

### **Abstract**

The paper examines the localization of hip-hop culture in the province of Foggia, with a specific focus on the town of Apricena, through an ethnographic study inspired by the methods of visual anthropology. Originating in the Bronx as a form of cultural resistance, hip-hop is reinterpreted by young people in Apulia as a tool of identity expression and social agency. The investigation draws on participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and photography, culminating in the production of a fanzine that visually reflects the fieldwork. The analysis explores artistic practices—rap, dance, graffiti, fashion—with particular attention to the use of dialect as a means of symbolic reappropriation and territorial rootedness. Hip-hop culture emerges as a glocal phenomenon, capable of articulating both innovation and tradition, aesthetic participation and the collective construction of meaning.

### **Keywords**

Hip-hop culture, fanzines, identity, youth community, artistic expression, cultural resistance

### **The author**

Denise Pia Formica holds a Bachelor's degree in Humanities and is currently enrolled in the Master's program in Modern Linguistics. During her undergraduate studies, she conducted a thesis research project on urban hip-hop culture in her home province, analyzing its local reinterpretation in relation to the origins of the phenomenon. This study involved extensive fieldwork, culminating in the creation of a self-produced fanzine featuring photographs and interviews collected directly from actors within the local cultural scene. Her research interests center on the exploration of contemporary cultural dynamics. Denise aims to further pursue territory-based investigations, with a focus on underexplored domains, in order to contribute to the understanding of local sociocultural transformations.

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## **Between Sound and Visual Traces: Hip-Hop as a Space of Cultural Subjectivation**

Inhabiting a cultural space that is constructed as much through sounds as through images means immersing oneself in a universe of meanings that shape identities and social relations in complex ways. Subcultures, in particular, emerge as responses to dominant values and norms, offering cultural alternatives that reflect different ways of living and thinking (Berzano and Genova 2011). They develop in a constant dialogue and tension with the dominant culture, opposing it while simultaneously influencing it, thus creating a dynamic space of cultural negotiation.

Hip-hop culture, which originated as an artistic and social phenomenon in the African American and Latinx neighborhoods of the Bronx in the 1970s (Bradley and Dubois 2010), represents a paradigmatic example of a subculture. Initially marginalized by the media and institutions, hip-hop has evolved and established itself, creating new spaces of expression and identity for the communities that practice it (Caroli 2023). Gradually, it has transcended its original geographic and social context, transforming into a device of cultural subjectivation capable of redefining who we are and how we recognize ourselves within communities.

More than a mere musical or performative form, hip-hop functions as an aesthetic and symbolic language that intertwines body, imagination, and narrative, producing spaces of affirmation and resistance that interact with local contexts. Its adaptive capacity allows it to preserve core elements tied to its origins while transforming according to specific social and territorial particularities. This raises critical questions: How is hip-hop interpreted when it moves from large metropolitan centers to peripheral realities? In what ways do its visual components—graffiti, fashion, street art—acquire new meanings, becoming tools of self-assertion and identity construction even in less central areas?

These concerns call for an anthropological perspective that goes beyond the sonic dimension, exploring also the visual traces of hip-hop and analyzing their symbolic meaning and performative power. The use of visual anthropology and participant ethnography allows the combination of direct observation, photography, and semi-structured interviews to understand how visual and sonic practices become instruments of identity construction. A peripheral town like Apricena thus becomes a privileged site to observe how young people adopt and reinterpret hip-hop as a form of identity expression and cultural resistance.

As Banks (2001) notes, photographs and film sequences elicit comments, memories, and discussions, generating a dialogical space where individual and collective narratives emerge. Similarly, the analysis of archival photographs, whether historical or familial, provides valuable “keys to access particular cultural universes” (Pennacini 2005), offering essential data and meanings for interpreting culture over time. Visual anthropology therefore intertwines documentation and interpretation, becoming a channel for reading the transformation and dissemination of hip-hop beyond its places of origin.

