

Local Music and Identity:  
A study of the signifiers of South African identity embedded in the  
South African Music Awards' 'Record of the Year' listings from  
2013 to 2018



**UNIVERSITY OF** <sup>TM</sup>  
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Master of Arts (MA) in Music

## Declaration

I declare that *Local Music and Identity: a study of the signifiers of South African identity embedded in the South African Music Awards' 'Record of the Year' listings from 2013 to 2018* is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 04-12-2020

## Acknowledgments

To my family - I will forever be grateful for your love, understanding and trust in my decision to pursue a career in music. Thank you for providing me with constant support and motivation throughout this process. To my mom, thank you for investing in my passion from such a young age and constantly helping to facilitate my dreams. I am who I am because of you and your prayers. To my guardian angel, my dad - I know you're looking down on me, protecting and guiding me every step of the way. I can only hope that I will continue to make you proud.

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## **Abstract**

This research paper explores the concept of a local identity through the gaze of a post-apartheid South Africa. In discussing 'local', this study explores pertinent discourse surrounding what could be deemed as the South African experience. This study makes use of a Grounded Theory methodological approach. This particular methodology was used in order to ensure that all findings within the context of this study are strongly based on observations, i.e. the data, and not pre-established hypotheses. This process consequently necessitates the contextualisation of quantitative information because it is by means of this that we allow numerical data to reflect lived experience. In doing so, it allows for a re-contextualisation of the 'local' ideology in the context of the South African music industry. This is achieved through an analysis of the South African Music Awards' Record of the Year category as an historical cache of the music of the time period in question. Through an understanding of the heterogeneous and intersectional nature of local identity(s), this study makes reference to a number of broad identities which have been pinpointed as being useful signifiers for our understanding of the post-apartheid South African society. This dissertation is rooted in the belief that local identity is grounded in a capitalistic society which is inherently built on principles of historic imposition, racialism and patriarchy. It is argued that the historic imposition present in contemporary South Africa contributes substantially to what it means to be a South African, and is inherent in the way we think or see ourselves. This represents what could be seen as a revision Stuart Hall's 'circuit of culture' (1997).

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“and when we speak we are afraid  
our words will not be heard  
nor welcomed  
but when we are silent  
we are still afraid  
So it is better to speak  
remembering  
we were never meant to survive”

— **Audre Lorde**

# Chapter One: Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The South African music and broadcasting industry has been the focus of a number of significant debates since early 2016. One such discussion was seemingly spearheaded by South African jazz musician, Don Laka, who brought to the fore issues around airplay and the restricted quantity of 'local' music that makes it into the mainstream. The core of this discussion seemed to be the prioritisation of international music and the consequent impact of this preference on the economic standing of the South African music industry.

Part of the core of this discussion lay within its emphasis on the substantial amount of royalties being paid to international artists, implying that the more favourable option would be to retain the money from royalties from radio airplay in South Africa (Dj Okapi, 2016). Alongside this economic viewpoint, is a social aspect relating to loss of a sense of cultural identity(s) on mainstream radio due to the overwhelming dominance of global identities.

These discussions spearheaded by Laka seemingly led to consultations with the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), which later announced that they would be implementing a new quota system that would prioritise local content (Government Communication and Information System, 2016). The quota would ensure that, from the 12 May 2016, 90% of the music that was played across eighteen SABC affiliated radio stations would be 'local' music. This, according to the SABC, would be followed by a quota that would increase the amount of local content, including 'local' music fillers between television programmes, on SABC television channels, from the 1 July 2016. The quota was emphasised as being unbiased with regards to the languages used in the local content and encouraged the "cross-pollination of music" in order to ultimately "reflect the South African story" (Van Zyl, 2016). Because of the economic motives behind the implementation of the quota, it would be justifiable to say that the quota was anticipated to bring about a positive boost to the South African music industry as a whole. Unfortunately, the promises and expectations that were made by the SABC were,

however, tainted by controversy which led to a significant decline in listenership at three SABC affiliated radio stations, Metro FM, 5FM and Goodhope FM (Ndeze, 2017). The substantial financial losses made by the SABC after the implementation of the policy had ultimately led to the demise of the now infamous 90% local music quota system.

From the onset, the 90% local content quota appeared to brandish a certain hegemonic control by the then SABC Chief Operating Officer (COO), Hlaudi Motsoeneng which in turn, steered discussion away from enhancing the South African music landscape, towards discussions around corruption within the corporation. This research project, consequently, revisits the idea of the enrichment of the 'local' music industry by interrogating, at its most fundamental level, what is happening in the South African music industry through an analysis of the songs with the highest airplay on local commercial radio stations.

When it comes to the 2016 local content quota, there is a lot that can be unpacked – both negative and positive. While I do not in any way condone the autocratic reign of former SABC COO, Hlaudi Motsoeneng, I do believe that there were positive aspects to the reasoning behind the 90% local content quota which were not implemented in a coherent manner that made both business sense, for the SABC and its radio stations, or socio-economic sense for artists. In addition, the quota unfortunately did not seem to take into account any considerations of the tastes, needs or preferences of the audience, which, among other things, seemingly contributed to the termination of the quota. Richardson (2006) explains that a local content quota “affects supply only” and that the implementation of such legislature cannot “ensure that increased local programming is actually consumed” (2006:605). Approximately four years later, the idea of a quota that would prioritise more local content, was again brought to the fore by the current Minister of Arts and Culture, Nathi Mthethwa in a press briefing discussing artist relief during the Covid-19 pandemic:

We are pleading for local content to dominate on radio and television. We will be engaging the SABC because it doesn't help to have Needletime Rights royalties overseas but not here at home in South African (Head, 2020).

For me, this is an important resurgence of discussions around the necessity of uplifting and providing support for artists by giving them a better chance of making a substantial living off their performance art. This leads me to ask: how do we prioritise more local content; how do we encourage the “cross-pollination of music” to “reflect the South African story” (Van Zyl, 2016); and more importantly, what is the South African story?

## **1.2 How I came to this topic?**

The intentional emphasis on the actuality of a distinct 'local' music in contemporary South Africa sparked my interest in another aspect of the quota, which led to my asking: what is 'local' music, or rather, what is it anticipated to be? During the period in which the 90% local content quota was implemented, a Durban-based radio station, Lotus FM, where the content specifically caters for the South African Indian community, suffered a loss of 130,000 listeners (one third of their listeners) in four months due to their audience listening to 'local' music instead of their usual playlist of music, which is geographically rooted in India (Ferreira, 2016). This isolation of a minority group in South Africa is a consequence of the imposed limitation of what is perceived to constitute 'local' which leads me to ask the following questions: why is the preferred music of a South African racial group not considered to be 'local'? Does its geographical point of departure determine the legitimacy of 'local' music? Does music have to be made in South Africa, by South Africans, for it to be considered 'local'? My assumption here is that there is no distinct 'local' music and no singular, overarching South African identity as there is no single South African sound that gives expression to a single South African identity. This could be attributed to the fact that identity discourse is so closely linked to how people experience themselves, resulting in multiple possibilities due to the diversity present in South African society

### **1.3 Significance of this Study**

I believe that a study of this nature is a necessary contribution to the limited academic works dedicated to Popular Music Studies within the South African context. As noted by Durbach (2015), much of the research within the African music (in this case, South African music) domain, places emphasis on traditional music forms, neglecting more contemporary studies, such as those centred on popular music (Tenaille, 2002:246 in Durbach, 2015:7). This field of study, although not entirely new to South Africa, is still underrepresented in the broader catalogue of music academia in the country. A necessary understanding of, and participation in, the subsequent culture that is aligned with local popular music is something that I acknowledge and am hoping to use as a further contribution to my research. I do believe that one cannot fully grasp or comprehend a music and its culture without being submerged in it, thus, making my experience and contributions as a young musician and music fanatic something that I would deem invaluable.

The interdisciplinary nature of this research is something that is valuable within the broader humanities discipline. This is due to the fact that this research paper's critical analysis of Popular Music Studies inherently contextualises the subject within several interconnected fields within humanities. This includes fields such as identity politics in South Africa; post-apartheid discourse as well as the dissemination of public service broadcasting. This interdisciplinary contextualisation inherently provides a critical understanding of each of these fields and, perhaps more importantly, a critical view of their relationship with each other, thus representing a critical addition to each field.

