freestyle: An improvised set of verses of poetry rapped over a beat.

Hip-Hop: An urban culture that is comprised of five main elements: DJing, MCing (rapping), Break dancing, Graffiti art, and Knowledge. Beyond this, it is an identity, a sense of place in the world linked to other members of the culture. It is a means of expression that transcends the boundaries of race, gender, sexuality, and class.

Hip-Hop show: In the case of this essay, a Hip-Hop show is used to define what is typically known as a Rap concert. However, this term is used instead because, in the case of MH2O, these shows are hardly ever solely comprised of just Rap music. They often incorporate the other elements of Hip-Hop into it as well. Therefore, in order to more accurately capture this idea, the term Hip-Hop instead of Rap is used.

MC: The performer of Rap music.

Rap: The musical component of Hip-Hop culture. Poetry set to a beat, hence the name, an abbreviation of “Rhythm and Poetry.”

Social Relevance of Research

In general terms, this is a socially relevant project since it studies the manner in which a community is mobilized politically. It studies how a large, politically mobilized community has been formed through the construction of a collective identity. This particular example of the use of a given medium to format a political message can be looked upon as a model for other social movements. MH2O has not only been spectacularly successful in mobilizing people, it has done it in a peaceful, benevolent, and artistically creative manner. It is a social movement from which inspiration for other political organizations should be drawn.

The real value of this research project lies in the medium through which the movement of interest disseminates its message: Hip-Hop. This culture has proven to be a significant cultural phenomenon on a global scale. It has reflected both troublingly disturbing and reassuringly uplifting aspects of human society throughout the course of its existence. I believe that the case of MH2O, along with other Hip Hop affiliated grassroots political movements, display the enormous power for good that this culture has within it. Hip-Hop's ability to mobilize people, whether it is politically, or otherwise, is a quality that could be used to spark something that truly changes the world for the better.

Methodology

My primary source of information for this investigation was the numerous interviews that I conducted both during the ISP and community project periods. In order to obtain a more complete picture of how the music of MH2O politicizes its members and the population in general, I attempted to interview as diverse an assortment of candidates as possible. Given their advanced knowledge of the movement's ideology, history, and effect on various communities, I focused my researching efforts on the high-ranking members of MH2O in the state of Ceara. This was tantamount to obtaining information directly from the movement's intelligentsia.

However, I supplemented this information with interviews from other sources as well. This project would not be complete if it did not include the views and opinions of the people that MH2O is attempting to politicize. In order to supply this voice, I interviewed members of the communities that MH2O worked in, including families and friends of members. I also spoke with a community leader in the neighborhood of Democrito Rocha. Finally, I also spoke with "rank and file" members of MH2O, recently joined militants and associates that had lower ranking positions in the movement. This gave me insights into the motives behind their membership and how they became politicized, if at all.

Secondary source material has also been instrumental in this project. The academic literature that I have gathered about Hip Hop culture and Rap music has allowed for me to both contextualize my subject of study as well as provide the theoretical framework for my monograph. I have used quotations from the various literary sources to validate the claims I make in my writing. Also, any references or allusions made to the history of Hip

Hop culture are based on information that was acquired through my extensive secondary source research.

Finally, I also drew upon first-hand observations made during the course of my research. This was the main source of information when it came to attending events, such as the concert and various community gatherings, since there was very few times at which I could stop people and ask questions. Though I do not base a lot of my monograph on this data, the few observations that I do use are essential since they make reference to actions on the part of MH2O and describe the communities in which they work.

Motives for Research

My academic motives for choosing this topic as my focus for the ISP lie in my interest in social movements and media studies. I saw the opportunity to conduct my research with MH2O as the perfect chance to combine these two passions of mine and create a project that I held a legitimate intellectual interest in. This project permitted me to analyze the music of the movement from a media studies perspective while also enabling me to witness and comment on the social impacts that it had on various Brazilian communities.

My personal motive for selecting this research topic is my interest in Hip Hop culture. I have been an avid fan of Hip Hop, particularly Rap music, for a long time and take great pleasure in learning more about it. One subject that always fascinates me is the regional appropriations of Hip Hop culture that take place globally. Clearly, the opportunity to study the appropriation of Hip Hop culture in Brazil was too unique and appealing a change to pass up.

In addition, I have a great deal of interest in grassroots political movements. This is particularly true with regards to movements that use media as a way of disseminating their message. I have typically been more interested in independent media particularly film. The prospect of examining a grassroots political movement that uses Hip Hop as a medium was an interesting and exciting concept for me.

Location

This investigation was conducted in the city of Fortaleza located in the Northeast Brazilian state of Ceara. More precisely, I visited the *favela* communities of Serrinha, Democrito Rocha, Rosalina, and Alto do Bode located on the periphery of the city. MH2O is heavily involved with these communities and, in most cases, has a long history of activity there. It should be noted at this point that while most of these communities would not be accurately described as “shantytowns”, the residents themselves classify them as *favelas*.

Introduction

Hip Hop and, more specifically, Rap music, has been a culture rooted in the notion of the social periphery, the section of society excluded from mainstream, capitalist, bourgeois society. In the United States, “the increasing social isolation, economic hardship, political demoralization, and cultural exploitation endured by most ghetto poor communities...gave rise to a form of musical expression that captures the terms of ghetto poor existence.”¹ Historically, it has been a way for the voiceless, “invisible” members of society to reflect, criticize, and protest against their societal position and social condition.

The *Movimento do Hip-Hop Organizado* (MH2O) is a nationwide Brazilian youth movement that seeks to politicize and create a sense of critical social consciousness within its young members, using Hip-Hop as a medium. Started slightly over a decade and a half ago, the movement has emerged as one the country’s largest youth movements. It has established a fixed set of cultural, educational, and community-oriented programs with the aim of improving the various communities, typically poor neighborhoods and *favelas*, in which it works. These programs champion a variety of causes including youth education, women’s rights, abolishment of gangs and violent crime, and the elimination of drugs.

However, the chief accomplishment of the movement has been its establishment of a collective identity among the members of peripheral society in Brazil. Using Hip-Hop,

¹ Dyson, Michael Eric. "The Culture of Hip-Hop." That's the Joint!: the Hip-Hop Studies Reader. Ed. Murray Forman and Mark Anthony Neal. (New York: Routledge, 2004). Page 61.

the organization constructs a socially informed, politically aware, and critically conscious community that is united through their common identification with Hip-Hop culture and MH2O. The movement has given the dislocated members of Brazilian society an identity with which they can establish their place in the world.