Particular attention is given to the visual expression of hip-hop, which extends beyond music to manifest through images, symbols, fashion, and urban art. Street art emerges as a powerful vehicle for asserting one’s presence in urban space (Piccioni 2021), while

fashion contributes to the definition of both individual and collective identities. Analyzing these practices allows for an understanding not only of hip-hop's global diffusion but also of its creative reinterpretation in peripheral contexts, where images and art become levers for self-assertion, social cohesion, and identity negotiation. The production of a fanzine, alongside written text, provides a visual narrative of the collected experiences and strengthens the dialogue between theory and practice.

The hip-hop phenomenon presents itself as an integrated system of practices that construct collective imagination and spaces of cultural subjectivation. The history of pioneers such as DJ Kool Herc demonstrates how hip-hop has been, from its inception, a channel of resistance and symbolic reappropriation of space and identity (Hess 2007). In the transition from global metropolises such as New York to provincial realities like Apricena, this culture transforms: visual forms, such as graffiti and fashion, become essential devices to claim visibility, reaffirm belonging, and redefine social identity in original ways. Here, hip-hop is not mere imitation but a creative and political reworking, a hybrid language intertwining global influences with local roots.

The global diffusion and adaptability of hip-hop demonstrate how subcultures can transform and influence other cultural contexts, providing tools to gain a deep understanding of cultural and social dynamics. This introduction thus preludes an investigation into the multiple facets of hip-hop culture, highlighting the tensions and paradoxes that emerge when a global culture becomes a local expression, with all the contradictions and potentialities this entails.

### **Origins and Transformations: A Journey through Cultural Roots**

The emergence of hip-hop is closely tied to the Bronx in the 1970s, a neighborhood marked by profound economic and social crisis. The disintegration of traditional neighborhoods, accelerated by the construction of the Cross Bronx Expressway and the migration of the middle class to the suburbs, left behind a fragmented urban fabric, characterized by degradation, youth unemployment exceeding 60% (Chang 2005) and rising violence. To this were added national tensions: the Vietnam War, political assassinations, and growing racial injustices deeply impacted the collective memory of African American and Hispanic communities, creating a fertile ground for alternative cultural forms (Alemanni 2019).

In this context, block parties became the beating heart of the emerging hip-hop culture. DJ Kool Herc, a Jamaican immigrant, introduced innovative techniques such as the extension of instrumental breaks, transforming music into a collective and participatory experience (Bradley and Dubois 2010). Alongside him, Afrika Bambaataa founded the Mighty Zulu Nation, promoting values of community and brotherhood, while Grandmaster Flash experimented with turntablism, revolutionizing the expressive possibilities of DJing. These free, open-to-all events were not merely parties but spaces of gathering, creativity, and resilience, where music, dance, and storytelling redefined youth identity and strengthened the sense of belonging.

## **Deciphering the Codes of Collective Identity**

If hip-hop was born in a Bronx in crisis, how did it manage to expand and take root in peripheral contexts far from its place of origin? The answer lies in its nature as an open and adaptable language, capable of reflecting local conditions of marginality, isolation, and resistance. In peripheral contexts, hip-hop is reinterpreted through its original practices—DJing, MCing, breaking, writing—which assume new meanings in relation to the needs and imaginaries of young people. Graffiti transform public space into a site of visibility, while dance becomes a tool of redemption and collective subjectivation. Hip-hop, therefore, functions as a symbolic and performative system, combining artistic expression and social critique, contributing to the construction of shared identities. Perhaps this is the key to its global success.

From a visual perspective, graffiti represent one of the earliest forms of public narrative, turning walls and urban spaces into canvases laden with symbolic and political meaning. Artists such as Dondi and Phase 2, for example, were pioneers in producing a visual narrative capable of transforming urban space into a field of visibility for marginalized communities (Alemanni 2019).

On the sonic side, DJing and MCing serve as tools of subjectivation through the manipulation of sound and word. Music becomes a medium to depict social reality, denounce injustices, and construct collective imaginaries of resistance. Tracks such as *The Message* (1982) by Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five exemplify this role, providing a raw and unfiltered narrative of life in urban peripheries. As Paola Zukar (2017) highlights, the song ultimately gave American rap its own identity, marking a process of full maturation.

The performative dimension is particularly evident in breakdancing, where the body becomes the protagonist of a symbolic and political dialogue. Break battles, far from being mere athletic competitions, are moments of identity negotiation, creative challenge, and personal assertion without resorting to violence.

