



Open Library of Humanities



Part of the Ubiquity  
Partner Network



Open Library of Humanities

---

## Article

**How to Cite:** Wiedemann, F 2019 The Local and the Global in Networks of Lebanese and Algerian Rappers. *Open Library of Humanities*, 5(1): 26, pp. 1–40. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.16995/olh.419>

**Published:** 05 April 2019

---

## Peer Review:

This article has been peer reviewed through the double-blind process of *Open Library of Humanities*, which is a journal published by the Open Library of Humanities.

## Copyright:

© 2019 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC-BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

## Open Access:

*Open Library of Humanities* is a peer-reviewed open access journal.

## Digital Preservation:

The Open Library of Humanities and all its journals are digitally preserved in the CLOCKSS scholarly archive service.

---

ARTICLE

# The Local and the Global in Networks of Lebanese and Algerian Rappers

Felix Wiedemann

Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg, DE

[felixwiedemann@posteo.de](mailto:felixwiedemann@posteo.de)

---

This article discusses border-crossing interconnections and processes of glocalization in Arab(ic) hip hop culture. It is based on an analysis of collaborative networks among Lebanese and Algerian rappers, and their Twitter networks. This approach is grounded in relational sociology, which assumes that culture is the product of interactions between individuals. Here, two interactions are modeled and analyzed as networks. At first, featurings as a form of artistic collaboration are examined. Secondly, Twitter followings, as an important form of online communication, are focused on. By analyzing network-structures like clusters and node properties like the number of connections to other nodes (degree), this article takes a quantitative viewpoint on a subject matter usually analyzed by qualitative tools. The article's findings indicate the parallel existence of an Algerian and an Eastern Arab(ic) hip hop community excluding the Maghreb region. Both communities have social media connections to the US-American hip hop scene, while French hip hop seems to only play a bigger role in Algeria.

---

## Introduction

Si tu écoutes nos chansons, tu vas voir, c'est pas comme les Américains, c'est des autres instruments, c'est des autres mélodies, c'est des autres sujets. C'est une différente façon de rapper, c'est une autre langue. It's completely different. It has nothing to do with the States. Yes, the movement was born there, but the movement spread all around the world. Ceux qui sont maltraités, qui ont quelque chose à dénoncer. C'est la voix du peuple qui crie, qui souffre et chaque fois que ce genre de musique est parti chez une communauté différente, ça a été différent parce que ça représentait ces gens-là et les problèmes de ces gens-là et juste comme je peux dire maintenant que à cent pour cent, le hip-hop français n'a rien à faire avec le hip-hop américain, c'est deux sortes de hip-hop différentes, je te dis aussi que le le hip-hop arabe est complètement différent de toute sorte de hip-hop (Malikah, quoted in Bensaddek, 2011).<sup>1</sup>

As Lebanese rapper Malikah describes, hip hop culture has come a long way from its roots in mostly Afro-American communities in the South Bronx of the 1970s. Over the next decades, hip hop's four core elements – graffiti, b-boying ('break dancing'), DJing and rapping – went global. This geographical dissemination of hip hop to different communities led to different manifestations of the culture, which, according to Malikah, 'have nothing to do with US-American hip hop'.

Nowadays, rappers in Lebanon and Algeria share her view to varying degrees. Beirut-based rapper Chyno speaks of a 'transition-phase' (Shorbaji, 2016) between

---

<sup>1</sup> Translation (my own): 'If you listen to our songs, you'll see, it's not like the Americans, it's other instruments, it's other melodies, it's other subjects. It's a different way of rapping, it's a different language. It's completely different. It has nothing to do with the States. Yes, the movement was born there, but the movement spread all around the world. Those who are mistreated, who have something to criticize. It's the voice of the people who are screaming, who are suffering and every time this kind of music has gone to a different community, it's been different because it represented those people and the problems of those people and just as I can say now that 100% of French hip hop has nothing to do with American hip hop, it's two different kinds of hip hop, I also tell you that Arab hip hop is completely different from any kind of hip hop'.

hip hop, influenced by foreign hip hop cultures, and a truly localized hip hop culture. His fellow crew-member in Fareeq el Atrash, Edd Abbas, already speaks of a 'golden age' (2016) of Arabic rap. In the Lebanese rapper El Rass's opinion, by now 'on est passé du rap en arabe au rap arabe'.<sup>2</sup> (Nashara, 2015: 7). Algerian rapper Fada Vex focuses on local anchoring:

Quand je dis, l'identité de mon rap [...] c'est de faire un rap qui ne ressemble pas au rap américain, qui ne ressemble pas au rap français, et qui ne ressemble pas au rap allemand, qui ne ressemble pas au rap marocainet qui ne ressemble pas au rap du *mašriq* ou du rap libanais. C'est de faire un rap propre à nous. Avec notre propre slang, avec notre propre façon de faire la musique, de la concevoir. C'est ça, [...] se construire une identité musicale. C'est d'essayer de faire un rap algérien (Bourbia, 2016).<sup>3</sup>

So how can hip hop communities in Arabic-speaking countries be described nowadays? Can we speak of one Arab(ic)<sup>4</sup> hip hop community? Does it only include artists living in countries in which Arabic is widely used? Is it more appropriate to differentiate between several local Arab(ic) hip hop communities? If that is the case, do the boundaries of these communities run along linguistic 'boundaries' between different Arabic dialects?<sup>5</sup> Do Arab(ic) hip hop communities have strong ties to

---

<sup>2</sup> Translation (my own): 'We have transferred from rap in Arabic to Arab rap'.

<sup>3</sup> Translation (my own): 'When I say, the identity of my rap [...] that is to make a rap that doesn't resemble American rap, that doesn't resemble French rap, that doesn't resemble German rap, that doesn't resemble Moroccan rap and that doesn't resemble rap of the Mašriq or Lebanese rap. It's to make a rap that's our own. With our own slang, with our own way of making music, of creating it. That's right, to build a musical identity. It's trying to make an Algerian rap'.

<sup>4</sup> I've chosen to write 'Arab(ic)' instead of 'Arab' or 'Arabic' because I assume that some of the connections uniting the members of the community are based on concepts of a shared 'ethnicity', whereas others are based on an understanding of a shared language. I use 'Arab(ic)' for countries in the MENA region where Arabic is spoken.

<sup>5</sup> Arabic is a language which is diglossic by nature: there is a functional separation of language use domains between Arabic's 'high' and 'low' varieties. The 'high' variety, (Modern) Standard Arabic is used for example for writing and education. Its 'low' varieties, the Arabic dialects are used for example in everyday situations and at home. Arabic dialects can differ to such a degree from each other that for example for many speakers of Lebanese Arabic, Algerian Arabic would not be easily understandable.

US-American or French hip hop, or do local hip hop communities function rather independently? Can we speak of what hip hop heads fans around the world call a global 'Hip Hop Nation'? The article at hand tackles these questions mentioned above on how to best understand Arab(ic) hip hop communities.

As I will be using the term 'Hip Hop Nation' both in this article and work building on it, an explanation side note is appropriaterequired. The term originated within hip hop culture itself and is now widely used in academia (See for example: Smitherman, 1997; McLaren, 1999; Higgins, 2008). One of its scholarly definitions reads is as a 'borderless composite of hip hop communities worldwide' (Alim, 2004: 387). However, relatively few researchers mention that using the word 'nation' also places the Hip Hop Nation in a longer tradition of Black (American) movements – from the Nation of Islam over the Five Percent Nation/Nation of Gods and Earths, to Hip Hop Nation's sibling organization, the Universal Zulu Nation (See for example: Fielder, 1999; Costello & Wallace, 1990). Just like these movements, the Hip Hop Nation can be understood as a form of Other and counter culture uniting different (marginalized) communities under one common cultural umbrella against a White hegemonic culture.

The article at hand tackles the questions mentioned above on how to best understand Arab(ic) hip hop communities. My approach, based on relational sociology, examines networks in Lebanese and Algerian hip hop communities. It focuses on these networks' internal structures, their key statistical values, and on their connectedness to the global hip hop network and adds a quantitative perspective to the research area of (Arabic) hip hop culture, in which qualitative methods are dominant.

It contributes to diverse fields such as Hip Hop Studies as well as to research on cultural networks and the process of 'glocalization'. Glocalization is the local anchoring of globalized cultures or in the words of Robertson (1995): 'the concept of globalization has involved the simultaneity and the interpenetration of [...] the universal and the particular'. Glocalization has been analyzed by different researchers of Arab(ic) hip hop cultures. For example, Cristina Moreno Almeida (2015) has worked out how taqlīdī rap, a mélange of rap beats with Gnawa and Andalusian musical influences, does not only enable Moroccan rappers to create a locally

anchored musical identity but also helps Moroccan elites advertise an 'oriental' yet 'modern' country. Nicolas Puig (2017) describes how the Lebanon-based Palestinian artist Osloob creates 'sonic intertextuality': Osloob uses a variety of samples, from Arab traditions to US East Coast rap, to place his work both in a local refugee camp context and in a global network of rap and electronic music cultures. This article contributes to a better understanding of glocalization in Arab(ic) hip hop culture(s) by highlighting links between different local hip hop cultures.

### **Case Studies: hip hop in Lebanon and Algeria**

At the starting point of my investigation I chose Algeria and Lebanon, two countries that are geographically far apart, which makes it less likely to find connections between their hip hop scenes. If, however, connections can be identified, this will make a strong case for the existence of a border-crossing hip hop community. Further reasons to compare the two countries are Algeria's pioneering role in the history of Arab(ic) rap and Lebanon's position as a 'melting pot' of different Arab(ic) musical influences.