The Peripheral Culture

The story of Hip-Hop's emergence from one of the most neglected sections of American society sheds light onto why the members of MH2O chose this medium to disseminate their message. The roots of modern Hip Hop culture first appeared in the New York City neighborhood of the South Bronx during the early 1970s. Once a thriving region in the greater metropolitan area, a series of measures passed by the municipal government turned the South Bronx into an urban wasteland. "White flight" to the suburbs caused a real estate vacuum. When combined with the "urban renewal" programs of Manhattan that acted as de facto ghetto clearances, a mass influx of lower class African Americans and Puerto Ricans were forced into the area. Businesses fled, resulting in skyrocketing unemployment levels. Schools were closed and public housing projects were opened. Inevitably, crime levels rose, yet the crime enforcement in the area was reduced. The South Bronx had become an area abandoned by the government, a neighborhood on both the geographical and social periphery of New York City.²

² Chang, Jeff. Can't Stop, Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2005). Pages 13-14.

People soon had to begin taking measures into their own hands. Fuelled by the racial tensions that existed between the various African American, Puerto Rican, and remaining Irish and Italian communities in the area, groups of youths began to form violent gangs for protection from both law enforcement officials and each other. The neighborhood was quickly divided up based on gang territories. Predictably, due to various incidents, tensions escalated and were soon beyond control. After the brutal murder of a well-respected member of the gang community, it was agreed upon by several gangs that a neighborhood wide truce was necessary.

It was in this post-gang climate in the South Bronx that Hip Hop was born. A Jamaican-born immigrant named Clive Campbell, more famously known as DJ Kool Herc, began throwing block parties for his community. It was at these parties that he introduced his own style of DJing by mixing records and focusing attention on the “break” section of songs. This inspired scores of young people in the area to imitate this style and add their own touches to it, most notably the future Hip Hop legends known as Grandmaster Flash and Afrika Bambaataa.³ These parties brought the community together and repaired the rifts that were created during the gang period. The bitter enmity and resultant violence that divided neighborhoods transformed into good natured rivalries that manifested themselves in break dancing and DJing challenges. It is these early beginnings of Hip Hop that aided in a neighborhood’s recovery from an extremely traumatic time.

The roots of Hip Hop’s political functions lie with the story of Afrika Bambaataa and the Zulu Nation. Bambaataa, during the troublesome period in the South Bronx, was a

³ Ibid. Page 83.

prominent “warlord” in the gang known as the “Black Spades”. It was through his involvement with this group that he gained respect throughout the area, particularly in the Bronx River projects.⁴ During the peace process between gangs, he formed a group known as the Zulu Nation that united several prominent African American and Puerto Rican gangs into one peaceful group. Once the gang period had resolved itself, Bambaataa became infatuated with Hip Hop culture and began throwing his own block parties in the style of DJ Kool Herc. As the leader of a massive group of area teenagers, Bambaataa and his parties had a huge following.⁵

The Zulu Nation also underwent a change during that time, appropriating Hip Hop culture as an intrinsic element in their organization. They formed their own set of values based on the tenets of the Bible and the Qu’ran, but also preached equality, justice, and freedom.⁶ The Zulu Nation is a movement that is both soulful and religious, yet extremely politicized. It is considered to be the first political grassroots movement in Hip Hop and thus one of MH2O’s predecessors.

The history of Hip Hop’s origins and the chronicle of MH2O’s establishment are strikingly similar. Brazil first experienced Hip Hop in the mid-1980’s, right when Rap was truly beginning to attain mass popularity in the United States. The culture was still fairly obscure and unknown in most circles in Brazil since many had not been exposed to it yet. However, all across the country, break dancing became very popular, particularly among youths, and dance posses began to form. In Fortaleza, one particular posse, *Striking Gang de Break* (SGP), was especially famous. The flamboyant style of dance

⁴ Ibid. Page 102.

⁵ Ibid. Page 105.

⁶ Ibid. Page 106.

attracted a lot of attention and intrigue. Not long after its formation, the group consistently drew large crowds.⁷

At this time, a local university's student group, *Anarchia Proletaria* (AP), was searching for a way to mobilize large amounts of people. They were an organization with a well-formed and structured leftist political ideology, but they lacked a means of presenting their message in an appealing format. Members of AP approached GSP with a proposal to fuse their two groups together. The break dancing crew was captivated by the political ideology of AP and saw it as an opportunity to use their art as a means of transmitting a meaningful message. An agreement between the two groups was made and MH2O, Brazil's first grassroots Hip-Hop movement was formed.⁸

Fortaleza's periphery in the 1980's, like the South Bronx in the 1970's, was plagued by gang warfare. Rural workers, displaced from the country's interior due to the seizure of their lands by large landowners, relocated to the big city. With the government unable to provide neither the housing demand nor the services needed to accommodate this influx, people were forced to create their own communities known as *favelas*. As a result of gross government negligence and high levels of poverty, crime rates rose and gangs were formed. Soon, the gang problem spun out of control. Babu, a resident of Serrinha, a *favela* community located on the outskirts of the city, recalls,

There were many gangs in the neighborhood like all others. It was divided into factions based on gang territories. A major problem with this was that people could not move between areas. For example, I might not be able to go visit my friend...because he lives in a territory that is controlled by a gang that is

⁷ Babau. Personal interview. 29 Nov. 2007. ISP Field Journal, Page 40.

⁸ Ibid. Page 40.

different from the gang controlling the part of the neighborhood I live in. It divided everyone, not just the gangs. People were extremely depressed, people were dying, it was terrible.⁹

Tensions between neighborhoods rose along with levels of violent crime, robbery, and misery. It seemed as if there was no solution to this quagmire of gang warfare.

As time passed, the residents of Serrinha were growing weary of their confined, stressful, and dangerous situation. Fortunately, a breaking point came: the arrival of MH2O. The movement served as a mediator between the various factions and worked with them to achieve a peace agreement. “[MH2O’s] argument was to question why these gangs wanted to kill other poor people, that gangs were an illusion and that we were all in the same situation of poverty,” Babau remembers, “They argued that when you kill somebody... you are affecting not only yourself and the victim, but two entire families. [It] was a subjective...argument that was designed to provoke an emotional response.”¹⁰ It is in this argument that we see MH2O’s first efforts at forging a collective, peripheral identity. They portrayed the neighborhood of Serrinha as a community that was populated by inhabitants that suffered the same affliction: poverty. Through this common position within society, they are linked to one another and thus have a unified, collective identity. This is a point that has shaped the ideology that MH2O has followed in its attempts to politicize the periphery.