Hip-hop, therefore, emerges as a multilevel apparatus of resistance, where music, body, and visual sign intertwine to produce a narrative that challenges power structures and creates spaces of autonomy for marginalized communities.

## **Rap as a Practice of Resistance and Identity Construction**

The diffusion of hip-hop culture in the province of Foggia takes shape as a complex and multi-layered cultural device, through which local youth construct, negotiate, and perform both collective identities and individual subjectivities. Within this context, rap emerges not merely as a musical genre, but as a powerful vehicle of identity narration, where the voice assumes a value that goes far beyond sound, becoming a tool of visibility, social recognition, and self-affirmation. In a territory marked by limited cultural opportunities and by geographical and social marginality, rap enables the articulation of a language and perspective that, while nourished by global influences, is expressed through profoundly local practices and lived experiences, thereby shaping an original and contextualized mode of expression.

Field testimonies confirm that the first encounter with hip-hop is often mediated by family environments where music plays a central role. As one interlocutor recalls, «music was never absent in the house»<sup>1</sup> (Buccino 2024), thanks to figures such as a radio-host uncle or an enthusiastic father, but above all through the early introduction to hip-hop by older siblings. This early exposure generates an intimate bond and a process of musical subjectivation, producing a deep emotional and cultural memory that shapes a musical identity intertwined with personal history. At the same time, rap functions as both a personal and communal narrative, a privileged channel for those living in conditions of social and economic marginalization. In such contexts, music becomes the expression of lived experiences, a ground for identity elaboration and reconstruction, but also a space of action and participation. Stories such as that of De Nittis<sup>2</sup> (2024) –who, between streets and playgrounds, began imitating and reinventing hip-hop movements and styles– demonstrate how this culture is built not only in words but also in the body, motor activity, and performative gesture. Bodily creativity and personal imagination thus intersect to transform a context often poor in resources into an opportunity for expression and recognition.



**Figure 1** Boy performing breakdance. Apricena, Italy. From the archive of Samuel Buccino, 2017

Foggian hip-hop thus emerges as a performative and narrative practice capable of traversing bodies, memories, and social spaces, positioning itself not only as a musical expression but also as a tool of individual and collective testimony. Local biographies, interwoven with global influences and social tensions, produce a language that narrates marginality, resistance, and hope, transforming rap into a device of self-definition and recognition. Emblematic spaces such as the jams organized by the association *I Polli di Pirro* in the former prison of Apricena provide occasions for visibility and cohesion, where rap combines with other hip-hop arts and becomes a motor of community and belonging<sup>3</sup> (M. Perrone 2024).

<sup>1</sup> Interview with Samuel Buccino, conducted by the author, 24 September 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with Antonio De Nittis, conducted by the author, 14 December 2024.

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Mario Perrone, conducted by the author, 12 November 2024.

The performative dimension manifests itself in the relationship between body, clothing, and visual arts: breakdancing, as a sensory and transformative experience, translates pain, inner struggle, and aspirations into creative energy and social recognition. Clothing, far from being a mere ornament, becomes a symbol of collective identity and lifestyle, revealing how hip-hop constructs meaning and social bonds also through appearance<sup>4</sup> (M. F. Perrone 2024).

The Southern Italian dialect assumes a central role in local rap, functioning as a performative code that reinforces belonging and cultural resistance. Artists such as Co'Sang, Kid Yugi, and Geolier elevate the local language to a vehicle of visibility, historical memory, and social revendication (M. F. Perrone 2024). Dialect rap thus becomes a practice of cultural and political legitimization, challenging prejudices and symbolic marginalization, and transforming into a narrative that gives voice to marginality while promoting emancipation and collective action<sup>5</sup> (Restani 2024).

Fieldwork conducted in Apricena and the surrounding areas reveals the plurality of voices, practices, and visions that animate Foggian hip-hop culture. Interviews, participant observation, and encounters sketch a dense social fabric in which individual biographies intertwine with physical spaces—former prisons, basketball courts—and social networks, giving rise to an active and dynamic community. Hip-hop, therefore, does not merely construct individual identities but becomes a practice of social cohesion and intercultural dialogue.