There are some similarities between the countries: Lebanon and Algeria both experienced French colonial rule, long periods of civil war, and tensions between secular and religious forces. Both have large diasporic communities. Many citizens are multilingual, speaking different versions of Arabic, French, Berber languages, English, Armenian, and other languages. On the other hand, Algeria and Lebanon have different political systems and societies. Algeria's population is almost exclusively Muslim, and the country's president has been ruling since 1999. In contrast, Lebanon is home to Muslims, Christians, and those of other faiths, and has a slow political decision-making process due to the confessionalism in political structures. These features characterize the two countries as interesting case studies to investigate the spread of hip hop culture.

I will briefly outline the trajectory hip hop culture took to arrive in Lebanon and Algeria. When talking about the history of Algerian hip hop, one has to start on the other side of the Mediterranean. France was one of the first countries outside the USA to which hip hop culture spread. As early as the 1980s, block parties were

organized in Paris (Hammou, 2010). From France, the culture found its way to Algeria via French satellite television (Fada Vex, 2004). Thus, Algerian youth were inspired by American and French artists (Boumedini, 2007: 148), and started to rap in the early 1990s in the urban coastal centers of Algiers, Oran, Annaba, and Constantine (Miliani, 2002: 768; Virolle, 2007: 55; Boumedini & Hadria, 2009: 141). In 1992, for example, the famous Algerian rap crews Intik and MBS were founded in Algiers (Kouras, 2008: 66). Nowadays, Algerian rap is not only listened to in Algeria's big coastal cities, but also in its small villages. It criticizes local sociopolitical problems like unemployment, addiction, visa issues, and divorce (Mouffokes & Boumedini, 2017: 43–44). It differentiates itself from foreign rap by using local languages, neologisms, and code-switching (Boumedini & Hadria, 2011: 51–52). Stars of the Algerian rap scene interact with fans mostly via social media and are not as visible through live events.

In Lebanon, hip hop began to emerge after the end of the Lebanese civil war in the late 1990s (Eyre & Allers, 2013). The first well-known Lebanese rappers were Qitaa Beirut, Aks'ser and Rayess Bek, who were located in Beirut (Bensaddek, 2011; Eyre & Allers, 2013). DJ Lethal Skillz, a Lebanese hip hop pioneer, recounts that 'most of us were into American hip hop, into East Side versus West Side' (Burkhalter, 2013: 53).<sup>6</sup> Today's Lebanese rap scene is characterized by its diversity: artists of Lebanese, Palestinian, Syrian, Armenian, or other origins rap in a variety of languages, including local Arabic dialects, Standard Arabic, English, French, Armenian, and others (Puig, 2012). It is also less 'underground' than the Algerian scene, meeting regularly for open mic sessions in venues like the pub Radio Beirut and organizing concerts or open-air rap battles. From their origins until now, hip hop in Algeria and Lebanon have developed into vibrant forms of culture and produced many interesting artists. The latter influence each other, which leads to this article's theoretical and methodological approach.

---

<sup>6</sup> DJ Lethal Skillz is referring to the 'battle' between East Coast and West Coast rappers which led to the killings of the rappers Tupac (1996) and Notorious B.I.G. (1997).

## Relational Concepts of Culture and Network Theory

Relational sociology focuses on interactions between actors. Its core assumption is, in the words of Nick Crossley (2015: 4), that '[c]ulture arises within and through interaction and belongs to the domain of interaction'. It differs from holistic views, which perceive culture as something on its own (decoupling it from the people it is comprised of), as well as individualistic views, which concentrate on the importance of single individuals. Relational sociology rather states that '[c]ulture exists *between* actors' (Crossley, 2015: 4, italics original). Crossley draws inspiration from other sociologists who share a relational approach to culture. He references Howard Becker (1974: 767), who sees art works 'as the product of the cooperative activity of many people'. Becker's theory of the 'art world' (1974, 2008) emphasizes the support personnel who accompany the 'artists'. He also stresses the significance of conventions that regulate processes of cooperation. In rap music, one such convention would be that a song is typically between three and four minutes long. So, both the rapper and the producer, who makes the beat, know that their artistic output has to match this time frame which facilitates their cooperation.

These worlds, the actors in them, and the relations between them can be described as networks. Networks are models of reality in which nodes are connected by edges. A network's meaning for its readers depends on which sort of actors and which sort of interactions are visualized in the network. In a social network, human actors are the nodes. They are connected by edges if there is a specific form of interaction between them. The representation of actors and interactions as nodes and edges leads to simplification. This is both a strength of network analysis and a potential weakness. On the one hand, networks translate parts of complicated reality into models, which are easier to understand. On the other, the initial concentration on specific actors and specific interactions leaves information out. The latter point must always be taken into consideration when interpreting networks. I want to emphasize the potential and the limits of this theoretical approach: network analysis is a quantitative approach. For research on Arab(ic) hip hop, network analysis helps verify if assumed communities within the culture exist. It cannot however explain why these communities exist. This should happen in follow-up research but it is not the objective of this article.

Having clarified the potential of network analysis, its core concepts and terminology will be outlined. In networks, the presence and absence of interactions leads to the formation of clusters, components, and cliques. Clusters are parts of a network, in which nodes are more densely connected to each other than to other nodes of the network. Cliques are 'strongly connected subgroups' (Diani, 2008: 346), in which, at best, all members are connected to each other (Knoke & Kuklinski, 1982: 56). A cluster that is completely disconnected from the rest of the network is called a 'component'.

In social networks, connections between clusters are important for the spread of ideas and culture. Paraphrasing Ronald S. Burt (2004: 349), culture is more homogeneous within than between network clusters. Thus, actors who are part of the same cluster are more likely to share a form of culture than actors of different clusters. Different clusters can only influence each other if they are connected through interaction, i.e. through people having ties to more than one cluster. They form 'weak ties' between different sub-networks through which information can flow (Granovetter, 1973). Otherwise, information would be stuck in one community. People occupying such a position between different communities are called brokers. They can initiate change by filling the 'structural hole' between different communities (Burt, 2004). They are, therefore, very important actors in a social network, even if they occupy places at the margin of a sub-network (Padgett & Ansell, 1993). Another important role in most social networks is played by hubs: these nodes have 'an anomalously high number of links' (Barabási, 2003: 70) while most other nodes have only very few links. That is due to the fact that in these networks, new nodes connect mostly to those nodes which are already well connected to others; a phenomenon which can be called 'preferential attachment' (Barabási & Albert, 1999: 1).

For a better understanding of networks in Arab(ic) rap music, it is crucial to identify hubs, clusters, and broker positions. The existence of clusters might indicate the formation of musical sub-genres, hubs could point to people being important players in the hip hop world, and broker positions could show connections and influence between different hip hop communities. I focus on: (a) a network of artistic collaboration among Algerian and Lebanese rappers, and (b) the Twitter network of one Algerian and one Lebanese artist.

## **Networks of Collaboration**

A variety of interconnections based on different sorts of interactions can be analyzed. The most obvious form of these interactions is featuring. Reginald D. Smith (2006) wrote an earlier research paper on networks of collaboration among US American rappers from which inspired this approach.

Featuring can be seen as an 'invitation', i.e. artists are inviting other artists to create art together (Hammou, 2009: 77): in a rap song, one artist might be the lead artist who invites another artist – the featured artist – to appear on the same song. It is a meaningful form of collaboration between artists as it 'is not only a track of mutual acquaintance, but also a track of minimal mutual recognition as a practitioner of rap music' (Hammou, 2014: 107). Thus, the mere fact that one artist features another artist reveals important information regarding the artists' status. Furthermore, featuring involves different roles: a host inviting a 'guest' (Hammou, 2009: 77).

### ***Methodological approach***

Not only is featuring a very meaningful form of artistic cooperation, it can also be analyzed in a structured way. In many cases, artistic collaboration becomes in the end a piece of art, i.e. a song or an album. As countless songs are unpublished, published online on different platforms or offline in the form of single CDs or albums, the scope of this analysis has to be reduced. In order to understand more about the links in and between Algerian and Lebanese hip hop, I considered songs that featured artists across Lebanese and Algerian hop hip cultures. I only took into account songs that were released in the form of an analogue or digital album (I did not consider digital or analogue singles). Observations during field work, which I conducted for another project (Wiedemann, 2019), and I cannot elaborate on any further here, indicate that albums are considered a work of art, marking the 'initiation' of an artist into the world of rap. In addition to that, this approach limits the overall amount of data to a manageable amount: a database containing 165 albums by Algerian artists and 53 albums by Lebanese artists (**Tables 7 and 8**). These rap albums and songs include metadata on the rappers who are featured.

Information on the albums of Algerian artists was taken from a collaboratively administered and actively maintained list of Algerian rap albums on *genius.com* (2016a) (the last update to my database for this project was made on 7 November 2016). The people working on this list are part of an online community dedicated to rap music and can be considered experts in Algerian rap music. Their list is the most comprehensive database of Algerian rap albums I found, which makes it the best available starting point for my research. By using it, I adopt the community's definition of who is an 'Algerian rap artist'. Language use is not necessarily a criterion here, as the artists on this list use Algerian Arabic, Standard Arabic, French, and other languages. Neither is the artists' nationality or self-identification as 'Algerian' a criterion. The main criterion is if artists resided in Algeria when they produced the album. This excludes, for example, albums produced in the diaspora by artists of Algerian nationality. It also excludes albums in which Algerian artists do not act as the host artist but are only featured. Arab diasporas would of course be a promising ground for further research (Swedenburg, 2015).