### **1.4 Chapter Outline**

This research paper begins with an introductory section in Chapter One, which focuses on the foundations of my research topic and what motivated me to choose this particular topic. This chapter introduces the SABC as a point of departure for my research owing to the implementation of the 90% local content quota and the subsequent consideration of the concept of a 'local' identity within the South African music soundscape.

Chapter Two is concerned with the theoretical grounding and core literature that has underpinned my research. The broad areas of research into which this literature is segmented are: Cultural Studies, the South African Context; Broadcasting Reform; Popular Music Studies; Music and Identity.

Chapter Three is an account of the methodology used in this qualitative research project and here the processes specified through grounded theory are unpacked and delineated.

Chapter Four is the analysis section of my research. In this chapter I have gathered and analysed the South African Music Awards' 'Record of the Year' listings from 2013 to 2018. The content analysis is systematised, based on the principles of grounded theory, through the use of four core research areas, namely: genre, theme, gender and race. Through the use of this data and an understanding of which artists make the most appearances within the listings over the stipulated period, this chapter attempts to uncover potential trends that will allow for a qualitative discussion on music and identity in South Africa.

Chapter Five seeks to shed light on the key research question that I have set out in Chapter One, which is 'What is local?' and how does this music then give expression to South African identity and experience. Through the use of the data and trends uncovered in Chapter Four, I will present a discussion centred on the primary research question.

In the final section of my research, Chapter Six, I then attempt to theorise the research findings and thereafter, re-contextualise 'local' within the discourse of the post-apartheid genre, kwaito. Lastly, I will proceed to conclude this research project by rounding up my final thoughts on the topic, including possible areas for further research.

# Chapter Two: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

## 2.1 Theoretical Framework

### 2.1.1 Introduction

My research is based on the theoretical framework that is informed by the notion that there is an inherent tripartite relationship between culture, the economy and the government. In that sense, the infrastructures and power structures exert an immense impact on the way that culture is made, produced and disseminated. Meaning, the creation of culture is political (DeNora, 2000:110 citing Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983; Fyfe & Law 1992; Zolberg 1996). The inherent relationship between business (i.e. the economy) and politics (i.e. government) has been extensively researched within the context of the post-apartheid project of transformation (Adam et al., 1997; Herbst, 2000; Horwitz, 2001; Muller et al., 1989; Thomas & Nain, 2004). Similarly, the culture and broadcasting industries have been a focal point in redressing the transgressions of the apartheid government, with legislation, like the Broadcasting Act No. 4 of 1999, explicitly locating itself (and in turn, the SABC) as countermanding the apartheid era's Broadcasting Act No. 73 of 1976 (Broadcasting Act No. 4, 1999:2). The extensive censorship regulations implemented by the apartheid government, after monopolising the South African Broadcasting Corporation, was, amongst other things, implemented in order to control the narratives that were disseminated by the corporation (Muller et al., 1989; Teer-Tomaselli, 2015), thereby demonstrating that public broadcasting was clearly politically aligned during apartheid. If we contextualise within the possible influence of politicians on aspects of the running of the SABC,<sup>1</sup> we can strongly suggest that the creation and dissemination of culture within the South African context is political.

My research is grounded in the belief that a comprehensive interrogation of popular music, particularly in the South African context, requires an interdisciplinary approach

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<sup>1</sup> As noted in Chapter One, with the controversy surrounding former SABC COO, Hlaudi Motsoeneng.

which can fully encapsulate the nuances present within our society. In this sense, my approach is similar to one advocated for by Richard Middleton (1990) in his book *Studying Popular Music*, in which he states:

Traditional musicology still largely banishes popular music from view because of its 'cheapness', while the relatively new field of cultural studies neglects it because of the forbiddingly special character of music. A breakthrough in popular music studies would, in my view, reorientate cultural studies in a fundamental way and would completely restructure the field of musicology (Middleton, 1990:v).

With that being said, I would refer to my research as being what Middleton refers to as, "a cultural study of music" (Middleton, 1990:v).

### **2.1.2 Cultural Studies**

Culture, as an entity, is described by Emielu (2013) as being "dynamic" in the sense that "change in musical traditions becomes a direct reflection of cultural change" (2013:95). In similar fashion, culture is depicted by Arjun Appadurai (1996) as being "an activity rather than a thing" due to the fact that "it is a way of generating a stable sense of self in the complex and confusing flows of the contemporary globalised world" (Hohls, 2017:14. citing Appadurai, 1996:2). In saying this it is necessary to note that culture is also "the conscious and imaginative construction and mobilisation of difference" (Hohls, 2017:14. citing Appadurai, 1996:2). My research will be embedded in an analysis of culture that is "not an experimental science in search of law" but rather "an interpretive one in search of meaning" (Geertz, 1973:5). An understanding of this notion is key when interrogating and facilitating discussions around music and identity.

Cultural studies is a relatively established area of research in South Africa. Academic, Sarah Nuttall, has made an indelible imprint on the writings within the South African cultural studies sphere, and has thus contributed a substantial portion to my knowledge in this area. Post-apartheid transformation and inclusivity have formed the grounding upon which South African Cultural Studies is built (Nuttall & Michael, 1999:54), and is

thus a notable part of the grounding with which I have addressed this research project. The acknowledgment of “complex figurations” has been solidified by this study’s emphasis on the importance of the social context within the context of identity discussions (Nuttall and Michael, 1999:59). In addition, in discussing a particular local identity, it is necessary to acknowledge that “compartmentalization of knowledge undergirds the obsession with Africa’s uniqueness” and that this “feeds the overwhelming neglect of how the meanings of Africanness are made” (Mbembé and Nuttall, 2004:350). The writings of Stuart Hall (1997) on cultural theory and more particularly on the circuit of culture will provide a framework for the analysis and discussion of identity and representation. Hall’s position on meaning being a constantly evolving entity that is “produced within language” and “by the practice, the ‘work’, of representation” (1997:14) has been adopted in this study. Hall (1997) suggests that the audience’s constantly evolving interpretations are a product of what has come before but that its meaning or representation is nevertheless never fixed. Thus, the audience’s active interpretations and meaning-making will differ according to possible influence by prior knowledge (Hall, 1997). These ‘active interpretations’ then become what is perceived as the standard and thus form a possible influence for consequent representations and interpretations – thus, meaning is constantly evolving. Hall’s view that representation is an active process and that that which is represented can have many meanings is adopted in my research. In this manner, my research should be seen as being one interpretation of the various possibilities that may exist.

## **2.2 The South African Context**

### ***2.2.1 Background***

This research paper investigates the concept of ‘local’ music within the context of a post-apartheid South Africa. I have strategically placed ‘local’ within inverted commas to emphasise my view that it is a social construct, having no particular value other than to create a superficial sense of belonging, or conversely, not belonging. The word ‘local’ is described in the Cambridge Dictionary as meaning “from, existing in, serving, or responsible for a small area, especially of a country” (Cambridge Advanced Learner’s

Dictionary & Thesaurus, 2013). This definition concisely highlights the vague nature of the concept of 'local' which exposes the notion of a particular 'localness' as being problematic due to the extremely complex nature of South African society.

Within the discussion of 'localness', it is assumed that the 'local' that is emphasised within the 90% local content quota is a cultural signifier, due to the SABC's emphasis on prioritising "local content that reflects the diversity of South African cultures" in an attempt to "reflect the South African story" (Van Zyl, 2016). With that in mind, it is important to acknowledge the difference between 'local' music, as a cultural signifier, and locally made music, and that they are of equal importance (Shuker, 2008). The implementation of a formal policy relating to this content is seen as a means of preserving its uniqueness or 'localness', suggesting that there is a specific musical product that is inherently South African, within a growing capitalist market (Ferreira & Waldfogel, 2013). Conceptually, this would create an increased attraction and demand for the cultural good to be exported to the global market. The political nature of the promotion of an innate 'localness' could be seen as being "justified in terms of supporting local culture and identity" and thus bring about a sense of national pride and identity (Shuker, 2008:271). Of interest here in relation to the SABC's 90% local content policy, is the discussion brought to the fore on what music is made available to South African audiences, and following on from that, the issue of how the soundscape informs and directs what is understood as 'South African-ness'. When interrogating the potential 'South African-ness(s)', it is important to reflect on history as a repository of valuable insights through which we can unpack what is, in relation to what was (Olsen, 2000:8 citing Appadurai, 1990).