The multiple expressive forms—from writing to dance, from visual art to experimentation with virtual reality in street art<sup>6</sup> (Presa 2024)—testify to a cultural vitality capable of challenging marginality and rejecting the idea of a static identity. In this provincial context, hip-hop confirms itself as a dynamic medium that articulates tradition and innovation, memory and projection, re-signifying spaces, bodies, and languages through performative practices that consolidate a sense of belonging and a desire for social transformation.

### **Between Memory and Future**

The experiences collected through interviews, participant observation, and encounters with leading figures of the hip-hop scene in the province of Foggia outline a composite panorama of diverse biographical trajectories, nonetheless united by shared elements. The first contact with rap often arises in family contexts where music is an integral part of everyday life; yet this initial bond quickly evolves into an autonomous process of cultural subjectivation. Passion for rap thus assumes a dual function: on the one hand, a tool for escape from difficulties and social constraints; on the other, a medium to express emotions, desires, and frustrations otherwise left unspoken, embodying a practice of self-definition and recognition<sup>7</sup> (L'Altrella 2024).

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<sup>4</sup> Interview with Morena Francesca Perrone, conducted by the author, 9 October 2024.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Matteo Restani, conducted by the author, 9 October 2024.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with Francesco Presa, conducted by the author, 9 October 2024.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Federica L'Altrella, conducted by the author, 1 December 2024.

Within this dynamic, the communal dimension of jams plays a central role: described by participants as a true “family,” they represent models of horizontal solidarity and cultural exchange, capable of generating belonging and reinforcing alternative social networks (M. Perrone 2024). Narratives such as that of Ferrara<sup>8</sup> (2024), who discovered Tupac through a friend, illustrate how cultural transmission within the local scene is grounded in word-of-mouth and intergenerational interactions, establishing a constant link between historical continuity and renewal.

The Foggian hip-hop scene also experiences internal tensions, stemming from the challenge of reconciling innovation with fidelity to a cultural identity rooted in the territory. Local artists construct an imaginary that dialogues with global influences, yet remains deeply anchored in local experiences and values. The production of lyrics by figures such as Restani, committed to representing Apulian reality with both artistic rigor and social awareness, embodies this dialectic between roots and openness. Beyond music, street art also contributes to shaping the collective imaginary: artists like Presa transform urban spaces into devices of memory and political visibility, experimenting with expressive forms that include innovative technologies such as virtual reality, thereby expanding the boundaries of both subject and community.

The tension between tradition and innovation, roots and experimentation, runs through the entire local scene. The globalization and increasing massification of the genre raise critical questions regarding how to preserve identity specificity and social cohesion. Symbolic places such as the former prison of Apricena—once a dynamic center of artistic production and cultural resistance—demonstrate how internal transformations and evolving challenges affect the movement (M. Perrone 2024). The future of the scene will depend on its ability to maintain a balance between memory and innovation, roots and openness, consolidating its territorial bond while remaining in dialogue with contemporary global dynamics.

### **The Use of Images and Media in the Dissemination of Hip-Hop**

Hip-hop emerges as a multifaceted cultural mechanism, articulated through performative, linguistic, and visual practices that transcend geographic and social boundaries. Since its inception, hip-hop has conveyed its essence through a plurality of languages, enabling this culture to overcome geographic, linguistic, and cultural barriers, while adapting to the diverse contexts in which it has taken root. Among these expressive forms, images play a crucial role: they do not merely document the movement but actively contribute to its evolution, giving rise to a visual imaginary that constitutes one of the most distinctive dimensions of its identity. Photography, in particular, possesses the ability to capture not only the external appearance of events but also the emotions, passions, and philosophies animating its practices. As Vikki Tobak notes in her influential book *Contact High: A Visual History of Hip-Hop* (2018): «Photographs, like music, are imprinted onto our collective consciousness. Both define our individual and cultural identities and help shape how we view the world as well as ourselves. In the case of hip-hop [...] both the

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<sup>8</sup> Interview with Andrea Ferrara, conducted by the author, 30 May 2024.

visuals and the music become a part of us. It's not just that one powerful song that has a way of getting under your skin, it's also the visuals that equally captivate, and stick with us for years to come».