Information on Lebanese rap albums was not collected by an active online community but by myself. In my list, I tried to include all albums that were produced by rappers while they lived in Lebanon. To further research on Lebanese rap and support the community, I started a similar list on *genius.com* (2016b) (the last update to my database was similarly made on 7 November 2016).

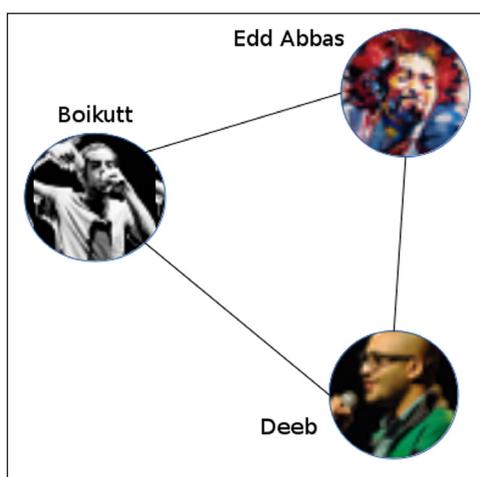
The database used in this article includes the rappers' names and aliases, and their affiliations to different rap crews, as well as their countries and cities. Some songs include more than one host artist and one featured artist. In these cases, I registered a connection between all of the involved artists. Let us take as an example the song 'Re7la', which was released on the mixtape 'El 3arabi mokh'.<sup>7</sup> It is a song uniting three well-known artists: Egyptian host artist Deeb, based in Cairo, was noticed by an international, non-Arab, non-hip-hop audience for his musical support of the Tahrir protests in 2011. One featured artist is the Palestinian, Ramallah-based

---

<sup>7</sup> This mixtape is not part of the network database because it was released in Jordan by DJ Sotusura who only now lives in Beirut. However, because of its border-crossing featurings of very well-known Arab rappers and because two of these rappers are parts of crews, I decided to use this song as an example to illustrate my approach.

rapper Boikutt, co-founder of the crew Ramallah Underground. The other featured rapper is Edd Abbas, who lives in Beirut and Abidjan and is a member of the crew Fareeq el Atrash. All of the interconnections were entered in a csv file, which was then imported into a network visualization software. I opted for displaying all connections as undirected edges between the artists. Hereby, I did not differentiate between ‘hosts’ and ‘guests’ because the artists’ roles are not always explicit in the song’s metadata. Depending on the information one wants to obtain, it is important to decide how to visualize featurings; for example, through a network in which every rapper is a node and all the rappers who appear together on one track are connected by an edge. Before visualizing the data, several decisions had to be taken.

**Individual artists vs collectives:** Some artists release individual work and are also active in a rap crew. Two options are possible: visualizing each individual artist (**Figure 1** and **Table 1**) or visualizing only the crew (**Figure 2** and **Table 2**). I opted



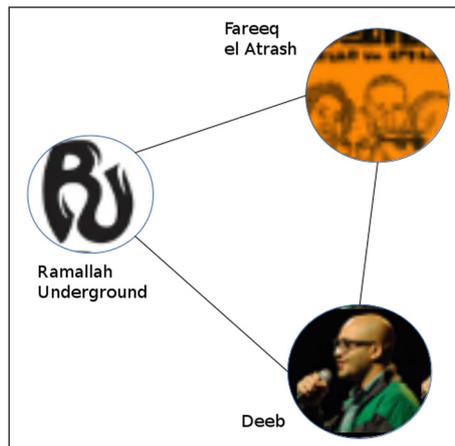
**Figure 1:** Network of collaboration of the song ‘Re7la’. Individual artists.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The bitmaps used for illustrating networks are made from images found at the following online locations. It is my understanding that a ‘fair use’ of the images is allowed due to their reduced quality and their use in a non-commercial purely academic context. All links were checked on 14 November 2016.

1. Boikutt: [http://67.media.tumblr.com/186285806d4f6fc72b3021dcc7bdee93/tumblr\\_inline\\_nm1nkr8oNm1t6a7bz\\_500.jpg](http://67.media.tumblr.com/186285806d4f6fc72b3021dcc7bdee93/tumblr_inline_nm1nkr8oNm1t6a7bz_500.jpg)
2. Edd Abbas: [https://pbs.twimg.com/profile\\_images/2286870251/s8g0m0pdi5pv986n57sn.jpeg](https://pbs.twimg.com/profile_images/2286870251/s8g0m0pdi5pv986n57sn.jpeg)
3. Deeb: <http://scoopempire.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Eldeeb.jpg>
4. Fareeq el Atrash: <https://i1.sndcdn.com/avatars-000072541568-ug4zqb-t500x500.jpg>
5. Ramallah Underground: <https://img.youtube.com/vi/Mxu7fQ8xtAk/hqdefault.jpg>

**Table 1:** Deeb – ‘Re7la’ featuring Boikutt and Edd Abbas.

Edge ID	Artist [source]	Artist [target]	track
1	Deeb	Boikutt	Re7la
2	Deeb	Edd Abbas	Re7la
3	Boikutt	Edd Abbas	Re7la

**Figure 2:** Network of collaboration of the song ‘Re7la’. Individual artists replaced by their crews.**Table 2:** The same song data; individual artists replaced by their crews: Deeb – ‘Re7la’ featuring Boikutt and Edd Abbas.

Edge ID	Artist [source]	Artist [target]	track
1	Deeb	Ramallah Underground [Boikutt’s crew]	Re7la
2	Deeb	Fareeq el Atrash [Edd Abbas’ crew]	Re7la
3	Ramallah Underground	Fareeq el Atrash	Re7la

for visualizing the crew because it is not always clear if all of the crew members took part in producing a song. In addition to that, strong ties and mutual influence between crew members can generally be assumed. Last but not least, visualizing a crew simplifies matters. Taking each individual artist as a separate node would certainly lead to a more precise picture of the network and could also take into account that line-ups of crews change and that crews can also split up.

**Discretization of continuous data:** Due to technical limitations, node attributes have to be reduced to discrete values despite being of continuous nature.

All the artists who have lived in different countries, or traveled or commuted between different countries, or who call several countries their 'home' can only be placed in one country. As mentioned, I chose to pick the country where the artists lived in when they produced their work and stored these countries alongside the artists in the database.<sup>9</sup> As my focus was on the Algerian and Lebanese rap scene and on the question of whether there is an Arab(ic) Hip Hop Nation, I opted for the following strategy: if albums were produced in more than one country and one of the artists' countries was Lebanon or Algeria, I placed the artist there. If not, I checked if the artists' countries included an Arab country and placed the artist there. This simplifies visualization, but information about movements of artists is lost.

The data was visualized using the software Gephi 0.9.1. I employed the Yifan Hu algorithm (for technical details, see Hu, 2006), as well as the Label Adjust algorithm, which are both implemented in Gephi. Through both algorithms, the visualization became readable as a result of the software evenly distributing nodes in space, depicting symmetry where it exists, and minimizing edge-crossing (this is at least what the Yifan Hu algorithm intends to do, see Hu, 2006: 37), as well as overlapping labels. After applying the two algorithms, the distance between the two main clusters was manually reduced and the smaller clusters were drawn nearer to the main network.

In the visualization, node and label size is based on node degree, i.e. a node's total number of connections to other nodes. Nodes are colored according to assigned country. Those having a degree of less than one were filtered out; artists with no collaborations were not taken into account.

### ***Results: Geographical concentration***

Even before looking at interconnections, conclusions can be drawn from analyzing the database. It contains a total of 748 artists, of whom 404 could be placed in at least one country; many could also be placed in a city. The following table (**Table 3**) shows the 11 cities with the highest concentration of artists within this database.

---

<sup>9</sup> The countries besides Algeria and Lebanon in alphabetical order: Bahrain, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, Egypt, France, Germany, Great Britain, Iraq, Italy, Jordan, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Palestinian Territories, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, USA.

**Table 3:** Geographical hubs in the network of collaboration.

<b>City</b>	<b>No. of artists (rappers + crews)</b>
Oran	42
Algiers	41
Beirut	37
Paris	17
Annaba	15
El Harrach	12
Constantine	9
Boumerdès	8
Sidi Bel Abbès	8
Cairo	7
Ramallah	6

The four Algerian cities with the highest number of inhabitants – Algiers, Oran, Constantine, and Annaba – are on the list. Sidi Bel Abbès is one of Algeria's ten biggest towns. El Harrach is a suburb of Algiers, and Boumerdès is located 50 km east of Algiers. Finding these cities in the list is not a big surprise.

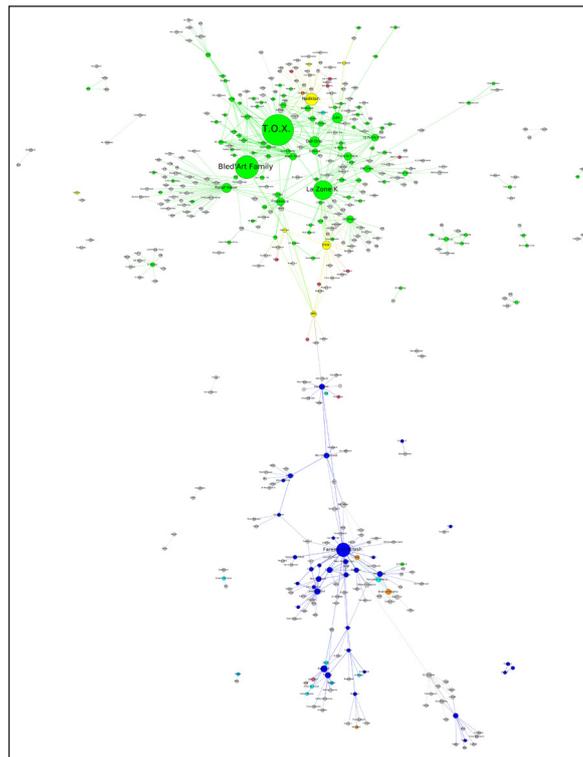
Of all the Lebanese cities, only Beirut makes it to the top of the list. The Lebanese hip hop community seems to be concentrated in the capital. This might have been caused by and led to an infrastructural concentration of support personnel, production facilities, organizations, and sponsors in Beirut (Burkhalter, 2013: 63–71). Still, one should consider that many Lebanese rappers like Touffar (Baalbek), El Rass (Tripoli) and, according to the rapper Samzz, also 'a lot of the rappers that come to Radio Beirut' (Ajaj, 2016), are originally from other Lebanese regions.