### **2.2.2 Post-apartheid South Africa's Residual Segregation**

Within the context of a democratic, post-apartheid South Africa, the socio-economic and socio-political conditions have not fully displayed the freedoms that would be expected within the 'New South Africa'. The unequal distribution of wealth and accessibility of basic resources are some of the many challenges that face a substantial portion of South Africans. A chapter by Lange and Van Eeden (2016), titled *Designing the South African*

*Nation: From Nature to Culture*, in the book 'Designing Worlds: National Design Histories in an Age of Globalization' (Fallan & Lees-Maffei, 2016) has formed a central foundation to my understanding of the nuances of South Africa's oppressive history, within the communication design domain, that may have been omitted in other publications. The notion of the history of South Africa as one being driven and upheld by "symbolic and material manifestations of power" to "manipulate class, gender and race relations" is significant when unpacking the potential lifespan or after effects of an oppressive regime (Lange & Van Eeden, 2016:60 citing Zukin, 1991). This is justified in terms of these "symbolic and material manifestations of power" holding the capacity to "clarify cultural identity, forge a national consciousness, and contribute to the expression a national identity" – meaning, when dissecting contemporary national or cultural identity it is important to note that the "new social, political, and cultural order is conceptually fixed and visually registered" (Lange & Van Eeden, 2016:61 citing Sauthoff, 2004:35-36).

South Africa's history of oppression and segregation can be traced back to the colonial epoch, but is more notably presented and documented in the 1900s. The legislation that was passed under these repressive periods was put in place to favour the white minority, fragment society on the basis of skin tone, and control and repress black movement – i.e. the Natives Land Act of 1913 (Beinart and Delius, 2014); Native Urban Areas Act No. 21 of 1923 (Parnell, 1998); and the Group Areas Act of 1950, to name a few. The study of a 'local' identity or nationhood here is important once we add these dynamics into the picture – previously disadvantaged communities still face systematic racism and oppression due to, among other things, the apparent inability of the present government to fully redress the ills of the past. Areas previously deemed to be for particular race groupings are still, for the most part, largely comprised of these race groups, and continue to be dominated by the social and economic infrastructure put in place by the apartheid government, which includes the lack of basic necessities and service in these communities in particular. This is not to say that the ANC (African National Congress) government has not made any progress in providing certain freedoms to many South Africans, nor to say that the introduction of the ANC led government in 1994 had resulted

in the abolishment of all power structures that existed in pre-1994 South African society – but rather, to say that these freedoms have not, as yet, been felt by all.

When we consider the above in relation to music (or other media industries) and take into account that South Africa is said to have potentially “operated one of the most comprehensive censorship systems in the world” (Jansen Van Rensburg, 2013:1 citing Coetzee, 1996:34), we may quite firmly say that through the extensive history of censorship at the SABC, music and broadcasting in South Africa has been historically segregated (Drewett, 2003, 2004; Merrett, 1995; Muller et al., 1989; Teer-Tomaselli, 2015). In this sense, as argued by Jansen Van Rensburg (2013), we can say that music (censorship) in South Africa is inextricably linked to apartheid ideology (Jansen Van Rensburg, 2013:24). If we consider this, and include the fact that, due to the entire spectrum of the freedoms of a democratic society not yet being fully experienced by all, South African society could be seen as still being in the process of redressing the ills of apartheid. If this is in fact the case, it would be reasonable for us to assume that if there are still aspects of the apartheid regime in present day South Africa, there is a strong possibility that the divisive ideologies that accompanied the apartheid regime could still be a part of society today. Racism, for example, was prevalent pre-1994, and we still find that rhetoric in present day South Africa. If this is potentially a reality in the South African society, we can confidently infer that, because music is a reflection of society (DeNora, 2000:2 citing Adorno), it is only natural that this reality would also be prevalent in music.

Popular music and the music industry at large have changed considerably since the demise of the apartheid regime. It could be said that, just as South African society has made certain structural and societal advancements since the onset of democratisation, music (and the music industry at large) just like South African society has progressed since the end of apartheid. And, just as there are prevalent examples of apartheid ideology and structures that perpetuate inequalities in our society, one must question whether music reflects the same principles, or whether music has the same look and feel as it did before.

The Afrikaans nationalists' implementation of apartheid manifested in three major arenas - "language (Afrikaans), religion (Calvinism), and ethnicity (separation)" (Lange & Van Eeden, 2016:65) and this has led to the self-defining of *Afrikanerdom* or Afrikaner identity on the basis of these three points, being white, of Christian faith and Afrikaans speaking (Vanderhaeghen, 2014:16). Less than a year ago, evangelist Angus Buchan caused a major uproar aired on social media due to a voice recording of him sharing segregatory sentiments that are, in my opinion, similar in ideology to those of Rev. S.J. Du Toit, who suggested, among other things, that Afrikaners were a superior nation and were destined to rule South Africa (Lange & Van Eeden, 2016:65). In the voice recording, Buchan is heard saying:

Everybody is welcome as always to our meetings but this time the emphasis will be on the Afrikaner nation, we are going to call out to God remembering that only two nations in the world have ever been in covenant with the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They are the Jewish people and the Afrikaans people, that is a fact (Maphanga, 2019).

This confirms my point that the racial segregation and inequality that characterised the apartheid regime are still evident today and that, notwithstanding the governments continuous efforts at post-apartheid transformation,<sup>2</sup> there is much left to be transformed and worked towards in our collective journey towards a truly democratic and equal society. My point here is congruent with one discussed by Bosch (2014), in which she cites Bekker and Prinsloo (1999) in their stance that "group identification and identity politics will remain important in South Africa" (2014:903). That is to say that: the use, designation and repression of the idea of racially defined groupings is something that characterised the apartheid regime. We are twenty-six years into democracy, and yet present day South Africa still makes use of race groupings, making identity politics and the study thereof relevant in South African academia. Posel (2001) argues that in spite of

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<sup>2</sup> Legislation like the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act, No. 34 of 1995, along with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission were implemented in order to right the wrongdoings of the apartheid regime and reconcile/unite the country.

the “contradictions, uncertainties, irrationalities, and lapses of control” that came with racial categorisations, the implementation of these groupings focused primarily on the policing and segregation of society instead of being grounded on a purely biological viewpoint – ultimately contributing to the “overwhelming racialisation of South African society” today (Mophosho, 2013:11 citing Posel, 2001:88). Failure to consider the ramifications of persistent racialisation in South African society is, in my view, the failure to comprehend the full scope of that which is being investigated through this study. And thus, even though we have progressed post-1994, we cannot be considered to be completely free from artefacts of apartheid (Mophosho, 2013:2 citing Dolby, 2001).

A noteworthy discussion focusing on the constructions of race in the post-apartheid South African discourse is presented by Robertson (2011), who critiques:

[...] the tendency to depict ‘race’ as homogeneous, seamless social groups; to obscure affinities cross-cutting racial boundaries; and to portray ‘race’ as the primary determinant of difference in South Africa (2011:458).

In this argument, Robertson (2011) highlights three examples, namely: Desmond Tutu’s declaration of South Africa as a ‘rainbow nation’; former-president Thabo Mbeki’s interpretation of South Africa as a binary made up of one nation of poor blacks and an opposing one for rich whites; and lastly, the concept, as described by MacDonald (2006), of race and culture being closely aligned, with a static culture being racially determined (Robertson, 2011:458 citing MacDonald, 2006). While I do agree that race is not a monolithic concept, I do not believe that such discussions are productive in their interrogation of race. We cannot in any way dismiss the socio-economic conditions that are faced by black South Africans, nor can we dismiss race as a uniting force within and across cultural groupings. The segregation caused by legislation like the Group Areas Act of 1950 (Group Areas Act, 1950) is something that is still evident today – the racial lines drawn by the apartheid government are still present in the current socialisation and socio-economic conditions, therefore, pushing them to the side as a secondary discourse is negligent. As much as there are multiple representations or cultures within racial

groupings, this discourse is secondary in the greater scheme of things – i.e. when socio-economic, and socio-political factors are considered.

The ANC government's attempts at transformation and nation-building took on various physical and ideological forms. I consider one in particular to be of importance due to its seeming permanence as a broad South African national ideology or signifier – that is, the 'rainbow nation'. My personal positioning with regards to 'rainbow-ism' as symbolic of a national identity, could be likened to that of Lange and van Eeden (2016), in saying that the rainbow nation ideology is a "principal post-apartheid myth" due to its assumed depiction of South Africa as whole as being unified and equal society (2016:68).