Within this interplay, images are not confined to a documentary function, but actively participate in shaping the collective imaginary and the processes of subjectivation. It is from this perspective that I chose to complement ethnographic analysis with the creation of a fanzine, inspired by the experience of *Alleanza Latina* (Aelle), to document and celebrate the hip-hop scene of Foggia. The fanzine functions as a channel of visibility and collective memory, endowed with strong symbolic and communicative value.

Founded in 1991 by Claudio "Sid" Brignole, *Alleanza Latina* was conceived as a visual and narrative archive encompassing not only rap but also writing, breakdance, turntablism, R&B, and the multiple expressions of urban culture. In a pre-digital era, the magazine operated as a device of connection between peripheral realities and a global imaginary, fostering visibility and cohesion within a scene that was still fragmented (Tripodi 2022). It is no coincidence that Aelle published the first interviews with figures who later became icons, documenting the transition of hip-hop from a subcultural phenomenon to the mainstream.

It is from this experience that my fanzine takes shape, aiming to narrate the local scene of Foggia through an interwoven visual and textual narrative, rich in memory and subjectivation. The fanzine is thus not a mere archive, but a performative medium that activates practices of recognition and identity, while simultaneously interrogating the role of the physical and symbolic spaces that host the movement.

### **Images and Narrative**

The images collected during this ethnographic research were not originally intended to document or represent the local hip-hop scene. On the contrary, they were taken almost by chance, playfully, with the naïve gaze of someone simply wishing to preserve a personal memory. No staging, no artistic ambition, no awareness of their future value—only moments captured in the spontaneity of an encounter, in the lightness of a shared experience. Yet it is precisely within this innocence of the shot, almost "raw" and imperfect, that an extraordinary testimonial force resides. These photographs, taken with untrained hands, tell more than words ever could: they speak of an instinctive culture, one that expresses and defines itself visually even before it does so verbally.

In each frame, the visual soul of hip-hop emerges: oversized clothing, caps, sneakers, and hoodies become more than mere accessories—they function as identity markers, emblems of belonging to a community and to a worldview. Fashion here is never an end in itself; it becomes a language, one that tells stories, draws distinctions, and claims spaces. It is an aesthetic choice that turns political, much as it did for the African American community that, through music and style, demanded to be seen, heard, and recognized. Even in Italian provinces such as Foggia, these same codes are reactivated and reinterpreted with new awareness yet shared roots.

The images also speak to the modes of listening to music in an era dominated by speed and instant streaming. Within this context, hip-hop rediscovers slowness, the value



of choice, and the practice of attentive listening. Vinyl records reappear; shelves filled with albums, hands caressing covers as though they were relics. Collecting is not a simple act of nostalgia but rather an act of care and resistance: a way to preserve a living bond with the past, to safeguard the legacy of a movement that is deeply rooted in memory and narration.



**Figure 2** Vinyl Collection. Poggio Imperiale, Italy. From the archive of Francesco Pio Presa, 2024

What stands out most in these photographs is the sense of community they succeed in evoking. The captured moments are fragments of brotherhood, peace, and mutual recognition. Images hold the power to freeze time, to preserve and return the depth of bonds which, though they change, leave enduring traces on bodies and emotions. When looking at group photos, interviewees often experience nostalgia, a gentle melancholy that warms the heart: for these images are not merely memories of a shared past, but tangible proof that such a sense of collectivity truly existed. They are emotional testimonies, which—like the pieces of a mosaic—reconstruct a layered and pulsating collective memory. It is no coincidence that one of the most iconic albums in Italian hip-hop bears the title *Foto di Gruppo* (“Group Photo”) by Bassi Maestro. The title track functions as an existential photograph, immortalizing not only places and faces but also fragments of life: joys, sorrows, loves, disappointments, and friendships, all framed within a single emotional snapshot.

Thus, these seemingly “casual” photographs transform into documents—powerful in their imperfection, alive in their implicit language. No artistic intent was required, for what speaks are the bodies, clothes, unstudied poses, shared smiles, and lived places. Each shot becomes a trace of a collective identity in constant redefinition, a mirror of a culture that refuses to be confined within the peripheries but, through the image, claims space, history, and dignity.