This sense of connection and identification that MH2O shares with the history of Hip Hop is an important point with regards to the sense of identity that it attempts to construct. In nearly every single one of the workshops and lectures that the movement

⁹ Robson “Babu” Dos Santos Nascimento. Personal interview. 24 Nov. 2007. ISP Field Journal, Page 35.

¹⁰ Interview with Babau. 29 Nov. 2007. Page 41.

holds, an account of Hip Hop culture's birth and development is recounted.¹¹ This emphasis on the movement's history is intended to connect the movement's audience, members of the periphery, to the originally American culture. It attempts to show that it is an art form that was born out of struggle and suffering and that inspiration can be drawn from its history. Through this culture, it is possible to transcend restrictive social, political, racial, economic, sexual, and gender-based barriers and form meaningful connections with others and incite relevant change.

Several members and associates of MH2O stated in their interviews that Hip Hop was chosen as a medium for the movement's political message simply because it had the power to mobilize people due to its popularity among the youth. However, no one gave a reason for its appeal to Brazilian, *favela*-dwelling youths. Babu gives an intriguing interpretation of this popularity, "Rap is a marginal form of music that does not have a place in the mainstream media, much like the movement itself."¹² This highlights the true motive behind the selection of Hip Hop culture by MH2O as a medium for its political message. The culture itself is marginalized, discriminated against, deemed unfit for a place in the mainstream. It is through the cultural position of Hip Hop that MH2O's target demographic is intended to identify with it. Hip Hop is an inhabitant of the cultural periphery, much like the residents of the *favela* are the inhabitants of the social periphery.

¹¹ Observations. ISP Field Journal. Page 15.

¹² Interview with "Babu." Page 35.

The “Hip-Hop Mirror”

Given its status as “art”, Hip-Hop is, naturally, a reflection of reality. The theorist Gwendolyn D. Pough argues, “Hip-Hop can give us the mirror to the ills of society and to tap that potential we need to look in that mirror and work to change the things we see.”¹³

Rap, at least in a previous era, was a genre of music marked by its social awareness and critical consciousness, acting as a veritable mirror of society. The remarkable ability of Rap music and its artists to capture their existence was such that, in the late eighties, Chuck D of the legendary rap group, Public Enemy, declared it “The Black CNN.”¹⁴

The reflective capability of the “Hip Hop Mirror” of Rap music is a quality that is central to MH2O’s motive for using Hip Hop culture as an agent of social change. The MCs of the movement take their everyday experience in the *favela* and social periphery and translate them into art. In the words of Donha Rosa, a community leader in the neighborhood of Democrito Rocha, “They take these problems and they turn them into something beautiful.”¹⁵ However, this analysis, though apt, deconstructs the function of the music only on a superficial level. The description of the realities of the *favela* serves a number of purposes other than artistic output.

Firstly, it acts as a way of increasing the audience’s social and political awareness. By speaking about the realities of the *favela*, it contextualizes the political messages put forth

¹³ Pough, Gwendolyn D. “Seeds and Legacies: Tapping the Potential in Hip-Hop.” That’s the Joint!: the Hip-Hop Studies Reader. Ed. Murray Forman and Mark Anthony Neal. (New York: Routledge, 2004). Page 288.

¹⁴ Kitwana, Bakari. “The Challenge of Rap Music from Cultural Movement to Political Power.” That’s the Joint!: the Hip-Hop Studies Reader. Ed. Murray Forman and Mark Anthony Neal. (New York: Routledge, 2004). Page 343.

¹⁵ Donha Rosa Lima de Souza. Personal interview. 22 Nov. 2007. ISP Field Journal, page 31.

by the movement.¹⁶ While urban realities with regards to crime and drug use may be readily apparent, things like the causes of the development of a *favela* are not. For example, Naldo, an MC in MH2O, describes “rural flight, the move from the interior into an urban center. These workers from rural parts of the country lack education and proper training to find jobs in the city. I rhyme about this experience and the consequences that many of them face as a result of it.”¹⁷ By describing this common experience, the political messages of MH2O are contextualized and the audience’s political awareness and social consciousness is increased.

Secondly, the description of the urban realities of the *favela* functions as a way of uniting the periphery. By drawing a sketch of his experience of life in the *favela*, an MC forms the basis of a connection between audience members as a result of a shared collective experience. When speaking about the messages he puts forth in his music, the MH2O MC Gordinho spoke about the problems that he sees around his neighborhood and affect his everyday life, things like violent crime and teenage pregnancy. However, he asserts, “I don’t only speak about my neighborhood; I take a more general perspective because the problems that I rhyme about affect not only my area. They are problems of the periphery in general.”¹⁸ This transfer from the localized anecdote to general depictions of problems is a catalyst for unity among audience members. The underlying message of these portrayals of *favela* life is that the various communities throughout the city suffer the same afflictions, but it is not necessary for them to be endured alone. Naldo summed it up nicely when he said “it forms a bond between...different

¹⁶ Ednaldo “Naldo” Pereira da Silva. Personal interview. 27 Nov. 2007. ISP Field Journal, page 38.

¹⁷ Ibid. page 38.

¹⁸ Gordinho. Personal interview. 24 Nov. 2007. ISP Field Journal, page 34.

neighborhoods because they see that they share the same realities, the same problems.”¹⁹ These descriptions break barriers of geographical separation and regional rivalry between communities and unite them through shared collective experience.

These representations are not only intended to increase awareness through education and unify the periphery. They also serve as a warning. Mano H, an extremely popular and well-respected MC in MH2O uses his music for this purpose. When asked about what points he wanted to convey through Rap, he stated, “I want the youth to know that with crime, their future is either prison, or death. I want them to know that there are other options available to them, such as education and employment, and that the world of crime offers nothing but grief.”²⁰ The grim description of the sordid reality of criminals educates, but is primarily intended to act as a deterrent.