## **2.3 Broadcasting Reform**

### ***2.3.1 Public Service Broadcasting***

The music business has altered significantly since the turn of the century and this has changed the way music is produced and consumed, which in turn has dramatically shifted the way things operate. With the progression of many music users into the digital era, the role of broadcasting mediums such as radio has shifted. Nevertheless, radio still has significant presence in many people's day to day lives. Historically, music and the radio, as previously mentioned, have played important roles in the growth and development of the musical tastes due it being "the most important electronic mass medium in contemporary sub-Saharan Africa" (Grätz, 2013) by "actively situating African listeners into a modern-global" setting (Mhlambi, 2015). According to the founder of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), John Reith, broadcasting "was the most effective way of sending information" and that "the microphone... can achieve what the printed word and the philosophic formulation of doctrine have failed to bring about" (Mhlambi, 2015:47).

Broadcasting is, according to the Independent Broadcasting Authority Act of 1993, defined as:

[...] any form of unidirectional telecommunications intended for public, sections of the public or subscribers to any broadcasting service having appropriate receiving facilities, whether carried by means of radio or any other means of telecommunication or any combination of the aforementioned, and “broadcast” is construed accordingly (Independent Broadcasting Authority Act No. 153, 1993).

While this definition accounts for a number of broadcasting mediums, my focus here is on public service broadcasting and more specifically the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC).

### ***2.3.2 The South African Broadcasting Corporation***

Through my research I have made use of a sizeable body of literature referring to accounts of the history of the SABC pre- and post-1994 (Article 19, 1995; Barnett, 1998; Fardon & Furniss, 2000; African-European Institute & Omroep voor Radio Freedom, 1991; Jansen Van Rensburg, 2013; Lekgoathi, 2009; Louw & Milton, 2012; Mhlambi, 2015; Muller et al., 1989; Ngubane, 2006; Scharnick-Udemans, 2017; Shaw, 2007; Teer-Tomaselli, 2015). The SABC’s history could be seen as being closely aligned with the apartheid regime, due to there being very little documentation of the corporation’s history prior to this period (Teer-Tomaselli, 2015:60). This resulted in the bulk of its history being tainted by oppression and the imposition political ideologies and agendas. Thus, the post-apartheid mission, for transformation and the enrichment of the once oppressed South African population, that has characterised the SABC could be deemed necessary for a number of reasons. Predominantly due to the fact that the apartheid government had monopolised the SABC and in turn, used it as an agent of apartheid ideology by creating censorship regulations in order to control the narratives that were dispersed through various broadcasting mediums (Muller et al., 1989), but also due to the reality of the SABC, which was established under Reithan principles, which mandated it to service the needs of the South African population (Teer-Tomaselli, 2015:60).

During the transitional period after the dismantling of apartheid, a number of organisations were formed in order to regulate the decisions made by the SABC in order to ensure that

it displayed qualities of a truly democratic corporation. One of the main regulatory councils in South Africa is the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) whose mandate is based on the Broadcasting Act of 1999 (Broadcasting Act No. 4, 1999). The efficacy of broadcasting in South Africa is also dependent on its freedom from the control of political parties or politically driven agendas (African-European Institute & Omroep voor Radio Freedom, 1991) in order to be driven by its purpose – to provide quality and independent media. This is however rather difficult to manage due to the close affiliations that many leaders in the SABC have with political parties like the African National Congress, with many openly mentioning their affiliation to the party and its leaders. This consequently makes it rather difficult to disregard potential political associations that may bypass the hierarchy that lies within the SABC (Article 19, 1995).

This relationship between the government and broadcasting is a part of the context within which this study is formulated. It is almost impossible to separate the SABC from political agenda due to the nature of that which it is mandated<sup>3</sup> to do. During the transitional period after the dismantling of apartheid, a number of organisations were formed in order to regulate the decisions made by the SABC in order to ensure that it displayed the qualities of a truly democratic corporation. These writings all make reference to the transformation that the SABC had made since the liberation of South Africa and the presence of regulatory boards in order to ensure that the SABC provides quality broadcasting that is independent of external motives (Horwitz, 2001; Louw & Milton, 2012). This is to ensure that the SABC moved away from an approach that highly censored content that was used by the apartheid government to segregate and discriminate against specific racial groups (Teer-Tomaselli, 2015). The efficacy of the execution of this is, however, questionable. The SABC's intention to move away from a strategy that embraced censorship was undermined by the ex-Chief Operations Officer, Hlaudi Motsoeneng, who made attempts to censor information distributed by SABC affiliated journalists (Mketane, 2019). The credibility of broadcasting in South Africa is also dependent on its freedom from the control of political parties or politically driven agendas (African-European Institute &

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<sup>3</sup> The SABC is mandated to provide quality and independent media. However, this cannot be separated from its role in the post-94 mission for transformation.

Omroep voor Radio Freedom, 1991) in order to be driven by its purpose – to provide quality and independent media. This is however rather difficult to manage due to the recent propensity of close affiliations that many leaders in the SABC have with political parties like the African National Congress, as some of these leaders are appointed by or report to politicians (Blignaut, 2019; Bronstein & Katzew, 2018; Smit, 2019; Muthwa, 2019). Consequently, it is rather difficult to disregard potential political associations that may bypass the hierarchy that lies within the SABC (Article 19, 1995).

With that said, local content quotas have the potential to impact positively on a local music industry - this has been the case in New Zealand, as discussed extensively by Shuker (2008). The government's support of the local music industry included assistance with regards to the production and dissemination of music, as well as the necessary provisions to encourage growth of the infrastructure of the industry (Shuker, 2008:272, 277). This, in my view is something that strongly contrasts the implementation of the infamous '90% local quota' by Hlaudi Motsoeneng and the SABC, who had appeared to implement the quota with little practical investment into the local music industry.

### ***2.3.3 Radio and Airplay***

When discussing and affirming the relevance of radio, it is key to point out some of the recent statistics in this sector: firstly, radio is still one of the most impactful broadcasting mediums in South Africa, with around 35.6 million South Africans listening to the radio consistently throughout the week; the average radio listenership per province is 88.6%; the average listening period for South Africans is 3 hours 42 minutes; black South Africans, the majority demographic, have the longest listening period (3 hours 48 minutes); 46% of South Africans are considered to be 'heavy listeners', as they listen to the radio for over 20 hours per week; for 72% of South Africans, the preferred radio listening device is a portable radio; and lastly, 86% of South Africans listen to the radio in their homes, as opposed to their cars, work or in shopping centres (BRC-RAM, 2018).

If we take all of this into account, the consistency and regularity of radio listenership by a large portion of South Africans emphasises its integration as a key part of the average

South African's daily life – thus, making it a key source of, not only news or information, but also music. The consistently, high consumption of music through this medium, as discussed by David Hendy, identifies it as being “an insistent and ubiquitous marketplace for music, radio remains a central force in shaping popular music tastes” (2000:743). It seems to be a natural progression for the music that is regularly consumed, to form a part of the soundtrack for your musical identity, and in turn, form your musical taste – and if that consumption is mainly through the radio, then radio airplay becomes a determining prescriber of musical tastes. This is most likely the case for the 36% of South Africans who tune in to the radio solely for music consumption (BRC-RAM, 2018). Due to the dire economic status of the country and limited internet access due to high data prices, the options of any other method of music consumption are restricted. This, among other things, could be the reason why 84% of South Africans still choose to use the radio as a means of listening to music, even with the availability of other platforms for music consumption (BRC-RAM, 2018).

In addition, radio is “influential in the construction of meanings as well as how listeners imagine themselves” (Nkosi, 2014:5). I say this to emphasise the significance of radio as a broadcasting medium. Fardon and Furniss (2000) argue that radio “impinges so widely on African public life”, thus making it an imperative part of the lives of people of varying economic status (Fardon and Furniss, 2000:9). Thus, in our understanding and discussion of radio broadcasting, it is necessary to note the “multiple discourses of everyday life” that are entrenched in the act of radio listening (Bosch, 2014:905 citing Silverstone, 1994). Both the consumption of radio and the production of identity signifiers are interlinked, since radio (and other mass media) “constitute the means by which groups represent themselves to themselves and to others” (Horwitz, 2001:4–5).