### The Word as a Device of Knowledge

The interviews collected serve as an essential complement to the images forming this research: not merely biographical testimonies, but genuine analytical devices, capable of revealing the multiple subjective, affective, and political trajectories that traverse the field

of hip-hop. Through direct dialogue with the protagonists of the Foggian scene—young men and women selected according to cultural affinity and narrative ability, based on my own personal intuition—I was able to gather a constellation of voices composing a choral, layered, and sometimes contradictory narrative, which is precisely why it is authentic.

Some interviewees chose to recount their first encounter with hip-hop, the moment when a song, a music video, a jam, or a graffiti piece ignited something within them. For others, hip-hop represented a transformative encounter, a horizon that allowed them to discover latent passions such as music production, writing, drawing, or dance. These activities often originated in clandestine forms of expression, serving as outlets in response to rigid, judgmental, or indifferent social contexts.



**Figure 3** Boy Performing on Turntables. Apricena, Italy. From the archive of Samuel Buccino, 2024

Other participants spoke to me with tenderness and nostalgia about how this culture allowed them to form deep emotional bonds. One of the most recurrent and significant narratives concerns the function of hip-hop as a tool of cultural assertion, particularly for those living in or originating from Southern Italy, who often bear the weight of a stigmatized identity. Several testimonies highlight how hip-hop has served as a resonating chamber for the voice of Southern Italy, historically marginalized within the national narrative. The young people recounted how, through the use of dialect, they reclaimed dignity, pride, and visibility, overturning the paradigm that regarded the Southern accent as a sign of ignorance or otherness. Indeed, it is precisely through dialect rap that many discovered the evocative power of their mother tongue, capable not only of engaging outsiders but also of empowering those who, for decades, had to mask their speech to be accepted. In these narratives, dialect emerges not only as a communicative code, but as a political act, a tangible marker of belonging and cultural resistance.

At the same time, an often underappreciated yet strongly evident element from the interviews is the role of women in the local hip-hop scene. Far from being an exclusively male or patriarchal culture, hip-hop also emerges as a space of female empowerment, where several young women have found voice, presence, and courage. Some recounted how, through music, dance, or writing, they were able to challenge gender stereotypes and carve out a space for recognition within a culture that, despite its contradictions,

provided tools for self-expression, defense, and visibility. Their voices, sometimes still timid, are resolute, aware of their potential as active agents of transformation, capable of disrupting dominant models and opening up new imaginaries.

The testimonies collected thus convey the polyphony of the hip-hop movement: some experience it as an educational and inclusive support, others highlight its aesthetic dimension, and yet others explore its political potential. For some, hip-hop is a daily practice; for others, an ethic of life; and for others still, an embodied memory. Each narrative, in its uniqueness, contributes to deconstructing the monolithic vision of hip-hop as merely an urban subculture, revealing instead its fluid, situated, and deeply relational nature.

In this sense, the fanzine produced as the culmination of my research is not merely a graphic product, but a device of restitution and listening, a hybrid form that combines the ethnographic approach with the narrative and visual power of hip-hop culture itself. The collected stories, intertwined with images and words, speak not only to enthusiasts of the genre but to anyone who feels the need to recognize, reclaim, or remember.

### **The Body, Memory, and Imaginary as Devices of Transformation**

Through these narratives, hip-hop emerges as a field that traverses the body, memory, and collective imaginary, shaping a complex and layered identity. Embodied practices—dance, writing, and performance—function as devices that produce visibility and assertion, while individual stories reflect the tension between local roots and global influences.

In this sense, the fanzine becomes a site for dialogue and reworking of the past, a device that contributes to perpetuating the memory of the movement while projecting it into the future. One may then ask: how can a local narrative contribute to rethinking global hip-hop? In what ways can the craftsmanship of a fanzine act as a gesture of cultural resistance in an era dominated by digitalization?

The fanzine project represents an original contribution to the long tradition of visual and textual narratives of hip-hop, a practice that not only preserves but also renews a culture in motion. By combining images with profound testimonies, it conveys the vitality of a scene often rendered invisible, placing the community at the center as an active subject and agent of transformation.