The occurrence of three particular cities in this list is surprising: Paris, Cairo, and Ramallah are geographical hubs in the network of artistic collaboration among Algerian and Lebanese rappers. It is apparent that there are at least some artistic collaborations that cross national borders. Finding Paris on this list indicates the strong influence of Algerian and Lebanese diaspora communities.

### **Results: Clusters**

In the network of collaborations (**Figures 3 and 4**), several clusters can be noticed. I analyzed if these clusters overlap with regions and countries.

There is a big cluster of mostly Algerian rappers (visualized at the top). Only a few French rappers and crews like 113, Rocé, Les Saltimbanks, and Gazateam, and Algerian artists who migrated to Europe like Intik, Africa Jungle and MBS are part of this cluster. At the bottom, we see a cluster containing many Lebanese artists but also Egyptian (Arabian Knightz, Deeb, MC Amin), Palestinian (Ramallah Underground, Al Nather), Jordanian (El Far3i, Satti), and Syrian (Bu Kolthoum, Al Darwish) artists. Several of these multinational collaborations can be found on mixtapes, which, according to DJ Lethal Skillz, 'bridge cultures through soulful, funky, raw beats, a microphone, and two turntables' (The Letter B, 2012). Here, the ambivalent role that international



**Figure 3:** Network of Collaboration.

<b>Legend</b>
N/A and other countries
Algeria
Lebanon
Algeria, France
Egypt
France
Palestinian Territories, Israel
<b>Node count: 445</b>
<b>Edge count: 1352</b>

**Figure 4:** Legend to figure 3.

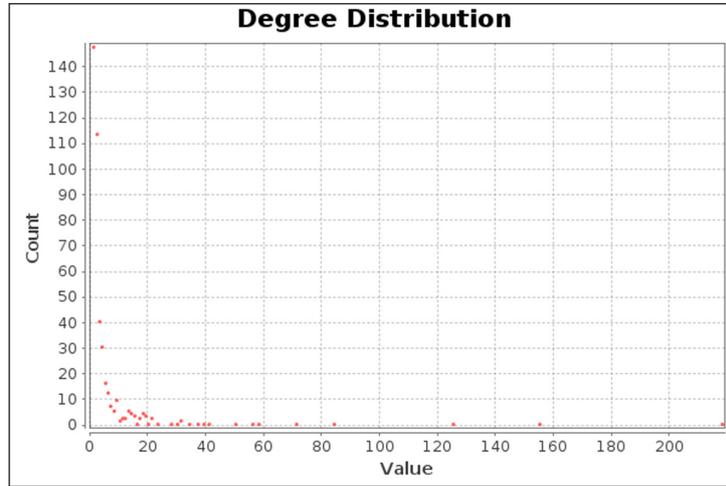
non-governmental organizations like Rapolitics, and governmental organizations like the Institut français and the United States Agency for International Development play in organizing border-crossing collaborations should be considered and examined further (Butler, 2009). Only one collaboration connects the big and mainly Algerian cluster to the big and mainly Lebanese cluster: Rayess Bek's track 'Al Shou3ara2', on his album 'Hip Hop Republic' (2011), includes a feature by Rabah Donquishoot, one of the members of 'Le Micro Brise le Silence' (MBS), a pioneering Algerian rap crew.

The main take-aways of analyzing these clusters are the following. Collaboration seems to be mostly based on shared geographic location. Algerian rappers mostly collaborate with other Algerian artists and to a lesser degree with artists based in France. Lebanese artists mostly collaborate with other artists based in Lebanon, but they sometimes include artists from other Arab countries, except the Maghreb.

### ***Results: Hubs and brokers***

The degree distribution (**Figure 5**) produces a long tail with numerous artists (nodes) having only very few collaborations (edges) and a few artists (nodes) who have many collaborations (edges). Of all the 1,352 edges,<sup>10</sup> the 388 artists with between 1 and

<sup>10</sup> The total number of edges is 1,352. Some pairs of nodes have multiple edges in between them, resulting in a weighted edge. If an artist collaborates once with another artist, the edge representing



**Figure 5:** Degree distribution in the network of collaborations.

9 edges account for 211 edges. The 57 artists with more than 10 edges account for 1,141 edges. Without additional data, one can only speculate as to the reasons of this effect: Some artists might be more 'social' and collaborate more often than others. Especially, famous artists – all of the major hubs are well-known artists in their country – could also be more attractive partners for collaboration. Some artists have been active for a longer period of time and, therefore, have been able to collaborate with more artists than others.

Filtering out the disconnected nodes, the average number of connections of one node to others (degree) in the network is 3.038. Nine of the ten nodes with the highest degree are crews; and only one Lebanese crew is among this list of most connected artists (**Table 4**).

The overall network is quite fragmented: it contains many components but also several sub-clusters that are only held together by one node. This gives many hubs a broker functionality. Another indicator for the existence of brokers at a small scale is that in 669 songs, 1,500 collaborations (2.24 collaborations per song) can be found. Hence, many songs unite more than just two artists. This speaks for the broker functionality of host artists in general. Collaborations at a song-level form small cliques, as all of

---

this collaboration has a weight equaling one. Some artists collaborate with other artists more often than once. The edge weight corresponds to the number of collaborations.

**Table 4:** List of most connected artists (by highest degree value).

<b>Artist</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Degree</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>City</b>
T.O.X	crew	218	Algeria	Oran
Bled'Art Family	crew	155	Algeria	Algiers
La Zone-K	crew	125	Algeria	Bordj Bou Arréridj
Fareeq el Atrash	crew	84	Lebanon	Beirut
Naiklan	crew	71	Algeria, France	Djelfa
Def-One	crew	58	Algeria	Oran
Lax	crew	56	Algeria	Oran
Raouf Adear	rapper	50	Algeria, United Kingdom	Algiers, London
Intik	crew	41	Algeria, France	Algiers, Paris
Freekenca	crew	39	Algeria	Boumerdès

the participating artists are connected to each other. The detection of hubs coincides with observations from field work: While some artists' names are not mentioned at all, others appear very often. These seem to be well-known and active artists like the rap crews Fareeq el Atrash or T.O.X who are able to initiate new collaborations.

As mentioned before, the two big clusters of mostly Algerian rappers and mostly Lebanese rappers are only connected by one edge. This edge is formed by the Lebanese rapper Rayess Bek and Rabah Donquishoot of the Algerian crew MBS. They made one track together in 2011 and also collaborated with artists of other nationalities. Meanwhile they have both migrated to Europe – Rayess Bek to Paris and Rabah Donquishoot to London. They continue to make music but their potential as brokers between the Lebanese and Algerian hip hop communities has not unfolded further; Rayess Bek experiments successfully with other styles of music whereas Rabah Donquishoot's collaborative activities came to a halt afterwards. No indication for ongoing broker activity between the two big clusters can be found.

### **Twitter Network**

The network of artistic collaboration is one possible way to look at interconnections between rappers. Another measurable way of interaction between artists is their communication in online social media. Many hip hop artists agree on the high importance of social media: in Oran, Fada Vex says that rap is very widespread in Algeria but that it is only visible in social media and not in the open:

Le rap est diffusé en Algérie. C'est une musique qui est très très écoutée.  
Il y a beaucoup de rappeurs. Mais ça se passe surtout sur les réseaux sociaux.  
Sur le terrain, on remarque pas ça beaucoup (Bourbia, 2016).<sup>11</sup>

In Beirut, Mad Prophet recounts having found a producer for one of his songs in a competition organized in a Facebook group (Bourjaili, 2016). Rayya El Zein (2016: 419) mentions in her thesis on Lebanese, Jordanian, and Palestinian hip hop that 'the vast majority of listener engagement with Arab(ic) hip hop and the MCs and producers who make it is not during live events but mediated through technology', and refers to SoundCloud, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter as 'primary sites for hosting and disseminating this material'. Therefore, it seems legitimate to take online social media as important communication channels in the hip hop community. Focusing on Twitter can only give us part of a bigger picture. Further research might concentrate on Facebook, which works as a community-building tool in both Algerian and Lebanese hip hop cultures, or YouTube and Soundcloud, the prime platforms through which music is disseminated.

### ***Twitter***

I focused on the micro-blogging service Twitter as it provides a useful application programming interface (API), which allows for scraping data on user interaction. The other sites have tighter API usage policies, which disproportionately complicate access to comparable data. Moreover, Twitter users generally show their profiles publicly (one can restrict the visibility of one's Twitter profile to confirmed followers only, but this feature seems to be used very rarely), which reduces research-ethical concerns with regard to the use of Twitter data. Twitter users can post 'tweets', which are up to 280 characters long (before 2017, tweets had a character limit of 140), and can include photos, an animated GIF or a short video. They can 'follow' each other through subscribing to other users' tweets, which are displayed in their newsfeeds. However, users who are followed by other users do not have to reciprocate the following, which makes the connections between them directed links.