The variety of music available to the South African public becomes the next point of interrogation: what music is the majority of the population listening to during these extensive listening periods over the radio? This will be interrogated in Chapters Three and Four.

## 2.4 Popular Music Studies

### 2.4.1 *Sociology of Music*

The term 'Popular music' is one that is not to be used interchangeably with the term 'pop music', as the two differ in meaning – with 'popular music' being what Hesmondhalgh and Negus (2002) refer to as being “an unstable, contested and changing category” (Hesmondhalgh & Negus, 2002:3). I do not regard 'pop music' and 'popular music' as referring to the same thing. But rather 'pop music' refers to a smaller, genre-specific subsection under the 'popular music' umbrella. In this sense, it could be said that all 'pop music' is popular music, but that not all 'popular music' is 'pop music'.

Much has been written about the importance of popular music in identity formation and development, as well as in everyday life (DeNora, 2000; Frith, 1996, 2007; Hohls, 2017; Longhurst, 2007; Negus, 2012; Wilson, 2006). The writings of Simon Frith (1996, 1998, 2007,) offer a point of departure for my research within Popular Music Studies. His book *Performing Rites: Evaluating Popular Music* (1998) is central to an understanding of the social significance of popular music. Frith (1998) reflects on meaning-making within music and notes that it is not exclusively dependent on text, but also, directly, on social processes included in the listening process. Additionally, value based judgments are neutralised by Frith's sociological approach in which he highlights the audience and its experience of the music as a key part of popular music's value and function (1996, 2007). In this sense, there is no music that can be deemed to be 'good' or 'bad' due to the key understanding of music's symbiotic relationship with culture, and thus, to understand culture, one needs “an understanding of its articulation through music” (DeNora, 2000:5 citing Shepherd & Wicke 1997:34). The tendency of academics like Keith Roe (1987) to project a hierarchical model on music by inaccurately linking popular music listenership with negative or destructive behaviour and poor intellect, is something that I strongly oppose (1987:223). In all analysis, I will intentionally attempt to pursue neutrality in all value based or aesthetic judgements.

Another notable theorist is Theodor Adorno, who brought to the fore the idea that “music is a ‘force’ in social life, a building material of consciousness and social structure” (DeNora, 2000:1–2 citing Adorno, 1973:15, 1976:53). In his criticism of popular culture, Adorno comments on the commodification of the ‘culture industry’ and its production for the market (Longhurst, 2007; Witkin, 2003). It has been argued that this criticism of popular culture is particularly unsubstantiated due to its generalisation of popular culture and its minimisation of the industry due to his preference for Western Classical music (DeNora, 2000:2). Consequently, leading to his assessment of modern music as being “...at the end of an historical trajectory” (DeNora, 2000:2). Interpretations like that of Theodor Adorno miss the mark with regards to fully understanding the meaning and function of popular music due to internalised preferences, and thus are “focused on the ways in which music was active in – and not merely determined by – social life” (DeNora, 2000:5).

I have intentionally focused on and emphasised the importance of popular music due to its impact and reach. Frith (2007) argues that, “the intensity of this relationship between taste and self-definition seems peculiar to popular music,” in the sense that “it is ‘possessable’ in ways that other cultural forms ... are not” (Frith, 1987:144 in Frith, 2007:268). In addition, the personalised positioning of the audience/listeners in relation to music, is one that cannot be undermined by simply viewing popular music as entertainment (Bosch, 2014:912 citing Frith, 1981). In this sense, Frith’s sentiments here could be likened to those of Attali (1985) when he says: “music is more than an object of study: it is a way of perceiving the world, a tool of understanding” (Durbach, 2015:6 citing Attali, 1985:4), thus, emphasising its role as a signifier of identity. Meaning, it is necessary when analysing popular music to view it as being aligned to culture (Hesmondhalgh & Negus, 2002:7), more than solely being viewed as entertainment. Byerly (2008) argues that music is “an unparalleled site” to investigate due to its ability to “provide analyzable discourses which reveal the paths of people’s histories” (Durbach, 2015:6 citing Byerly, 2008:265).

#### **2.4.2 Music in South Africa:**

The writings of Agawu (2001); Ballantine (1989, 2000, 2004); Coplan (1982); Coplan and Wright (1985); Hamm (1991, 1995); Hammond (2010); Kirby (1968); Meintjes (1990); Tracey (1953, 1963) form my foundation with regards to discussions on South African music history. Within the realm of Popular Music Studies, my study is located within the domain of 'African pop' as a generic label, as discussed by Austin Emielu (2011) to highlight the inescapable difference between the 'African' and 'Western'. Emielu describes African popular music as being:

[...] cross-cultural and trans-national product which reflects, among other things, our common Colonial heritage, European contact, the legacy of Islamic and Arabic culture, as well as cross-cultural and trans-national influences within the African continent and the African Diaspora (2011:386).

The articulation of this is necessary in order to rethink notions of national identity or 'localness' that were constructed by the colonial project (Boloka, 2003; Connell & Gibson, 2003; Mudimbe, 2003). This does not suggest the superiority of European over African popular music, but rather, acknowledges the hegemonic power of the West throughout history.

In his writing on African popular music, Austin Emielu (2011) identifies three broad groupings to categorise African music, namely:

African traditional music' which is ethnic bound; 'African popular music' which is Western derived; and the more elitist 'African art music' which is modelled on European 'classical music' (2011:376–377).

This distinction is necessary in surmounting the perceived narrative of 'African music' as a homogenised category, dominated by cultural capital. In a similar fashion, it is also necessary to avoid what Shuker (2008) refers to as being the "straightforward dichotomising of the 'local' and the 'foreign'" (2008:282) so that the "complex

interrelationship” that exists between what is considered to be the ‘global’ and ‘local’ is emphasised (Shuker, 2008:282).

The globalisation of African media has resulted in the hybridity of African music due to the accessibility of other genres and styles of music (Charry 2012). This hybridity could be seen as adding to the already expressive music present on the African continent. The easy availability of popular music through the internet has created an external source of musical resources that results in a hybridised product thereby making music with a particular flavour defining a geographical location hard to find. This is due to the enduring effects of the colonisation and later globalisation of African countries. Hence, music in Africa cannot be seen as a localised entity but rather a sector of the global community (Falola & Fleming, 2012). Discussions centred on the impact of globalisation on ‘local’ popular music are intentionally decentred from the focus of my research due to the potential alienation and disillusionment it may create for music-makers, like myself. Discourse surrounding such discussions create the impression that there is something innately negative about being influenced by international music or by locating one’s audience geographically outside of South Africa. In addition, discussions centred on globalisation further create a hierarchical divide between the ‘West’ and Africa, and in turn, adds to the ‘othering’ of Africa (in relation to the West). Mudimbe (2003) argues that nations like the United States or Europe do not undergo the same level of deliberation with regards to conversations focused on globalisation (2003:205). While we cannot avoid the juxtaposition of the West and Africa, or Afrocentrism and Eurocentrism, we need to acknowledge this comparison as being problematic in that it has the tendency of producing “oversimplifications and inevitable stale mates” (Byerly, 1998:2).

A distinction that is central to my deliberation over the concept of ‘local’ is the idea of a ‘local’ sound as being different conceptually from the idea of music that is locally-made, with the former being rooted as a cultural signifier, and the latter solely being rooted geographically (Shuker, 2008:272). The issue then, is what local music is and how/if it can be distinguished from other music. The African diaspora and the “African Renaissance”, as advocated for by former President Thabo Mbeki in his speech *I Am An*

*African* (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2009), are important branches of African media as they seemingly lean towards attempting to keep the 'African' as definitively separate from that which is assumed to be 'Western' (Eze, 2014; Olaniyan & Sweet, 2010). I, personally, tend to avoid such distinctions due to their dichotomising of the West and Africa, but do note their importance in the overall discussions surrounding the African diaspora. Emielu (2011) references Coplan (1985), Collins (1992) and Emielu (2006) in his assertion that African music needs to hold space for music making, geographically outside of the confines of the continent, in the African diaspora (Emielu, 2011:376). This will be considered in my research on local music and identities in the South African context.