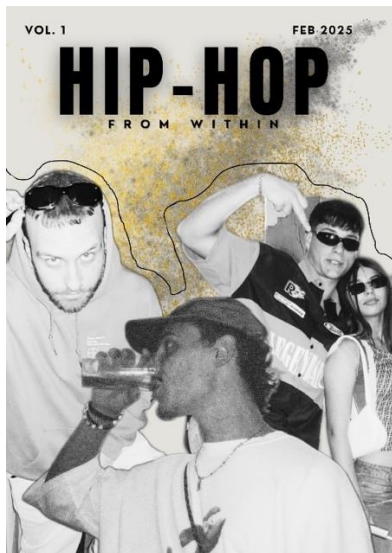


Figure 4 Cover of the fanzine. Online. Created by Denise Pia Formica, 2025

## Final Considerations: Expressive Potential and Transformative Horizons of the Local Hip-Hop Scene

The ethnographic path I have undertaken unfolded as a multisensory and layered exploration of the local hip-hop scene, moving along the threshold between visual inquiry and immersive fieldwork experience. The aim was not merely to document, but to make visible what often remains invisible: cultural microcosms in ferment, biographical trajectories intertwined with artistic practice, and margins that become pulsating centers of meaning. Within this framework, the fanzine produced during fieldwork does not constitute a mere final product, but rather a cultural artifact that condenses, reworks, and reactivates the visual and narrative memory of the observed community.



Figure 5 Pages of the fanzine. Online. Created by Denise Pia Formica, 2025

This product serves multiple functions: an affective archive, ethnographic document, and generational testimony. The images, texts, and voices collected during the research do not merely represent the past or present; they also speak to the future, bearing witness to the vitality of a culture that continuously regenerates through the dialogue between local practices and global imaginaries.

If it is true that hip-hop is “a way of life” (De Nittis 2024), then the fanzine becomes the tangible space where this life settles, narrates itself, and is projected forward. A paper-and-visual stage, it fixes attitudes, values, alliances, and tensions, but also hopes and aspirations. The hip-hop culture analyzed here should not be understood as an isolated or merely derivative phenomenon, but as a dynamic process of identity construction and cultural negotiation rooted in the local context.

Interviews with artists and enthusiasts revealed the transformative power of hip-hop: moments of self-reflection in which personal experience intertwines with the construction of identity. In a South often marginalized, the local scene emerges as a creative and collective space, where scarcity becomes a driver of ingenuity and the community generates enduring bonds, affiliations, and rituals.

Within this context, the ethnographer assumes a reflective and decentered stance, attentive both to listening and analysis. Every ethnographic narrative is a negotiation of perspectives, and in the case of hip-hop, observation transforms into a collaborative act: making the invisible visible through situated testimony, without the illusion of capturing an absolute objectivity. Ethnography thus becomes a tool for participation, documentation, and sharing, valuing both the strength and fragility of a daily yet revolutionary culture.

The fanzine reflects this approach and suggests evolutionary perspectives: interactive archives combining interviews, images, and soundscapes; immersive photographic exhibitions; participatory moments such as jam sessions, workshops, and open mic events. All initiatives capable of expanding collective memory, offering new modes of access, and restoring tangibility and intensity to the lived experience of the scene.

More profoundly, the project aims to act as a catalyst: sparking new narratives, fanzines, and archives. If even a single reader, young rapper, or graphic enthusiast finds inspiration within these pages, the research has already fulfilled its purpose: to become a seed, not merely a photograph.

Looking to the future, hip-hop must continue to function as a language of freedom, a form of creative resistance, and a driver of collective transformation, overcoming the prejudices that trivialize or marginalize its significance. In particular, it is crucial that women find space and recognition, not as exceptions, but as central actors in a diverse and inclusive movement. Their voices, stories, and images deserve to be heard and shared, as every gesture and trace contributes to writing new possibilities and strengthening hip-hop as a space of expression and collective participation.

In conclusion, what remains is a constant tension toward movement: a desire for openness. An awareness that ethnography, like hip-hop, never truly ends, but evolves, contaminates, and reinvents itself. Perhaps it is precisely in this continuous becoming that its strength lies.



**Figure 5** QR Code linking to the fanzine. Online. Created by Denise Pia Formica, 2025

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