---

<sup>11</sup> Translation (my own): 'Rap is broadcast in Algeria. It is a music that is very, very much listened to. There are a lot of rappers. But it happens mostly on social networks. In the field, you don't notice that much'.

Twitter can be accessed by web browser or mobile applications. Even if Twitter is called a social network, it is of course not an actual copy of the 'real-life' social network(s) its members live in. At best, it maps part of these 'real-life' networks. Not every person in a 'real-life' social network uses Twitter. Research in other regional contexts has shown that Twitter users are mostly younger, wealthier, and better educated than the rest of the 'on-line population', who are in turn younger, wealthier, and better educated than the 'off-line population' (Blank, 2016). In Lebanon, the hip hop community can be placed within a middle-class cosmopolitan context (El Zein, 2016). Therefore, one can assume that the presentation of Lebanese hip hop culture on Twitter is reasonably accurate. Comparing Twitter use in Lebanon and Algeria (**Table 5**), one notices that Twitter is used more actively in Lebanon (relative to the total population) but has probably reached its peak, whereas in Algeria, it has steadily augmented in the last couple of years.

Before starting to interpret Twitter data, it is necessary to emphasize a couple of points. Even Twitter users who follow many other users, or who have many followers, directly interact only with few contacts regularly (Huberman, Romero & Wu, 2008). This is because 'attention is the scarce resource in the age of the web' (Huberman, Romero & Wu, 2008: 2) and 'the cost of declaring a new followee [sic] is very low compared to the cost of maintaining friends (i.e. exchanging directed messages with other users)' (Huberman, Romero & Wu, 2008: 6). As a consequence, users with many followers do not necessarily interact with a lot of them (Cha et al., 2010: 13; Leonhardt, 2011). The number of followers is thus not a valid means to measure influence but

**Table 5:** Twitter use in Lebanon and Algeria (Salem, 2017: 46, 49).

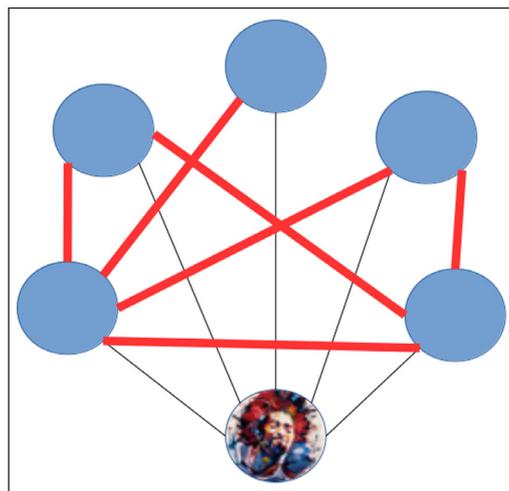
	<b>Lebanon</b>	<b>Algeria</b>
Twitter users in overall population	2.8%	2.0%
Average tweets per day of an 'active' user, i.e. someone who logs in at least once a month (March 2016)	3.0	2.8
Total change in the number of users between March 2014 and March 2016	-8,000 (-4%)	+773,500 (+2063%)
Total tweets in March 2016	15,714,161	70,813,468

it is still one possibility to measure popularity (Cha et al., 2010). Moreover, focusing on Twitter and leaving out other social media networks can only give us part of a bigger picture. Further research might concentrate on: (a) Facebook, which works as a community-building tool in both Algerian and Lebanese hip hop cultures, (b) YouTube and Soundcloud, the prime platforms through which music is disseminated.

### ***Collecting data with twecoll and visualizing with Gephi***

As the previous analysis of the network of collaboration identified Fareeq el Atrash as an important hub in the Lebanese rap scene, Edd Abbas, the crew member who has the highest number of followers (1,206) and follows the most Twitter users too (932), was taken as the base for data gathering. In Algeria, Fada Vex (174 followings) of rap crew T.O.X, the most prominent hub in the Algerian cluster, was taken as the starting point for data gathering.

I used twecoll, a command-line tool written in Python, to retrieve Twitter data. For a detailed explanation of how to use twecoll, see Hammer (2016). The data was gathered starting 28 September 2016 at 19:25. Data retrieval was completed on 1 October 2016 at 09:00. One set of data was collected for each one of the artists. The collected data represents the accounts that the respective artist follows (in **Figure 6**: blue nodes) and the interconnections between these accounts (in **Figure 6**: red edges).



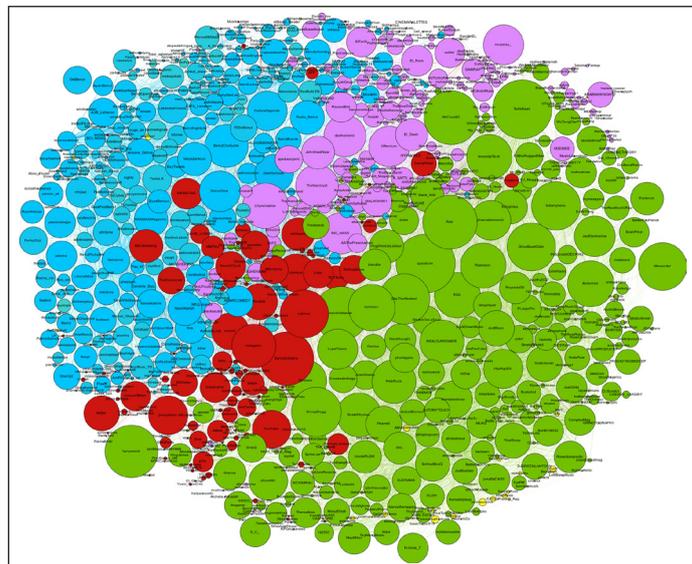
**Figure 6:** Edd Abbas' followings (black edges) and the connections between his followings (red edges).

Here, I have to emphasize the fact that the Twitter networks are personal to Edd Abbas and Fada Vex, i.e. one does not find any accounts in them which are not connected to these artists. These networks are thus only part of a bigger network. They show only the second degrees of followings (the followings of Edd Abbas's/Fada Vex's followings); the two rappers themselves are not displayed.

### ***Data visualization in Gephi***

The data gathered with twecoll were saved as a gml-file and imported into Gephi. Then, the resulting networks were laid out using again the Yifan Hu algorithm followed by Gephi's Label Adjust algorithm. The nodes' size corresponds to their degree. Nodes were manually colored and therefore had better readability: I opted for four (Fada Vex) to five (Edd Abbas) different sub-communities, based on a local-global differentiation, a differentiation in Twitter accounts of hip hop activists (graffiti artists, breakers, journalists, and so on), and accounts of other people and institutions.

The nodes that form the core hip hop network in Edd Abbas' network (**Figure 7**) can be divided into three sub-groups: US-American hip hop, French hip hop, and Arab(ic) hip hop. However, I could not find any Maghrebis in this sub-group. In addition to these hip hop-related networks, I identified a cluster, which I call 'Arab(ic)



**Figure 7:** Network of Edd Abbas' Twitter followings and their interconnections.

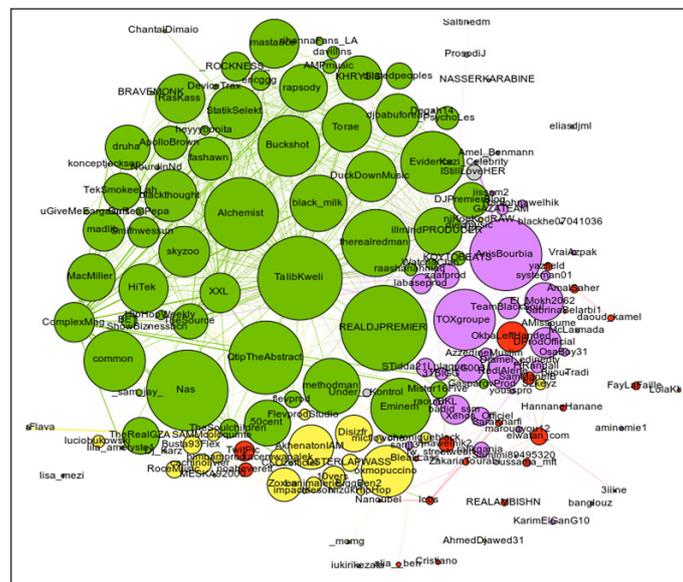
diverse', which includes people and institutions active in culture, media, economics, and more, in the MENA region. This cluster also lacks Maghrebis. The last cluster 'diverse' is similar to 'Arab(ic) diverse' but it includes all the people and institutions not based in the MENA region.



Fada Vex's network (**Figure 8**) was colored similarly. 'Algerian hip hop' replaced 'Arab(ic) hip hop' – there are no hip hop related MENA residents in the network besides Algerians – and the differentiation between nodes representing local and global 'diverse' elements was not made due to the small amount of corresponding nodes.



In contrast to the network of collaborations, these networks consist of only one giant component. This fact is caused by the data collection mechanism: only those Twitter accounts that are followed by Edd Abbas (or Fada Vex) are included and these accounts apparently are all connected to at least one other account, which is followed by the artist. What is more surprising is how dense the network is. With an average



**Figure 8:** Network of Fada Vex' Twitter followings and their interconnections.

degree of 41.46 (Fada Vex: 12.74), nodes are much more densely interconnected with each other than in the network of collaborations. No clear sub-communities can be detected at first glance.

### ***The Global Hip Hop Nation – the international world of rap***

Both Twitter networks include many international rappers and hip hop activists. The biggest sub-groups consist of US-American rappers and hip hop activists. Among the latter one finds various types of rappers, from pioneers like Chuck D to mainstream artists like Snoop Dogg and Kanye West, to many 'conscious rappers' like Talib Kweli, Questlove, Kendrick Lamar, and Erykah Badu who tackle more sociopolitical problems in their lyrics.