## **2.5 Music and identity**

### **2.5.1 Identity:**

Identity, as a concept, is highly contended in academia. Thus, it is necessary to assert the parameters within which I assert my definition(s) of identity. Keith Negus (1996) argues that identities are "the characteristic qualities attributed to and maintained by individuals and groups of people" (Ralfe, 2005:12 citing Negus, 1996:99). Martin (2013) references Amselle (1990), Augé (1988, 1994) and Benoist (1977) in asserting the fact that difference is a key factor when defining the parameters of "selfness" (2013:4). In the book *Sounding the Cape* (2013), Denis-Constant Martin reflects on *Oneself as Another*, by Paul Ricœur, in his discussion on identity formation. He states that:

[...] getting any sense of selfhood demands, in addition to distinguishing between Oneself and Others, a consideration of the Other that implies both the perception of the Other as part of Oneself – Oneself is like the Other – and the discovery of Oneself as an Other (Martin, 2013:4 citing Ricœur, 1990:380).

Meaning, in identity formation, the 'self' cannot be seen as being separate from the 'other'.

My research acknowledges that identities are multifaceted and that "the self is at least partially defined by membership of social groups" (Bornman, 2010:237). Additionally, it

acknowledges that it is possible to identify with a number of social groups, thus allowing for an elaborate combination of intertwining identities (Bornman, 2010:237 citing Deaux, 1993). This combination of identities ranges in dominance, with identities relating to nationality, race, ethnicity, and/or culture exerting a relatively stronger influence than socially acquired identities. If this is considered within the context of a heterogeneous South Africa, there is a strong probability of what Mattes (1999) refers to as being “multiple and often contending social identities (Bornman, 2010:238 citing Mattes, 1999). In addition, the subdivisions in the South African population due to the racial profiling implemented by the apartheid government has further stratified possible identities into various groups (Bornman, 2010:239). The numerous social and political changes that have occurred since the 1990s can indicate possible changes in identity formation amongst South Africans (Bornman, 2010:250 citing Korf & Malan, 2002). This makes it difficult to allocate any particular identity resulting in much difficulty in allocating one dominant identity or ‘local-ness’ to underpin South African popular music. Taking into account that music can be seen as “both a marker and a shaper of identity” (Hammond, 2010:2), this presumed group of varying identities (based on socio-political factors) is further diversified by the numerous identities and musical styles that are presented to the general public through broadcasting mediums.

In giving consideration to identity constructions, Hall (1997) states that “every identity is an exclusion” (Ralfe, 2005:13 citing Hall, 1997:14). I say this to underline the importance of this type of self-definition in the South African context. If we consider previously oppressed groups for example Black South Africans, the negative self-definition of identity imposed on the ‘self’ through the hegemonic powers of the time (e.g. the National Party during apartheid), has the power to create an inferiority complex of sorts, or inversely, to create an oppositional assertion to that which is ascribed by those in power (Martin, 2013:5). This speaks to discussions around cultural imperialism and the Eurocentric lens through which we are groomed to view ourselves. In this sense, we could liken this to Stuart Hall’s view on identity(s) as being:

[...] constructed through, not outside, difference ... it is only through relation to the other, the relation to what it is not, to precisely what it lacks, to what has been called its constitutive outside that the 'positive meaning of any term – and thus its identity can be (Hall, 1996:5).

Identity politics within the South African context is a complex phenomenon due to the “tangled tapestry of heterogeneous cultures” that have historically been intertwined with “deep-seated racial, ethnic and religious differences”, among other things (Lange & van Eeden, 2016:69). In this sense, the quest to find a “state of nationhood” or ‘oneness’ could be seen as being “largely illusory” (Lange & van Eeden, 2016:69). While we may be twenty-six years into democracy, the effects of colonisation and apartheid have left indelible imprints on the consciousness of South Africans who were colonised and oppressed by those systems. Ingrid Bianca Byerly (1998), references the Comaroff’s “colonization of consciousness” (1991), mentioning the purpose of colonisation as being “to colonize their consciousness with axioms and aesthetics of an alien culture” (Byerly, 1998:4 citing J. Comaroff & J. Comaroff, 1991:4). Meaning, the combination of colonisation and the social engineering that characterised apartheid has far reaching effects in present day South Africa, in the way we are, the way we think or perceive and in the way we interact. With this in mind, the immersion of indigenous peoples in an “alien culture” would seemingly produce the unintentional ‘othering’ of self by placing the West or white culture as the apex of society as a whole.

When reflecting on South African identity, one needs to interrogate, as suggested by Mudimbe (2003)<sup>4</sup>, both the terms ‘South Africa’ and ‘identity’. It is necessary to ask: “What do they mean and since when, exactly?” (Mudimbe, 2003:205). Moreover, it is necessary to note that “there is no single Africa” but rather, “thousands of culturally different and interacting societies” throughout the continent (Emielu, 2011:373 citing Tomaselli, 2003:25). South Africa can be considered in a similar light, with there being countless diverse and interrelating societies existing simultaneously.

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<sup>4</sup> Mudimbe (2003) discusses this idea in relation to “Africa” and “identity”. I have used this in relation to the South African context as it is applicable in both the broader African and specific South African context.

### **2.5.2 Music as an Identity Signifier:**

The function and importance of music – popular music in particular – has already been discussed in detail. It is for this reason that I believe that music cannot be viewed as solely for entertainment, but also as a “label of identification” (Bosch, 2014:912 citing Frith, 1981). In his Master’s thesis, David Durbach (2015) highlights the need to “look at music as a social phenomenon within an African context as South African music” due to the uniformity “both in the ways it is created and consumed” (2015:7). In viewing music, particularly in the South African context, as a social phenomenon, we may additionally bring light to another one of music’s functions – as an identity signifier.

My research acknowledges that music is “both a marker and a shaper of identity” (Hammond, 2010:2) and that music allows for the representation of both “the possible and the actual” (Lea & Turino, 2004:10). It is thus difficult to identify the representation of ‘local’ as a static entity. Because music, and the arts, allows for an easy exchange between “the possible and the actual” (Lea & Turino, 2004:10), the identities presented within the music may be a representation of aspirations or possibilities rather than actual lived experience, creating a “play of imaginations” (Lea & Turino, 2004:10). The numerous advances that have been made in technology and the easy accessibility of music streaming services and social media to many people has also contributed to allowing international identities and styles to infiltrate our presumed national identities. Thus, expanding the range of possible imagined identities beyond those located specifically within South Africa.

The book *Sounding the Cape: Music, Identity and Politics in South Africa* by French scholar, Denis-Constant Martin (2013), has contributed a great deal to my knowledge and understanding around music and identity in relation to the socio-political history of South Africa. Martin (2013) cites Arom & Alvarez-Pereyre (2007) who defines music as being “one of the expressive means through which a cultural group constructs its identity” (Martin, 2013:3 citing Arom & Alvarez-Pereyre, 2007:8) and references Pierre Bourdieu

(1979) in saying that “music and musical taste” are “among the most potent social classifiers” (Martin, 2013:12 citing Bourdieu, 1979:17).

Simon Frith’s chapter, titled ‘Music and Identity’ in the book *Questions of Cultural Identity* by Hall and Du Gay (1996) forms a foundational tool in my understanding of the relationship between music and identity. It is this chapter that determined my understanding of music as an experience. Frith (1996) states:

The problem here is not just the familiar postmodern point that we live in an age of plunder in which musics made in one place for one reason can be immediately appropriated in another place for quite another reason, but also that while music may be *shaped* by the people who first make and use it, as experience it has a life of its own (1996:109).

In this sense, we need to consider that as much as music is a social phenomenon that functions as a signifier of identity, it is best articulated as being “an experience of (the) self-in-process” (1996:109). This is explained as being due to the fact that music can be likened to identity, in the sense that it is able to encapsulate both the “social in the individual and the individual in the social” (1996:109). Meaning that music, like identity, is not only a process but also, an experiential force through which our sense of identity is constructed without any limitations confining space or time (Frith, 1996:124-125). In this sense, we can strongly infer that popular music has more intricate meanings beyond the surface level visual and aural representations (Emielu, 2013:93). This sentiment is reinforced when we consider Attali’s (1985) positioning of music as being “more than an object of study: it is a way of perceiving the world, a tool of understanding” (Durbach, 2015:6 citing Attali, 1985:4). If we add broadcasting and radio listenership into this dynamic, we include another area which allows for the “construction and negotiation of identities” (Bosch, 2014:905).