As positive as the reflective quality of Rap music can be, it can easily be detrimental as well. This is particularly true with regards to American Hip Hop culture such that “the negative things we see in Rap music and Hip Hop culture are the negative things we see in this country - in this society - if we are honest.”²¹ Since the Hip Hop exported from the United States is by far the most visible, the questionable morals and values that are, generally, inherent in mainstream American Rap music are exported as well. As a result, negative preconceptions about Hip Hop culture are formed. When interviewed, the secretive MC known only as the “Pernambucano” said, “In the U.S...rappers are far too materialistic. They are always on television showing off gold chains, diamonds, cars, and other things. It is as if they aren’t aware of the greater dangers that face us.” Because the

¹⁹ Interview with “Naldo”, page 39.

²⁰ Jose Haroudo “Mano H” Da Silva Venanceo. Personal interview. 26 Nov. 2007. ISP Field Journal, page 35.

²¹ Pough, Gwendolyn D. Page 288.

majority of Rap music that Brazilians are exposed to is American, materialism and the glorification of the “gangster” lifestyle is equated with the culture. This is particularly inappropriate given the context in which MH2O works since crime and drugs plague the reality of the periphery. Also, the glorification of ostentatious wealth is simply offensive considering that a shamefully large proportion of *favela* residents are denied access to basic amenities.

Additionally, not only are negative components of U.S. society exported, detrimental stereotypes that exist within Brazilian society are reinforced as well; precisely the types of things that MH2O works so diligently to refute. This is an especially thorny problem since the culture surrounding *forro*, a particularly popular style of Brazilian music, already objectifies women heavily.²² Patricia, the institutional and NGO coordinator of MH2O stated,

The question of women when it comes to Hip Hop is extremely problematic. The movement has a strong element of *machismo* given the nature of Hip Hop culture, even though the political outlook of MH2O itself is the opposite. Many women feel very inhibited and unwelcome in the culture.²³

In addition to the number of people that feel alienated and offended by the criminal posture of mainstream Rap, women, a historically disenfranchised population that makes up roughly half of society, are devalued as well. Clearly, these negative preconceptions create a formidable barrier between the people and MH2O, fettering the movement’s ability to form a single community.

²² Patricia de Albuquerque Bittencourt. Personal interview. 20 Nov. 2007. ISP Field Journal, page 27.

²³ Ibid. page 27.

Interestingly enough, there is a musical factor that contributes to these negative preconceptions. *Funk carioca* is a style of music that endorses violence, drug use, criminal activity, promiscuous sex, and objectification of women. In Brazil, *funk* is often confused with Rap due to the stylistic similarities between them. Several members of MH2O admit that, initially, they thought the two genres of music were one in the same, “I thought [Rap] sounded a lot like the funk music that was coming out of Rio de Janeiro because it had a similar beat... I actually confused the two and thought that [Rap] was just a slight variation on *funk carioca*.”²⁴ It is because of this confusion that the negative preconceptions of Rap music, and therefore, Hip Hop culture are, from an artistic perspective, more deeply rooted than the superficial Brazilian perceptions of American Rap music.

The misperception of Hip Hop culture has proven to be a particularly difficult obstacle for the movement to overcome. However, the challenging of these prejudices has become a primary tenet in the educational program of MH2O. “A lot of Hip-Hop, particularly mainstream American Hip Hop, acts as a representation of...crime,” Waltemberg, the general coordinator of communication for MH2O in Ceara said, “However, the various events we hold... work to counter these perceptions. They attempt to show that Hip Hop is a reflection of self, whatever that may be, and not the world of crime.”²⁵ In the case of women, Patricia asserts, “we promote the valorization of women through education and the dissemination of positive notions of femininity. Many of the musical artists in the movement include positive messages geared towards

²⁴ Lourenco Regis Santos Viana. Personal interview. 20 Oct. 2007. ISP Field Journal, page 17.

²⁵ Jose Waltemberg Sousa do Carmo. Personal interview. 27 Nov. 2007. ISP Field Journal, page 39.

women in their music.”²⁶ MH2O attempts to eliminate the barriers not only based on gender, but also of race, sexual orientation, and region.²⁷

It is these notions that comprise the “Culture and Counter-culture”²⁸ pillar of MH2O’s education program. Traditional expressions of Hip Hop culture are countered and altered in order to fit the message of the movement. It is through the appropriation of the message of Hip Hop culture that MH2O capitalizes upon the capabilities of the “Hip Hop Mirror” that is Rap music. The movement’s MCs use Rap to reflect the ideology of the organization and promote peripheral unity through the construction of a single identity based on a common interest in Hip Hop culture.

The Localization of Hip Hop Culture

A central component of Hip Hop culture, and thus Rap music, is identity. Space and place have an extremely strong influence on the concept of identity, and, therefore, have a profound impact on the ideas and viewpoints expressed in Rap music. In fact, this has been the case such that, “a more pronounced level of spatial awareness is one of the key factors distinguishing rap and Hip Hop culture from the many other cultural and sub-cultural youth formations currently vying for attention.”²⁹ Upon listening to a collection of Rap songs, one would be hard pressed to escape hearing allusions or direct references

²⁶ Interview with Patricia, page 27.

²⁷ Interview with “Mano H.”, page 36.

²⁸ Interview with Patricia, page 27.

²⁹ Forman, Murray. “‘Represent’: Race, Space, and Place in Rap Music.” That's the Joint!: the Hip-Hop Studies Reader. Ed. Murray Forman and Mark Anthony Neal. (New York: Routledge, 2004). Page 203.

to a given neighborhood, city, or other locale with which the artist identifies. Clearly, the concept of space and place are paramount in Rap music.

The importance of location in Hip Hop culture is due to a number of factors. The idea of location is closely tied to the concept of the “Hip Hop Mirror” since one’s geographical situation often affects the reality that is reflected in the music. This idea is discussed by the academician Murray Forman, “The prioritization of spatial practices and spatial discourses that form a basis of Hip Hop culture offers a means through which to view both the ways that spaces and places are constructed and the kinds of spaces or places that are constructed.”³⁰ Rap music provides a forum in which discourse surrounding how one’s life and position within society is affected by geographical space and place.

This notion of spatial discourse is a recurring theme in the music produced by MH2O artists. The descriptions of life in the *favela* and social injustices are strongly localized discussions. When asked about the focus of his music, the MH2O General State Coordinator for Ceara and MC Fofo explained, “I focus on ways of improving my community...specific things, like, for example, renovating the plaza, to more general things like social education programs.”³¹ By moving from a specific focus to a more general one in his music, Fofo’s use of his spatial location he connects his community into the collective identity of the periphery. He forms a bond, in this case lack of social education programs, between his community and the periphery in general by stating a common problem that they both share.