Rappers outside the Arab(ic) network and the US American cluster are rare in Edd Abbas' network. One could have also expected a strong French presence in his Twitter network due to the following reasons: a big part of Lebanese society, including Edd Abbas, are either francophone (40%) or partly francophone (15%) (Nadeau & Barlow, 2008: 311), and the French hip hop scene is the second biggest in the world (Eyre & Allers, 2013). Surprisingly, there are only a few French rappers in the network. They are not too strongly connected to the world of Lebanese rap since their degree values are quite small. Among these rappers, one finds only some well-known names like Disiz, Oxmo Puccino, Youssoupha, Akhenaton and Rim'K (who has Algerian roots). A possible explanation for the scarcity of French rappers is that in Lebanon 'English is taking over from French'; another is that French is primarily associated with the Maronite educated elite (Miller & Caubet, 2010: 246). This could lead rappers who tackle socio-political topics to prefer other languages.

Fada Vex's network also includes not many French rappers. Due to the cultural ties between France and Algeria and the influence French media had in the emergence of hip hop in Algeria, one would have anticipated a stronger connection. Nevertheless, the connection between the French hip hop community and the Algerian one is certainly stronger than that between the French and the Lebanese hip hop communities. The rappers with the highest amount of interconnections in this network are also those who were part of Edd Abbas' network: Disiz, Oxmo Puccino, and Akhenaton.

### ***An Arab(ic) Hip Hop Nation?***

While all the Arab(ic) rappers in Fada Vex' network are Algerian, the group of Arab(ic) rappers and hip hop activists in Edd Abbas' network is more diverse. The table below (**Table 6**) includes all the nodes in his network assigned to 'Arab(ic) hip hop' having an indegree<sup>12</sup> of at least 100, i.e. at least 100 followers within this sample of Twitter accounts.

**Table 6** proves how interwoven the hip hop scenes in different Arab(ic) countries are. One notices Lebanese hip hop artists (DJ Lethal Skillz, Eslam Jawaad, Zeinedin), but also Syrian (Bu Kolthoum, Omar Offendum, Chyno), Egyptian (Deeb, Arabian Knightz, MC Amin), Palestinian (DAM, Asifeh, DJ Sotusura), Jordanian (El Far3i), Iraqi (The Narcicyst), and Saudi Arabian (Big Hass) artists and hip hop activists. This multinational mix of artists shows that putting these artists inside country borders is not the best way to perceive the Arab(ic) hip hop scene. There seems to be one rap world encompassing rappers from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, the Palestinian territories, Iraq, and the Gulf States. Interestingly, no Maghrebi rappers are part of this network.

### **Conclusions and Possibilities for Future Research**

All in all, quantitative (meta)data analysis, data visualization techniques, and network analysis proved to be valuable approaches to understand cultural worlds. In this particular case of Lebanese and Algerian hip hop communities, the following results can be summarized.

The size of the Lebanese hip hop community, measured by the number of artists involved in it, is smaller than the Algerian one. Geographic hubs in the Lebanese and Algerian hip hop communities are Beirut and the bigger Algerian cities but also Paris, Cairo, and Ramallah. The analysis of networks of collaboration and Twitter networks within Lebanese and Algerian hip hop communities indicates the existence of at least two sub-communities within the Arab(ic) hip hop community.

The Lebanese hip hop community is embedded in a network of collaborations, which also includes diaspora artists and artists based in other Arab(ic) countries,

---

<sup>12</sup> Edges can be undirected or directed. If edges are directed, the indegree is the number of incoming edges connecting a node to others.

**Table 6:** Arab(ic) rappers with an indegree of at least 100; i.e. at least 100 Twitter followers. Values were rounded to the closest round number.

@Twitter	Friends	Followers	Statuses	In-degree	Out-degree	Degree	Weighted indegree	Weighted outdegree	Weighted degree	Betweenness centrality
Chyno Vation	281	591	2414	158	144	302	182	586	222	7606
The Narcicyst	1653	12670	55044	147	101	248	2918	840	963	3828
Djeithal skillz	558	1577	8624	145	177	322	450	964	3315	2157
BIG_HASS	4662	11386	46249	143	288	431	2552	2384	407	1439
Offendum	999	12374	17113	141	88	229	1056	1110	3175	1453
El_Deeb	220	1803	6010	111	66	177	281	308	9	0
El_Rass	2056	3739	2684	107	99	206	173	1143	1049	1222
MALIKAH 961	168	1792	1159	104	74	178	47	410	3946	0
RayessBek	248	722	158	104	68	172	6	216	5146	5796
asifeh	676	938	637	103	116	219	24	709	1102	2487
ElFar3i	75	3894	939	103	31	134	51	82	33	0

except the Maghreb. On Twitter, the community has links to US-American artists and artists from Arab(ic) countries, whereas French artists seem not to play a very big role. In contrast, the Algerian hip hop community is linked by collaborations to the French hip hop community. On Twitter, the community is connected through following some of the same artists within both the US and French hip hop communities. There are differences between artistic collaborations and Twitter relationships between hip hop communities in Algeria and in Eastern Arab(ic) countries. Surprisingly, connections to artists in other countries in the Maghreb were very rare. Their hip hop communities merit a closer look.

This article used a quantitative approach based on many binary either/or decisions – for example, each artist was placed in exactly one country. Of course, this oversimplifies reality: many artists identify as having more than one nationality and many are seen by fans as part of one or another ‘national hip hop culture’. Nevertheless, I would argue that community members’ nationality is a category that helps with analyzing and understanding of Arab(ic) hip hop culture(s), even if it has to be deconstructed in the end.

## Appendix

**Table 7:** List of Algerian rap albums in order of release date.<sup>13</sup>

Artist	Album Title	Year of album release
Intik	GRI	1995
Double Kanon	Kamikaz	1997
Hamma	L'Algérie, le conte de Féés	1997
MBS	Ouled El Bahaja	1997
Double Kanon	Kanibal	1998
Hood Killer	Fi men jet?	1998
Hood Killer	Kartia	1998
MBS	El Aouama	1998
TOX	Mechi Bessah	1998

(Contd.)

<sup>13</sup> For some albums, no exact publishing date could be determined, as dates either varied or were absent in my sources.

<b>Artist</b>	<b>Album Title</b>	<b>Year of album release</b>
Constat Rap	Adra	1999
Double Kanon	Kondamné	1999
Game Over	Chômeur	1999
Hamma	Rana N'moutou Bechouia	1999
K2C	K d'Inconscience	1999
Lotfi Double Kanon	La Kamora Vol. 1	1999
MBS	Le Micro Brise le Silence – المكرو بيريزي السكات	1999
Rafik Ganja	Mafioso	1999
V.A.	Algerap – الجزائر rap	1999
AMH	ilmiilmek	2000
Armada	Gatta3 E'trig	2000
Intik	Intik	2000
Lotfi Double Kanon	La Kamora Vol. 2	2000
Rafik Ganja	Trafik	2000
TOX	Ghir Hak	2000
V.A.	Wahrap	2000
Waheb Double Kanon	Solitaire	2000
Intik	La Victoire	2001
Lotfi Double Kanon	Breakdance	2001
Lotfi Double Kanon	Fonklore	2001
MBS	Wellew	2001
Cobra Noir	On a commencé le combat	2002
L'N. Fect	Tèj El Mahtèj	2002
Lotfi Double Kanon	Bad Boy	2002
Mehdi Rapace	Suicide	2002
Rabah Donquishoot	Galouli	2002
Rafik Ganja	Tlata	2002
Waheb Double Kanon	Kamikaz 2	2002
V.A.	Annaba Hip Hop Conexion	2002
Azzou	23 bikoura	2003
Lotfi Double Kanon	Dangereux	2003

(Contd.)

<b>Artist</b>	<b>Album Title</b>	<b>Year of album release</b>
Lotfi Double Kanon	Virus	2003
Hamma	Guerre Civile – الحرب الأهلية	2003
Soldatesk	Champ de Bataille	2003
Fada Vex	El Facteur	2004
Game Over	Face to Face	2004
Lotfi Double Kanon	Kobay	2004
Nadjib & La Familia	Lirique de Ouf	2004
Naili	Le Peuple Orphelin	2004
Rabah Donquishoot	Rabah Président	2004
Rafik Ganja	Win Rani	2004
Farid Kalamity	Rançon	2005
Karim El Gang	Fach'hado	2005
Intik	De L'Autre Côté	2005
Lotfi Double Kanon	Koupable	2005
Lotfi Double Kanon	Remix 2005	2005
Mamooth	Côté Noor... Côté Noir	2005
MBS – المسكات المكرو بيريزي	Maquis Bla Sleh	2005
MLBR	Revanche	2005
Systeman	Rebelle	2005
TOX	La Mix-Tape	2005
Zaaf Recordz	Sous Pression	2005
FFA	Chkouné Kan Igoul	2006
Karim El Gang & Smain	Mayna	2006
Lotfi Double Kanon	Kamizole	2006
Raouf ADear	Alger!A Street	2006
Youss	نروح	2006
Fugi	2round	2007
Game Over	Game Show	2007
Karim El Gang & Smain	Avertissement	2007
Mafia Underground	Mafia Underground	2007

(Contd.)