## **Chapter Three: Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

#### ***3.1.1 Rationale for Qualitative Research***

The purpose of this study is to explore the implication of the consumption of the chosen sample of music in terms of identity configurations within South African popular music. This study is of a qualitative nature but, due to the structure of my chosen methodology, has made use of data collection and analysis methods that could somewhat be likened to quantitative research. Within this study, I have made use of Straussian grounded theory research design in order to theorise and analyse my chosen area of study. Due to the emphasis and understanding of the social and economic realities within which this study is formulated, a qualitative study is deemed as being “interpretative research” (Creswell, 1994:147) – allowing for the full context to be understood, beyond the collection of statistics and figures. In this sense, all categories discussed or meanings/theories derived from the data are rooted in and through the analysis and reading of data within the grounded methodological process.

### **3.2 Grounded Theory**

#### ***3.2.1 Introduction to Grounded Theory***

In 1967, Barney Glaser and Amselm Strauss presented a new offering to the qualitative research field with what they called ‘grounded theory’ in their book *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* (1967). In this new approach, Glaser and Strauss (1967) placed emphasis on “the discovery of theory from data – systematically obtained and analyzed” when conducting sociological research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967:1). The aim of this method is to align theory and data more holistically through the conscious focus on the data as holding the key to a comprehensive, all-encompassing theory. In doing so, they were able to develop an empirically sound methodology which is so “intimately linked to data” that it presumed to have greater endurance than research whose core focus lies elsewhere (Glaser & Strauss, 1967:4).

### ***3.2.2 Straussian Grounded Theory***

Within the grounded theory methodology are two subgroupings, i.e. substantive and formal, which pay special focus to different aspects of the research. This research paper has utilised formal theory as its focal point lies in broader areas of study (e.g. gender issues), as opposed to substantive theory which focuses on smaller, definitive areas of study. Although Glaser and Strauss had together fathered the grounded theory approach, the methodology had developed in two somewhat opposing trajectories – namely, Classic Grounded Theory, developed by Glaser (1978, 1992) and Straussian Grounded Theory, developed by Strauss (1978). The difference between these two approaches resides in the construction of theory with or without considering the context that is pre-existing knowledge within the field. This research is more aligned with the Straussian approach due to the understanding that the use of extant literature is not detrimental to the validity of the approach as a grounded theory study. Researchers should practise the ability to maintain a significant level of neutrality when analysing data by acknowledging their inherent biases. The awareness of biases throughout the research process mitigates against the drawbacks of assuming a preconception of what the data will theorise, and should thus be used to “guide the researcher in identifying a starting point for data collection” and not “be awarded no relevance until validated or dismissed by the formulation of the emerging theory” (Breckenridge & Jones, 2009:119–120).

### ***3.2.3 Reflexivity within Research Model***

In order to infer neutrality within the approach to research, it is necessary to acknowledge any inherent biases in the process. This is achieved through openness and transparency in the approach to the data. McGhee et al. (2007) notes that the researcher’s reflexivity needs to be acknowledged, as well as being “shared with readers” in order to maintain the integrity of the research (2007:335). I say this to note my own positionality in exploring the chosen research topic.

I am a South African woman who identifies as being part of the Coloured ethnic group, as well as racially identifying myself as being Black. Ethnicity, in this sense, is grounded

in what Santos et al. (2010) refers to as lying “within the cultural realm” and being “determined by linguistic and cultural affinities and genetic similarities” as opposed to race, which lies “within the biological realm” and is determined by “skin color, hair type, face and skull shape, and genetic ancestry” (2010:124). Meaning, my lived experience encompasses that of a woman-of-colour part of a minority ethnic group in post-apartheid South Africa who, although identifying as racially Black, cannot fully lay claim to the Black South African experience. Historically, the treatment of different race groups in South Africa (Brown, 2000; Duckitt and Mphuthing, 1998), along with the effects of colourism (Gabriel, 2007; Magaisa, 2016; Phoenix, 2014) and hair politics<sup>5</sup> (Alubafi et al., 2018; Canella, 2020; Marco, 2012; Norwood, 2018), has resulted in the varying treatment of Black South Africans and thus differing experience within the realm of South Africa. With this in mind, I do acknowledge that in this sense, I have inherent ‘privileges’, in contrast to women of darker skin tones or differing hair-types. In addition, I was born at the cusp of a democratic South Africa, making my experience of post-apartheid South Africa potentially different from those born during apartheid – meaning, I am privy to certain information but not the full context due to my reliance on books and various other resources on South African history, and not lived experience. I can only speak of the knowledge that I have learned but not claim to have experienced apartheid in all its entirety. I am, however, able to note, through my own personal journey that discrimination and segregation as a result of South Africa’s oppressive history is still prevalent. Having encountered multiculturalism and multiracialism throughout my entire schooling experience, my understanding of the prevalence of systemic oppression and suppression of people of colour (particularly black people), lies predominantly in historically white spaces<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> The politics that surround black woman’s hair in particular, i.e. the need to uphold Eurocentric beauty standards.

<sup>6</sup> Post-94, Model C schools “remained constitutionally bound to white education departments” and allow for the inclusion of other “race groups provided that the schools remained fundamentally unchanged” (Christie & McKinney, 2017:9–10).

In further discussing my positionality, it is necessary to note that, congruent to my social context, is my journey within the musical sphere as both a musician, music fanatic/listener and academic. I am a classically trained pianist, who predominantly consumes jazz and hip-hop music (both 'local' and global), and participates in both popular music song-writing, performance and academia. In this sense, I would view my understanding of music to be quite well rounded due to my extensive exposure, participation in and appreciation of various types of music. I am aware of possible preferences in musical tastes that may be inherent due to my consumption of particular genres, however, due to my academic background, I am consciously attempting to resist placing value-based judgments on particular types of music.

### ***3.2.4 Research Methods***

The basis of this study, as emphasised within a grounded theory approach, follows specific steps within the approach to research. In line with the data collection procedures imperative in a grounded theory methodological study, the data collected and analysed (See Chapters Four and Five below.) was accomplished by:

1. Collecting the chosen set of data (the SAMA Record of the Year listings 2013-2018);
2. The perpetual comparison analysis of the data;
3. Allowing the data to propel the process of analysis through highlighting and formulating of categories and themes, with the understanding that these categories and themes will collectively steer the research to focus on new overarching categories.

### ***3.2.5 Theoretical Sampling of the data***

Glaser and Strauss (1967) advocated for the use of theoretical sampling within the grounded theory research process. They referred to this particular variation of sampling as:

[...] the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyzes his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges (1967:45).

In this sense, the process of coding and analysing data will run concurrently throughout the process of data collection, and that the development of the data into theory or further research will be led wholly by the data. The rationale for theoretical sampling is to identify categories, the properties of these categories and the relationship between the categories and their properties (Glaser & Strauss, 1967:49).

As stated above, my focus here is on the dissemination and consumption of local popular music through the chosen broadcasting medium, radio. In order to concisely draw an accurate representation of the group of songs with the most airplay per year, I have chosen to make use of the South African Music Awards' 'Record of the Year' category as my primary resource. The nominations for the award category in question are derived from statistics which the Record Industry of South Africa (RiSA), has collected from Radiomonitor, an airplay monitoring service – thus, articulating an accurate depiction of the songs with the highest airplay in South Africa per year (South African Music Awards, 2019). This category is the only category in the South African Music Awards where nominations are not decided by submission, but solely on its airplay on South African radio stations. In addition, this category is the only category that is decided upon by the viewers, who vote for their favourite nominee by SMS. With this taken into consideration, I have decided that the 'Record of the Year' listings would be the most appropriate showcasing of the possible evolution of local music, and essentially, the local identities disseminated in and through South African music from 2013 to 2018. I will be making use of these listings, which are freely available within the public domain, as a reference for analysis by finding possible trends and developments within the playlists over the six-year period, in order to consider the perceived local identities embedded within the most played songs in South Africa.

### 3.3 Data analysis

#### 3.3.1 Coding of Data

During the process of data analysis, grounded theory requires the researcher to conduct various types of coding at different stages in the research process in order to generate theory. These stages of coding are: *open coding*, *axial coding* and *selective coding* – the first, *open coding*, is developed into the latter two stages.