³⁰ Ibid. Page 202.

³¹ Fofo. Personal interview. 22 Nov. 2007. ISP Field Journal, page 32.

The localization of one's narrative voice can also serve as an example for people to draw inspiration from as well. Mano H describes his neighborhood as an ideal to be followed by other peripheral communities:

Serrinha is the place where I was born, where I live, and where I plan to die. Gang rivalry is a thing of the past, and I use our neighborhood as an example of what is possible. We are burdened by the same realities as all the other peripheral areas in the world, but here there is amity and respect among the residents.³²

Through his music, Mano H, like Fofó, bonds to the rest of the periphery and attempts to form a unified community. He achieves this by identifying his community with others through similar problems. However, he takes this idea one step beyond by offering his neighborhood as a model to be followed, as an example of what is possible. This tactic is reminiscent of the identification of the movement with Hip-Hop's origins in the South Bronx.

This idea of a description of a local setting as a means of identifying with a larger whole is one that pervades Rap, not just the music of MH2O. This theory is validated by Forman, "Rap tracks, with their almost obsessive preoccupation with place and locality, are never solely about space and place on the local scale. Rather, they also identify and explore the ways in which these spaces and places are inhabited and made meaningful."³³ Therefore, the locale being described itself is important on only a superficial level. The message to be drawn from the music lies within the manner in which these spaces are inhabited, that is to say, the social conditions of the inhabitants and how they deal with this situation, that imbue MH2O's music with its unifying capabilities.

³² Interview with "Mano H", page 37.

³³ Forman, Murray. Page 220.

Rappers as Role Models

The ability of Rap music as a device to describe a localized scenario creates figures that are strongly identified with a given region or neighborhood. By describing one's own physical setting, an element of an MC's personality is inextricably linked to that locale. Forman argues, "It is necessary to recognize that the home territory of a rapper or rap group is a testing ground, a place to hone skills and gain a local reputation."³⁴ This acquisition of a local reputation, combined with the high visibility of the MC within his or her own community results in the artist becoming a representative of that neighborhood. In essence, they start to become looked upon as role models.

The artists of MH2O embrace this role within their communities. However, this position must be reflected in their conduct. A representative of Serrinha, Mano H, stated, "Members have a certain responsibility with regards to their posture since they are very visible members of the community. Because of this, [the] perception of members as leaders develops naturally."³⁵ Since members of the movement are relatively prominent in their respective communities as a result of their artistic gifts, they are looked to for guidance. They must, therefore, portray themselves as reliable, knowledgeable, and compassionate members of society.

However, the position of leadership of members of MH2O is not solely due to their visibility caused by their artistic output. When asked about what is the most effective strategy for gaining credibility among a community, Patricia answered,

³⁴ Ibid. Page 207.

³⁵ Interview with "Mano H.," page 30.

[it] is to remain consistent with our work and to never give up the struggle...By continuing our work and inciting change, we gain the trust of the community and have greater visibility. It may not seem like much, but these “little things” really do make a difference to people.³⁶

MH2O’s efforts in the community show the movement’s devotion to its cause, garnering respect from all who witness these actions. These Hip-Hop militants are seen not only as artists, but also as caretakers of the community.

In addition to acting as philanthropists, members of MH2O act as model citizens, marked by their political activity. Donha Rosa, a community leader in Democrito Rocha, commented, “The members of the movement are extremely active in this community. I always see them walking past my door, coming and going to and from wherever they are doing.”³⁷ The members of MH2O are constantly involved in institutional political activities. At a recent community meeting in Serrinha, the number of young members of the movement was remarkable.³⁸

It seems that involvement in institutional political activity is one of the primary teachings of MH2O. As Gordinho commented, “with [the movement], I learned how to voice my opinion in a more effective and systematic way, in a manner that is actually heard by the government. I also learned how to become more actively involved in my community through the meetings and events that MH2O either holds or attends.”³⁹ The movement teaches its members how to become involved in organized political channels

³⁶ Interview with Patricia, page 29.

³⁷ Interview with Donha Rosa. Page 31.

³⁸ Observations. ISP Field Journal. Page 13.

³⁹ Interview with “Gordinho.” Page 34.

so that their voice is heard. Since community members look to these militants for guidance and inspiration, it is hoped that they see this and follow out of example.

When several members of various MH2O affiliated communities were asked about what they thought about the movement's work, a plethora of different compliments was bestowed upon them. Some praised MH2O for its efforts towards improved sexual and women's education to combat teenage pregnancy and prostitution. Others were impressed by its efforts to combat drugs and violent crime.⁴⁰ Donha Rosa spoke kindly of Fofó, a prominent member of MH2O, for his position as a role model for the children in his community, "I am very proud of ... Fofó, for studying in public school and then entering a university to further his studies. This makes him a good role model for the kids and inspires them, shows them that they can be something more."⁴¹ In some cases, the conduct of the members alone makes a difference and merits admiration from the community. These responses indicate that the actions of MH2O and its members do not go unnoticed by the public.

Furthermore, one need not even ask the members of an MH2O affiliated community about the effects of the movement's involvement. They are readily visible and tangible in the neighborhood's social environment. A comparison of the two MH2O communities of Rosalina and Serrinha convincingly demonstrate the effect of the movement on a given area. Serrinha, a neighborhood in which MH2O has been entrenched for over eleven years, is marked by the amity and goodwill that is exhibited between its residents. These sentiments emerge out of the sense of safety that the community feels due to MH2O's

⁴⁰ Observations. ISP Field Journal.

⁴¹ Interview with Donha Rosa. Pages 30-31.

veritable elimination of violent crime and its tireless efforts against crack cocaine consumption.⁴²

Upon beholding the *favela* community of Rosalina, one perceives a very different image. The branch of MH2O that operates in this area is relatively young, having been established only three years ago. This community has yet to experience the benefits of long-term involvement by MH2O. Violent crime in Rosalina is so rampant that the police will not enter to enforce the law. This appalling social environment is reflected in the conduct of its residents. There were much fewer groups of people socializing in the streets of Rosalina and many people chose to remain close to or inside their own homes.⁴³ Clearly, much work remains to be done in this community.