<b>Artist</b>	<b>Album Title</b>	<b>Year of album release</b>
Oxymore	Reportage	2007
Raouf Adear	Moussika Zenka 1	2007
TOX & Def-One	Rap Performance	2007
35 Crew	Première brique	2008
Azzou	Carnaval Fi Dachra	2008
DJ Mourad	Hip Hop Guérilla Vol 2, Pt 2	2008
FaouziAttentat	La réplique	2008
Freekence	Premier chapitre	2008
Ice-M	Cosa Nostra	2008
JMB	Bladi	2008
Lotfi Double Kanon	Kauchemar	2008
Rabah Donquishoot	Dernier Cri – آخر عيطة	2008
Raouf Adear	Moussika Zenka 2	2008
Reality	Reality Fel Maydane	2008
Systeman	This Is a War – 7arb l'ekléme – حرب لكلام	2008
Sofiane Hama	Rahoum Jaou	2008
TOX & Nailkhan	al Mou3ahada (Le Pacte)	2008
Youss	Ezzawalia	2008
Zaaf Recordz	Street Game	2008
Chakir Eminem	Chakir	2009
Darkman	Old School Party	2009
Fada Vex	El Azma Mixtape	2009
FaouziAttentat	La Mixtape	2009
Karim El Gang	Guantanamo	2009
Lotfi Double Kanon	Klemi	2009
M'trig L'trig – لطريق مطريق	l'seen el3ikyan – لسان العقيان	2009
Raouf Adear	Mout Wagef	2009
Fada Vex	Ramz El Mektoub	2010
La Zone-K	Djrou7 Bla Dmou3 – جروح بلا دموع	2010

(Contd.)

Artist	Album Title	Year of album release
Lax	DzTape	2010
Lotfi Double Kanon	Remix 2010	2010
South Crew	Yed El Ma7na	2010
Azpak	Pavillon35	2011
Banis	الشريط الموسيقي	2011
Dirty 16	The Dirty Mentality	2011
FaouziAttentat	La réplique vol. 2	2011
Freekence	En Noir et Blanc	2011
Fugi	Best Of	2011
Naili	Déjà 10 ans	2011
Naili	L'Empire des Rêves – الإمبراطورية للأحلام	2011
Raouf BKL	Mazal	2011
Systeman	Al Madrassa Al Kadima	2011
Xenos	madrassat el 7ayat	2011
Africa Jungle	شد روحك – Ched Rohek	2012
Banis	Banis au pays des merveilles	2012
Fada Vex	الهدرة قليلة	2012
Frekence 13	Etat d'urgence	2012
Icosium	Chapitre 1	2012
Lax	ستريت رافال – Street Rafale	2012
MC Mo	Risselti	2012
Rafale-A	El Basma	2012
Taaryk TK	The Education & the Respect – التربية و القدر	2012
TBM	Emchi We Rassek Fesma	2012
Azzou	Samurai	2013
Bad-ID	El Mou9adima	2013
Cloz	Hémorragie	2013
El Hass	Si Punchline	2013
Face to Face	الجريمة	2013

(Contd.)

Artist	Album Title	Year of album release
Fada Vex	The Black Session	2013
Flenn	Darba S'hiha	2013
Kahlouche – الكحلوش	Raplaisir	2013
L'N. Fect	Prix Nobel Ta3 Zbel	2013
Lotfi Double Kanon	Katastrophe Chapitre 1	2013
MC Majhoul	Couloir Noir	2013
Spook	El Kelma Lekma – الكلمة لكمة	2013
TOX	Zaxologie	2013
الحراز	صوت الواقع	2013
فلان	Alcat'Rap	2013
Bad-ID	2031 Freestyle Serie	2014
Bled'Art Family	Air Algérie	2015
Cloz	Zedna fel Jazayer	2015
Cloz	Zon9a Arte	2015
El Hass	Bounya	2014
Icosium	Bled-Art	2014
Ill-Yes	Yes Lookan	2015
Lax	Feat F Trigue – فيت فالطريق	2014
Rafik Ganja	Rasta Compil 2013-2014	2014
Raouf Adear	Moussika Zenka 4, Part 1	2015
Red l'Alerte	Etat d'alerte	2015
Tfāf (Armory de la Rime)	10 Tonnes	2015
رفيك	خمسة	2015
Blidian Thugz	Neptune Mixtape	2016
Fada Vex	حبر على ورق Mixtape	2016
Ill-Yes	Yes Stage Lakher	2016
Clan City	La Proka	?
Clan City	L'homme d'affaire	?
C4rys	Yal mesoul	?
Diabes Rouges	Anormal	?
DJ Pyro & R'Sell	Zenka Hardcore	?

(Contd.)

Artist	Album Title	Year of album release
DJ Sniper	Hake Alsawt	?
Lil-K	9mm	?
S.A.G.	Rassassa Lakhra	?
S.O.S. – س.و.س	Nul n'est personne	?
TNT 23	Roma	?
V.A.	Rap Brayji	?

**Table 8:** List of Lebanese rap albums in order of release date.<sup>14</sup>

Artist	Album title	Year of album release
Clotaire K	Lebanese	2002
Clotaire K	Beirut	2003
Rayess Bek	عم بحكي بالسكوت	2003
Rayess Bek	Nuit Gravement à la Santé	2005
Aksser	Aksser	2006
DJ Lethal Skillz	New World Disorder	2008
كتيبه 5	أهلا فيك بالمخيمات	2008
Beirutus	Beirutus	2009
Eslam Jawaad	The Mammoth Tusk	2009
Fareeq el Atrash	Pre-Album	2009
Omarz	Only Built 4 Arab Linx	2009
Vico	Judgement Day	2009
Bloodz Records	Bideyeh Jdide	2010
Rayess Bek	Khartech Aa Zamann – L'Homme de Gauche	2010
ظفار	صحاب الأرض	2010
Big A	Lebanon Don	2011
Bill Amaliyeh	Iza Ma Ejit Jarbou3a	2011
Rayess Bek	Hip Hop Republic	2011
Vico	Creative Control 1.0	2011

(Contd.)

<sup>14</sup> For some albums, no exact publishing date could be determined, as dates either varied or were absent in my sources.

Artist	Album title	Year of album release
Yaseen	Stateless	2011
Zeinedin	Min Beirut	2011
DJ Lethal Skillz	Karmageddon	2012
Edd Abbas	Al Mutarakam	2012
Hamorabi	Ashurya	2012
Osloob	Fasl	2012
V.A.	Khat Thaleth	2012
Vico	Relentless	2012
لراس و مونما	كشف المحجوب	2012
كتيبه 5 تقدم أسلوب	ف / صل	2012
Edd Abbas	Edd Abbas	2013
Edd Abbas & Lipos & Elepheel	Tripnol	2013
N1yah	my name is n1yah	2013
Hamorabi	Malku? 12	2014
Jnood Beirut	Ta7iyeh	2014
Vico	The Ignorance	2014
الراس	أدم, دروين و البطريق	2014
بيل أملية و فلان الفلاني	Tape مسك	2014
Chyno	Making Music to Feel at Home	2015
E-Hash	Manteq A'waj	2015
Hamorabi	Mahdishtar	2015
من وراء العدسة	طائرة الروح	2015
DJ Goadman	Funky Fikon	2016
El Rass & Al Nather	Idarat Al Tawahosh	2016
Hamorabi & Saligo	777	2016
Jnood Beirut	Compilation	2016
Kalash	Haida Ana	2016
Abs	Bideyeh Jdide	?
Aks'ser	Khartouch	?
Ashekman	Ashekmanphobia	?

(Contd.)

Artist	Album title	Year of album release
Clotaire K	Lebanese Shortcut	?
I-Voice	Greetings	?
كتيبة 5	الطريق واحد مرسوم	?
كتيبة 5 تقدم أسلوب	على الحفة	?

## Acknowledgements

The research for this article was financially supported by the Hans Böckler Foundation and the Orient-Institut Beirut. In developing the ideas presented here, I have received helpful input from my colleagues in Bamberg, Marburg, and Beirut, and from RapGeniusArabia. I especially thank the artists in Beirut and Oran who took their time to talk to me and from whom I have learned a lot. Last but not least, thanks Lena, Janosch, Johanna, and Ines for your valuable comments.

## Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

## References

- Abbas, E** 2016 Interview with Edd Abbas. Interviewed by Felix Wiedemann. Radio Beirut, Beirut, 29 September.
- Ajaj, S** 2016 Interview with Samer Ajaj aka Samzz. Interviewed by Felix Wiedemann. Radio Beirut, Beirut, 11 November.
- Alim, H S** 2004 Hip Hop Nation Language. In: Finegan, E and Rickford, J R (Eds.), *Language in the USA*, pp. 387–409. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511809880.023>
- Barabási, A-L** 2003 *Linked*. New York, NY: Plume.
- Barabási, A-L and Albert, R** 1999 Emergence of Scaling in Random Networks. *Science*, 286(5439): 509–12. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.286.5439.509>
- Becker, H S** 1974 Art As Collective Action. *American Sociological Review*, 39(6): 767–776. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/2094151>
- Becker, H S** 2008 *Art Worlds*. Updated and Expanded 25th Anniversary Edition. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Bensaddek, B** (Dir.) 2011 *Rap Arabe*. Orbi xxi.
- Blank, G** 2016 The Digital Divide Among Twitter Users and Its Implications for Social Research. *Social Science Computer Review*, 35(6): 679–697. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0894439316671698>
- Boumedini, B** 2007 Conditions politiques et sociales de l'apparition du rap en Algérie. Presented at the conference *Rap: Musique de Jeunes*, April 17. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8sAjz94p1xE> (Last accessed 4 November 2018).
- Boumedini, B** and **Hadria, D N** 2009 Catégories d'emprunt Dans La Chanson Rap En Algérie. L'exemple Des Groupes: T.O.X, M.B.S et Double Canon. *Synergies. Algérie*, 8: 139–147.
- Boumedini, B** and **Hadria, D N** 2011 Le mélange des langues dans les titres des chansons rap en Algérie. L'exemple des groupes: T.O.X, M.B.S et Double Canon. *Qirā'āt*, 1(2): 47–64.
- Bourbia, M** 2016 Interview with Malik Bourbia aka Fada Vex. Interviewed by Felix Wiedemann. CRASC, Oran, 11 October.
- Bourjaili, J** 2016 Interview with Jeff Bourjaili aka Mad Prophet. Interviewed by Felix Wiedemann. Radio Beirut, Beirut, 25 October.
- Burkhalter, T** 2013 *Local Music Scenes and Globalization: Transnational Platforms in Beirut*. London: Routledge.
- Burt, R S** 2004 Structural Holes and Good Ideas. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 110(2): 349–399. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1086/421787>
- Butler, K** 2009 Rappers Who Speak Their Minds in the Name of Peace. *The Independent*, 18 December.
- Cha, M, Haddadi, H, Benevenuto, F** and **Gummedi, K P** 2010 Measuring User Influence in Twitter: The Million Follower Fallacy. In: *Proceedings of the Fourth International AAAI Conference on Weblogs and Social Media*. Available at: <https://www.aaai.org/ocs/index.php/ICWSM/ICWSM10/paper/viewPaper/1538> (Last accessed 25 January 2019).
- Costello, M** and **Wallace, D F** 1990 *Signifying Rappers: Rap and Race in the Urban Present*. New York: Ecco Press.