The contrast between Serrinha and Rosalina reflects the impact that MH2O has on the communities in which it works. Serrinha, a community that was formerly mired in a state of gang warfare is now, after eleven years of MH2O involvement, a peaceful haven. Rosalina, on the other hand, is a neighborhood with a relatively new branch of the movement, so the social impact has yet to be felt in the area. As a consequence, it remains as a community beleaguered by violent crime.

The establishment of members of MH2O as role models within their community is linked to the construction of a peripheral identity. The position of these militants as common members of their respective neighborhoods makes them accessible personalities to which the community can relate. They are looked up to as examples by adults for their political involvement and by children as what they can aspire to become.

⁴² Observations. ISP Field Journal. Page 3.

⁴³ Ibid. Page 7.

Dialogue with the People

The influence of the Freirean model of education and political leaders on the movement's ideology is most evident in two types of events regularly held by MH2O: Rap "workshops" and Hip-Hop shows. It is through these events that MH2O enters into dialogue with the people and that "[their] empirical knowledge of reality, nourished by the leaders' critical knowledge, gradually becomes transformed into knowledge of the causes of reality."⁴⁴ Through these exchanges, the people are, ideally, transformed into more politically and socially conscious beings. However, they also serve as a means of aiding the people to identify with the movement, thus facilitating MH2O's goal of creating a "Hip-Hop community" through a collective sense of identity.

The Rap "workshops" held by MH2O consist of a member teaching a group of community members or students the technical skills required to craft the poetry that comprises this style of music. The formal instruction of concepts such as rhyme, meter, and poetic phrases are taught, in addition to the history of Rap music.⁴⁵ Though no formal training in political ideology or social criticism take place, the students are imbued with the tools needed to become critically conscious. As Naldo explained, "The periphery, in general, doesn't have that many spaces for expression. They don't have places for people to criticize and question parts of society and the issues that affect the community. Rap provides the space in which these people can talk about what they see

⁴⁴ Freire, Paulo. Pedagogy of the Oppressed. (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, Inc., 2006) Page 134.

⁴⁵ Observations. ISP Field Journal. Pages 14-15.

and how they think it should be changed.”⁴⁶ Rap music endows people with a critical space in which they can reflect upon their realities and become more self-aware.

In addition, Rap music, both literally and figuratively, provides members of the periphery with a “voice”. Diego, a young member of MH2O, highlighted this point in one of our interviews, “[Hip-Hop] appeals to the so-called ‘invisible’ members of society. When the children start rapping, or making graffiti art, or dancing, they are no longer invisible. It is the same reason that they often turn to crime and armed violence.”⁴⁷ As opposed to resisting the sentiment of feeling “invisible” by turning to a life of crime, Hip Hop culture, and thus, Rap music, provides people with an alternative.

The importance of a disenfranchised group’s ability to express itself is highlighted by the theorist Angela Ards, “Concerted political action will not necessarily follow from such a restoration of confidence and self-expression, but it is impossible without it. Radical movements never develop out of despair.”⁴⁸ This instruction of an artistic skill provides the answer to one of the most devastating problems that affects the majority of the periphery: lack of a voice. By restoring this section of the population’s confidence in its ability to express itself, the chances for full political mobilization are increased.

This forum also draws members into the Hip-Hop community. Several prominent members of MH2O, including Fofo, were initially recruited through a Rap workshop, “I used to sing funk in various clubs, but a friend of mine got me interested in Rap. I

⁴⁶ Interview with “Naldo”, page 39.

⁴⁷ Diego. Personal interview. 19 Nov. 2007. ISP Field Journal, Page 22.

⁴⁸ Ards, Angela. “Organizing the Hip-Hop Generation.” That's the Joint!: the Hip-Hop Studies Reader. Ed. Murray Forman and Mark Anthony Neal. (New York: Routledge, 2004). Page 314.

attended one of MH2O's Rap workshops and joined the movement shortly thereafter."⁴⁹

Part of the drawing power of the movement is its educational qualities and ability to instill critical consciousness in its members. The Rap "workshops" aid this by giving its alumni the tools with which they can attain these things. This helps to establish a community whose identity is defined by their abilities in social criticism.

The other major category of event with which MH2O engages in the Freirean dialogue with the people is the Hip-Hop show. Throughout the history of Hip-Hop, "the Rap concert has created space for cultural resistance and personal agency, loosing the strictures of tyrannizing surveillance...and mainstream society and encouraging relatively autonomous, often enabling, forms of self-expression and cultural creativity."⁵⁰ The Hip-Hop shows create the space for the critical dialogue that the periphery so desperately needs. They act as a means through which to liberate one's self from the bounds of mainstream society and, therefore, the concept of the periphery itself.

In addition, Paul Gilroy maintains, "It is particularly in collective rites of performance, such as live concerts, that the community is re-created and affirmed. In these rituals of pride and protest, where the music is heard in alternative, social modes of consumption, a moral, even a political, community is defined."⁵¹ Here, once again, we return to the concept of community and the creation of identity. The event that is a live concert is, in the most literal sense, the formation of a community of people, united by their interest in

⁴⁹ Interview with "Fofu". Page 32.

⁵⁰ Dyson, Michael Eric. Page 62.

⁵¹ Swedenberg, Ted. "Homies in the 'Hood: Rap's Commodification of Insubordination." That's the Joint!: the Hip-Hop Studies Reader. Ed. Murray Forman and Mark Anthony Neal. (New York: Routledge, 2004). Page 583.

a musical performance. It is for this reason that this type of event can be seen as a microcosm of MH2O's goal of uniting the periphery.

The Hip-Hop shows are, on a superficial level, a platform from which the movement can disseminate its political messages and visions for social change. As Mano H described them, at the shows “[we] speak about the perils of the drug world, stopping violence, diffusing gang rivalries; showing our vision of the neighborhood, really. We want to establish a community based on brotherhood, not enmity, which ties together the entire periphery.”⁵² At these shows, MH2O provides the message that is necessary for the unification of the periphery. Through their direct dialogue with the community, they attempt to fortify the already formed connections between audience members that was created when they gathered in a single location to listen to Rap music.