- Crossley, N** 2015 Relational Sociology and Culture: A Preliminary Framework. *International Review of Sociology*, 25(1): 65–85. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03906701.2014.997965>
- Diani, M** 2008 Networks and Participation. In: Snow, D A, Soule, S A and Kriesi, H (Eds.), *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, pp. 339–359. Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons.
- El Zein, R S** 2016 *Performing El Rap El 'Arabi 2005–2015: Feeling Politics amid Neoliberal Incursions in Ramallah, Amman, and Beirut*. Unpublished PhD thesis. New York: City University of New York.
- Eyre, B** and **Allers, J** 2013 Interview: Jackson Allers on Arab Hip Hop. *Afropop*. November. Available at: <http://www.afropop.org/wp/15250/jackson-allers-on-arab-hip-hop/> (Last accessed 27 March 2014).
- Fada Vex** 2004 Le rap algérien est dans la place!! *Mononoke. zine punk hardcore*, 2(6).
- Fielder, A** 1999 Articulating the Hip-Hop Nation. Rap as Transnational Urban Subculture in the United States and France. *DisClosure: A Journal of Social Theory*, 8: 5–31. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.13023/disclosure.08.02>
- Granovetter, M S** 1973 The Strength of Weak Ties. *American Journal of Sociology*, 78(6): 1360–1380. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1086/225469>
- Hammer, L** 2016 How to Collect Any Twitter Follower Network with the Python Script Twecoll. *Medium*, 7 September 2016. Available at: <https://medium.com/@Luca/how-to-collect-any-twitter-follower-network-with-the-python-script-twecoll-c482eeb61f77#.t2mpsq85k> (Last accessed 4 November 2018).
- Hammou, K** 2009 Des raps en français au 'rap français'. *Histoire & mesure*, 24(1): 73–108. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/histoiremesure.3889>
- Hammou, K** 2010 1986, terrain vague de La Chapelle. *Sur un son rap*. 14 July. Available at: <http://surunsonrap.hypotheses.org/1436> (Last accessed 4 November 2018).
- Hammou, K** 2014 Between Social Worlds and Local Scenes. Patterns of Collaboration in Francophone Rap Music. In: Crossley, N, McAndrew, S and Widdop, P (Eds.), *Social Networks and Music Worlds*, pp. 104–121. New York: Taylor & Francis.

- Higgins, C** 2008 From Da Bomb to Bomba: Global Hip Hop Nation Language in Tanzania. In: Alim, H S, Ibrahim, A, Pennycook, A (Eds.), *Global Linguistic Flows: Hip Hop Cultures, Youth Identities, and the Politics of Language*, pp. 95–112. New York: Routledge.
- Hu, Y** 2006 Efficient and High Quality Force-Directed Graph Drawing. *The Mathematica Journal*, 10(1): 37–71.
- Huberman, B A, Romero, D M and Wu, F** 2008 Social Networks That Matter: Twitter under the Microscope. *ArXiv:0812.1045*. Available at: <http://arxiv.org/abs/0812.1045> (Last accessed 25 January 2019).
- Knoke, D and Kuklinski, J H** 1982 *Network Analysis*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.
- Kouras, S** 2008 *Le français dans la chanson rap algérienne: une analyse socio-pragmatique*. Constantine: Université Mentouri.
- Leonhardt, D** 2011 A Better Way to Measure Twitter Influence. *The 6th Floor Blog*. 24 March. Available at: <https://6thfloor.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/03/24/a-better-way-to-measure-twitter-influence> (Last accessed 4 November 2018).
- McLaren, P** 1999 Gangsta Pedagogy and Ghetto-centricity: The Hip-Hop Nation as Counterpublic Sphere. *Counterpoints*, 96: 19–64.
- Miliani, H** 2002 Culture planétaire et identités frontalières À propos du rap en Algérie. *Cahiers d'études africaines*, 168(4): 763–776. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/etudesafriaines.165>
- Miller, C and Caubet, D** 2010 Arabic Sociolinguistics in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). In: Ball, M J (Ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Sociolinguistics around the World*, pp. 238–256. London: Routledge.
- Moreno Almeida, C** 2015 The Politics of Taqlidi Rap: Reimagining Moroccanness in the Era of Global Flows. *The Journal of North African Studies*, 21(1): 116–131. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629387.2015.1084101>
- Mouffokes, M B and Boumedini, B** 2017 Les thématiques de jeunes à travers la production artistique: cas du rap algérien. *Revista Argelina*, 5: 41–53. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14198/RevArgel2017.5.03>
- Nadeau, J-B and Barlow, J** 2008 *The Story of French*. New York: Macmillan.

- Nashara, O** 2015 'Une Sorte de Fierté Est Revenue'. Entretien Avec Le Rappeur El Rass. *BBoyKonsian*. Available at: <http://www.bboykonsian.com/attachment/593771/> (Last accessed 4 November 2018).
- Padgett, J F** and **Ansell, C K** 1993 Robust Action and the Rise of the Medici, 1400–1434. *American Journal of Sociology*, 98(6): 1259–1319. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1086/230190>
- Puig, N** 2012 La cause du rap: Engagements d'un musicien palestinien au Liban. *Cahiers d'ethnomusicologie. Anciennement Cahiers de musiques traditionnelles*, 25: 93–109.
- Puig, N** 2017 Composer depuis la marge. Sampling et références sonores dans l'œuvre d'un palestinien au Liban. *Volume!*, 14:1(2): 37–49.
- Rap Genius Arabia – Dz Rap Albums** 2016a *Genius*. Available at: <http://genius.com/Rap-genius-arabia-dz-rap-albums-lyrics> (Last accessed 4 November 2018).
- Rap Genius Arabia – Lebanese Rap Albums** 2016b *Genius*. Available at: <http://genius.com/Rap-genius-arabia-lebanese-rap-albums-lyrics> (Last accessed 4 November 2018).
- Robertson, R** 1995 Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity. In: Featherstone, M, Lash, S, Robertson, R (Eds.), *Global Modernities*, 25–44. London: SAGE. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446250563.n2>
- Salem, F** 2017 *Arab Social Media Report 2017. Social Media and the Internet of Things: Towards Data-Driven Policymaking in the Arab World (Vol. 7)*. MBR School of Government. Available at: <https://www.mbrsg.ae/getattachment/1383b88a-6eb9-476a-bae4-61903688099b/Arab-Social-Media-Report-2017> (Last accessed 12 January 2019).
- Shorbaji, N** 2016 Conversation with Nasser Shorbaji aka Chyno at Radio Beirut.
- Smith, R D** 2006 The Network of Collaboration among Rappers and Its Community Structure. *Journal of Statistical Mechanics: Theory and Experiment*, 2006(2). Available at: <http://iopscience.iop.org/1742-5468/2006/02/P02006> (Last accessed 25 January 2019).

- Smitherman, G** 1997 'The Chain Remain the Same' Communicative Practices in the Hip Hop Nation. *Journal of Black Studies*, 28(1): 3–25. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/002193479702800101>
- Swedenburg, T** 2015 Beur/Maghribi Musical Interventions in France: Rai and Rap. *The Journal of North African Studies*, 20(1): 109–126. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13629387.2014.983737>
- The Letter B** 2012 DJ Lethal Skillz Releases Sophomore Album Karmageddon. 13 March. Available at: <http://www.mideastdynasty.com/?p=7285> (Last accessed 4 November 2018).
- Virolle, M** 2007 De quelques usages du français dans le rap algérien. L'exemple de 'Double Canon'. *Le Français en Afrique*, 22: 55–69.
- Wiedemann, F** 2019 Remixing Battle Rap and Arabic Poetic Battling. *Occhiali – Rivista sul Mediterraneo islamico*, 4: 13–28. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.20378/irbo-54191>

**How to cite this article:** Wiedemann, F 2019 The Local and the Global in Networks of Lebanese and Algerian Rappers. *Open Library of Humanities*, 5(1): 26, pp. 1–40. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.16995/olh.419>

**Published:** 05 April 2019

**Copyright:** © 2019 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC-BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.



*Open Library of Humanities* is a peer-reviewed open access journal published by Open Library of Humanities.

**OPEN ACCESS** The Open Access icon, which is a stylized symbol representing an open padlock.