The action of entering into dialogue with the people is manifested by MCs' freestyles. These improvised stories draw upon a shared stock of local knowledge that is used to relate a common identity between artist and audience member. As Andy Bennett argues, “This instance of local Hip-Hop activity is indicative of the close links that prefigure collective notions of authenticity, identity, and local experience in Hip-Hop.”⁵³ This action on the part of the MC demonstrates a connection to the community since it draws heavily upon experience that is unique to the area. The effect on the crowd is visible. At the concert in Alto do Bode, different sections of the crowd roared when references were made to specific neighborhoods in various freestyles.⁵⁴ This improvisational act

⁵² Interview with “Mano H.,” page 36.

⁵³ Bennett, Andy. “Hip-Hop Am Main, Rappin’ on the Tyne: Hip-Hop Culture as a Local Construct in Two European Cities.” That's the Joint!: the Hip-Hop Studies Reader. Ed. Murray Forman and Mark Anthony Neal. (New York: Routledge, 2004). Page 197.

⁵⁴ Observations. Page 8.

establishes solidarity within communities, as well as a connection of that area to the artist. Clearly, this artistic creation has the connective abilities that are essential to creating a Hip-Hop community.

The goal of community and collective identity construction, as well as the attempt to enter into direct dialogue with the people is apparent in MH2O's choice of venues for its shows. Instead of choosing exclusive clubs or concert halls, the movement holds them in public spaces in the communities. Recent concerts in Serrinha and Alto do Bode were held in the public plaza and center of the neighborhood's main street, respectively.⁵⁵ It is important to note that at none of these shows is admission paid. This fact, along with the location of these shows, ensures that everyone is allowed to participate and that the show is held in the most visible area in the neighborhood, thus widening the possible community established as much as possible. In many ways, these concerts are extremely reminiscent of the "block parties" that gave birth to Hip-Hop culture.

Additionally, these events seek to directly benefit the communities in which they are held. "Alternative" markets are set up and goods such as artwork, clothing, and other goods are sold. "These markets serve to benefit the communities financially and stimulate their local economies by temporarily employing those who are unemployed and supplying them with supplemental income,"⁵⁶ Patricia explained. Not only do the concerts attempt to enter into dialogue with the community and connect them to the periphery, but they also benefit the communities economically, giving them a material incentive to host these events.

⁵⁵ Observations. Page 8.

⁵⁶ Interview with Patricia. Page 26.

The Rap “workshops” and Hip-Hop shows held by MH2O are extremely effective methods of constructing a collective peripheral identity and creating a community through Hip Hop. The workshops give the community the tools necessary to critique and protest their social condition, thus facilitating the process of identification with the rest of the periphery. The Hip-Hop shows offer the opportunity for the movement to enter into direct dialogue with the people, creating a relationship and sense of identification with them. In addition, these shows also serve to unify the community among themselves since they are able to connect with others around them through a common appreciation of Hip-Hop.

Conclusion

In recent years, MH2O has become recognized as a legitimate voice of the people by numerous social movements and the Brazilian government. The movement has held meetings with groups ranging from the Brazilian Communist Party to President Lula himself.⁵⁷ This respect is derived from MH2O’s ability to establish a socially informed, politically aware, and critically conscious community through a collective identity shaped by identification with Hip-Hop culture.

The movement uses a common relation to the history of Hip-Hop, the reflective capabilities of Rap, the appropriation of the culture to fit local surroundings, members of the movement as a source of inspiration, and events to enter into direct dialogue with the people in order to create a peripheral community. As Donha Rosa commented so

⁵⁷ Interview with “Fofó.” Pages 32-33.

eloquently, “They take [people] and link them together because they speak the same language through culture. They unite them across barriers [and] separation due to physical location...They have created a community among the rebellious and disenfranchised youth.”⁵⁸ It is through these channels that a formerly dislocated, disenfranchised, and disinterested population has become politicized and found its place in the world. MH2O has created a veritable Hip-Hop community within the Brazilian periphery.

These findings have broader social implications and speak to the ability of Hip-Hop as a medium through which to mobilize people. The work of MH2O gives credence to Pough’s assertion that, “Hip-Hop is a state of mind; a way of living and being that expands further than what kind of music one listens to. And there’s power there, so much power that some people are scared of it.”⁵⁹ By creating a sense of collective community among members of the Brazilian periphery, the movement has achieved what the government and countless NGOs have failed to do, help them. MH2O has demonstrated the power of Hip-Hop, the question for the future is, what will be done with it?

⁵⁸ Interview with Donha Rosa. Page 31.

⁵⁹ Pough, Gwendolyn D. Page 284.

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Appendix

1. Could you have done this project in the USA? What data or sources were unique to the culture in which you did the project?

No, I could not have done this project in the United States because the core of MH2O's purpose is solving problems that exist within Brazilian society. Though there are a number of grassroots Hip Hop organizations that are situated in the U.S., they attempt to solve problems with American society. Though there is similarities in the problems that Americans and Brazilians face, as a whole they are very different.

MH2O was clearly a source that was unique to Brazil, and they are the primary focus of my research and project. This further fortifies the claim that my project would not have been possible, not even in just the United States, but anywhere else in the world.

2. Could you have done any part of it in the USA? Would the results have been different? How?

The secondary research obviously could have been done in the United States since American academics and authors produced the texts I used. I could have researched grassroots movements that incorporate Hip Hop into their message of social change, but I feel that the results from this research would have been different. The reason for this is that the social problems that affect Americans are different from those that affect Brazilians and, therefore, the conclusions from my research would have been different.

3. Did the process of doing the ISP modify your learning style? How was this different from your previous style and approaches to learning?

The degree of interactive learning that defined the ISP modified my learning style the most. In the past, almost all of the papers and projects that I have written have been grounded solely in secondary sources and theory with very little use, if at all, of any primary data. This project reversed that relationship and in this case, the main pillar of my research came from primary resources and I drew upon secondary sources very little.

4. How much of the final monograph is primary data? How much is from secondary sources?

The majority of my final monograph is primary data drawn from interviews that I conducted with members and associates of MH2O. The sole purpose of my use of secondary sources in this project is to provide a theoretical framework and support for the ideas that I am conveying through my analysis of the movement's musical output.

5. What criteria did you use to evaluate your data for inclusion in the final monograph? Or how did you decide to exclude certain data?

I formed a thesis that encompassed the majority of the information that I collected. I then sifted through my work journal, looking for quotes from interviews or observations that supported points that I planned to make and extracted them. I included quotes that pertained to specific points I was making. This is the system by which I evaluated which pieces of data I included in my monograph.

6. How did the "drop-off's" or field exercises contribute to the process and completion of the ISP?

The field exercises were instrumental in contributing to the process and completion of the ISP. The "drop-off" was helpful since it helped familiarize me with Fortaleza, the location of my ISP, and the city's bus system, my primary means of transportation. However, I would say that the most helpful field exercise was the community project. This period permitted me to develop my relationship with Babau, my eventual project advisor, and MH2O, the organization with which I worked. I was able to gain greater insight into their work and it really helped me form a more narrow and refined research question for my ISP.

7. What part of the MTFSS most significantly influenced the ISP process?

As I mentioned previously, the community project was by far the most helpful in both preparing me for the ISP period and influencing my formation of an adequate research question. The community project period gave me a feel for the limitations of the ISP and exactly how much information I would be able to gather over the course of the three and a half weeks.

8. What were the principal problems you encountered while doing the ISP? Were you able to resolve these and how?

To be honest, the ISP research process was very smooth and problem free. The only thing I can imagine as being a problem was the number of interviews that I was unable to use due to the lack of relevant information provided by them. However, I have concluded that this is no fault of anyone's and simply the nature of the primary research process.

9. Did you experience any time constraints? How could these have been resolved?

There was a slight issue with time constraints because of the nature of the first week of the ISP period. I was under the impression for the majority of the first week that I was going to head to a social movement conference in Baturite that weekend, but, due to the inability to MH2O to acquire a bus for transport, was unable to go. Babau then was out of contact for the remainder of the week. Though no time was technically "wasted" or "lost", I could have started the collection of my interviews much sooner.

10. Did your original topic change and evolved as you discovered or did not discover new and different resources? Did the resources available modify or determine the topic?

My original topic was to determine the position of MH2O within the context of global Hip Hop culture. However, I realized that this undertaking was far too large and would have resulted in a thesis that was too broad. I then chose to focus my efforts on one component of the movement, music, and how it politicized its members and the communities it works in. My resources did not change this because I collected my resources based on this new topic.

11. How did you go about finding resources: institutions, interviewees, publications, etc.?

My primary link to MH2O was my project advisor, Babau. He connected me to a number of key members of the movement, and my network of associates grew from that point onwards. These connections were the only source of interviewees. With regards to publications, I simply searched online for academic literature pertaining to my topic and ordered for them to be delivered here.

12. What method(s) did you use? How did you decide to use such method(s)?

My primary method of information collection was interviews and first-hand observation. Since I was unable to obtain any secondary sources pertaining to MH2O in specific or the neighborhoods in which it worked, I had to obtain all this information from the people that are involved.

13. Comment on your relations with your advisor: indispensable? Occasionally helpful? Not very helpful? At what point was he/she most helpful? Were there cultural differences, which influenced your relationship? A different understanding of educational processes and goals? Was working with the advisor instructional?

Babau was an indispensable part of this project. Without him, I would not have had the same number of connections to MH2O that I had the luxury of obtaining. Though certain interview subjects were acquired through other sources, at the root of those sources was Babau. In addition, not only did he provide me with interview subjects, he himself acted as a key interviewee that provided me with as much, if not more, information as anyone I spoke to. Babau truly went above and beyond in his task as my project advisor. Everything that I have accomplished with regards to this project, I owe to him.

14. Did you reach any dead ends? Hypotheses which turned out to be not useful? Interviews or visits that had no application?

Unfortunately, yes. The number of people that I formally list in my ISP Field Journal as interviewees is lower than the number of people that I actually attempted to interview. Some people had very little to say, or contributed viewpoints and opinions that were very brief and disinterested. Given the “word of mouth” nature of MH2O’s music, there are very few forums in which it can be heard, so there weren’t that many people that were able to comment at length about it.

In addition, I visited a women’s prison on the outskirts of Fortaleza at one point during the ISP period. This took the better part of a day and it, although fascinating, had little relevance, if any to my project. I was accompanying Patricia, a high profile member of MH2O, whom I felt made the visit to establish a contact with the people there. The connection of this visit to my research was very loose and had little relevance to my project.

15. What insights did you gain into the culture as a result of doing the ISP, which you might not otherwise have gained?

The focus of my ISP, MH2O, is a social movement that concentrates its efforts on the periphery, the cultural, social, and political “Other”. As a foreigner to Brazil, I feel that if I were to simply visit this country without conducting an investigation of a similar type, I would not have witnessed or experienced this “invisible” section of society. This insight not only shaped the way I viewed Brazilian society, but the government and the country as a whole. These experiences revealed the extent of negligence on the part of the Brazilian government towards the majority of the population.

16. Did the ISP process assist your adjustment to the culture? Integration?

More than anything, I would say that my level of Portuguese improved dramatically. When I look back at my initial interactions with Babau at the beginning of the program and compare them with my conversations with him now, the difference is staggering. By speaking Portuguese for prolonged periods of time with no other option, it forced me to improve my language abilities. This, of course, aided my integration into and ability to navigate Brazilian society and culture.

17. What were the principal lessons you learned from the ISP process?

Before this undertaking, I had extremely limited experience with regards to interviewing people and collecting primary data and information. The nature of the ISP places a heavy emphasis on this type of research, so it taught me how to conduct a form investigation with which I was not accustomed.

In addition, this project taught me a great deal about the nature of social movements and the amount of hard work and passion that it requires to mobilize people towards a goal or an ideal. The members of MH2O were truly inspirational in their hard work and dedication the causes they believed in.

18. If you met a future student who wanted to do this same project, what would be your recommendations to him/her?

My first recommendation to that student would be to immerse them self in MH2O as early as possible. I was fortunate enough to determine what my ISP topic would be relatively early, so I was able to start my relationship with Babau and the movement long before the ISP period. I conducted my community project research with the same people and this gave me a sort of trial period to familiarize and orient myself within the organization. This is also a wise idea because MH2O's shows do not occur as frequently as one would hope, so if you were to focus on music, it might be possible for there not to be a single show during the ISP period. This was the case with me, however I was fortunate enough to witness one of these events during my community project period, so I drew upon that experience for my research.

19. Given what you know now, would you undertake this, or a similar project again?

I would absolutely undertake a similar project again. My research raised more questions than it answered and I leave Brazil more curious about MH2O than when I started my research. I have to add as well that everyone involved with MH2O was extremely pleasant and helpful and made my research experience as problem free as it could have possibly been. It was more than a pleasure to work with these communities, this movement, and these people.