##### *Open Coding*

This phase is the initial use of words or phrases that act as key identifiers of the data. The documentation of these identifiers in the form of memo writing is paramount in this stage. Glaser and Strauss (1967) indicate that two features are key when establishing concepts during this phase – they should be *analytic*, meaning it is “sufficiently generalized” when attaching characteristics to the entities; and *sensitizing*, meaning it should paint a “meaningful” depiction which allows for easy comprehension “in terms of one’s own experience” (1967:38–39).

##### *Axial Coding*

This phase is described by Strauss (1987) as the continuation of coding within categories in order to further contextualise the key identifiers, which will ultimately distinguish key categories or concepts (1987:32–33).

##### *Selective Coding*

This phase is the final step in the process to potentially generate theory. Strauss (1987) depicts *selective coding* as concerning “coding systematically and concertedly” for the key categories or concepts articulated during the *axial coding* process (1987:33). These identified key categories or concepts then highlight the progression of the research, moving towards the production of a theory.

## Chapter Four: Content Analysis

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter undertakes the task of theoretical sampling and coding the chosen set of data, as required in the grounded theory research model. This will be done by:

1. Collecting the chosen set of data (the SAMA Record of the Year listings 2013-2018);
2. Perpetual comparison analysis of the data;
3. Allowing the data to propel the process of analysis through its highlighting and formulating of categories and themes, with the understanding that these categories and themes will collectively steer the research to focus on new overarching categories.

The core of this research paper is the dissemination and consumption of South African popular music via the radio, in particular. Given radio's immense societal importance, due to the fact that: it "impinges so widely on African public life" (Fardon & Furniss, 2000:19), it is a "central force in shaping popular music tastes (Hendy, 2000:743); and lastly, that it is influential in the construction of meanings and identities (Bosch, 2014:905; Horwitz, 2001:4–5; Nkosi, 2014:5). It is also necessary to note that the main focus of this research is the lyrics and basic sound characteristics of the songs. This study does not attempt to offer an in-depth musical analysis of the listings due to the assumption that the general music consumer in the popular music sphere is more acquainted with the generic stylistic and/or genre classifications, as opposed to technical jargon.

During the preliminary stages of my research project, my initial hope was to explore and analyse the playlists of three contrasting national radio stations over a stipulated time period, in order to examine what version(s) of 'local' could be identified on different platforms. This, however, was not achievable due to the hesitation that the music compilers displayed at my request. As disappointing as this may have been at the time, it was understandable due to the immense scrutiny that the SABC was under due to highly publicised accounts of corruption and censorship under the leadership of the now former

COO, Hlaudi Motsoeneng. Consequently, I have chosen to focus on the sole Public Vote Category within the South African Music Awards proceedings – the ‘Record of the Year’ category.

## **4.2 SAMA Categories**

The South African Music Awards (SAMAs) are perceived as being the pinnacle of accolades within the South African music industry. Established in 1995, the SAMAs reflect the evolving model of music in post-apartheid South African society. In an article published on the South African Music Awards website, RiSA CEO Nhlanhla Sibisi says that, “There is no bigger platform to honour and recognize local music talent across the spectrum than the SAMA” – thus, highlighting the apparent importance of the show (SAMA News, 2020). The awards categories presented at the South African Music Awards are split up into five subdivisions, namely:

- 1). The Top 5 categories – Album of the Year, Duo or Group of the Year, Female Artist of the Year, Male Artist of the Year and Newcomer of the Year.
  
- 2). Album Genre categories – Best Rock Album, Best Pop Album, Beste Pop Album, Best Adult Contemporary, Beste Kontemporêre Musiek Album, best African Adult Contemporary Album, Best Alternative Music Album, Best R&B/Soul Album, Best Hip Hop Album, Best Kwaito/ Gqom/ Amapiano Album, Best Dance Album, Best Traditional Faith Music Album, Best Contemporary Faith Music Album, Best Traditional Music Album, Best Maskandi Album, Best Jazz Album, Best Classical Album, Best Afro Pop Album, Best African Indigenous Faith Album, Best Reggae Album.
  
- 3). Special Awards – Lifetime Achievement Award, International Achievement Award, Best Selling Awards (Best Selling Artist, Best Selling Live Audio Visual of the Year), Best Collaboration, Rest of Africa Award.

4). Technical categories – Music Video of the Year, Best Produced Album, Best Engineered Album, Remix of the Year, Best Live Audio-Visual Recording/ DVD.

5). Public Vote category<sup>7</sup> – Record of the Year.

The rationale for choosing the Record of the Year listings as analysable data for this project, is due to the category being derived from the songs with the highest airplay and audience reach per year, as collected by airplay monitoring service, Radiomonitor and verified by RiSA (South African Music Awards, 2019). In this sense, the listings that I have collected as the Record of the Year listings could be said to be an apt depiction of the top 20 songs in South Africa per year and more importantly, an apt depiction of what songs have been well received, and thus assumedly representative of, 'local' popular music. The explicit focus placed on this category by the SAMAs, by announcing the category nominees on a separate day on the prime-time music television show, *Live Amp*, emphasises the direct public interaction with this category. Notwithstanding the fact that the category is won by the song/artist with the most public votes, the method in which this category is selected and engaged with by the public makes it a comprehensive illustration of where 'local' popular music is or was, at particular moments in time. In this sense, the SAMA Record of the Year category serves as a historical cache of the music of the time period in which it was selected.

As with other award shows, the independence from external forces in decision-making and the derivation of the list of award winners needs to be taken into consideration. While the SAMAs do provide a comprehensive account of their procedures on their official website, one can assume that within the process of formulating the final list of nominees, involving the assessment of musical performance assumingly based on aesthetic value, there is room for bias. It is also quite important to acknowledge the dominance of performers affiliated to major record labels (i.e. Sony Music Entertainment, Universal

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<sup>7</sup> As of the 29 January 2020, the Music Video of the Year Award category is additionally considered to be a public vote category (SAMA News, 2020).

Music Group, Warner Music Africa) within the South African music industry and the consequent effect on taste making and airplay within the public domain. In conjunction with this, is the inevitable presence of representatives of these record labels within the executive committee of the Recording Industry of South African (RiSA), who organise and host the SAMAs (South African Music Awards, 2019).

With that said, I have purposefully chosen to make use of the Record of the Year listings as my primary source in order to ensure that the compilation of my research data is as representative of the South African popular music domain as possible. This category is taken as a representation of the musical tastes and preferences of a large portion of South African society as it suggests that the deliberate choice of the South African public to vote for their favourite song(s) via SMS indicates that the songs are consciously being consumed and enjoyed. The intention, here, is to identify the foremost categories within these listings and to distinguish what identity issues dominate. Another important consideration in my analysis is that all the Record of the Year nomination listings contain 20 songs per year, with the exception of 2015, which listed only 10 songs. My attempts at investigating whether there was a particular reason for this were not fruitful, and have left me pondering whether this was a deliberate decision or not, or whether there were difficulties that the SAMA committee encountered while tabulating the data that they received (from Radiomonitor). These questions will always plague my mind because of the possible irregularities caused, and thus, due to the smaller sample size, I will not be making any fixed judgments based on the listings in 2015.

## **4.3 Coding and Data Analysis**

### **4.3.1 Introduction:**

The first phase of coding within the grounded theory model can be initiated once the complete set of data is accumulated. In the case of this research, the set of data which was analysed is the Record of the Year listings from 2013 to 2018 (see Appendix 1), all of which is freely available in the public domain. During the process of *open coding*, the researcher uses key words and/or phrases to code the data. These key terms act as key

signifiers of prominent data points. Table 1 is a depiction of these initial key signifiers that emerged during the process of *open coding*.

Table 1

*List of the Initial Signifiers from the Record of the Year Listings, 2013 to 2018*

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Romantic relationships	Consumption of alcohol	Encouraging
Longing for better days	Consumption of drugs	Needing attention or affection
Life struggles	Black male dominance	Hypersexuality of women
Heartbreak	Gender roles	Life's struggles
Lust	Night life	Heterosexual normativity
Jealousy	Hoping for better future	Forgiveness
Capitalism	Nostalgia	African diaspora
Materialism	Party culture	Minority representation
Superficial values	Patriarchy	Multiracialism
Casual sex	Americanization	Egocentric
Rainbow nation	Fame/ stardom	Female subservience

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After the process of *open coding*, the process of memo writing and actively comparing the established key signifiers commenced with the aim of organising these signifiers into categories or concepts. This advanced the attention to more abstract groupings, established by the continual coding, comparing and questioning of these categories.

#### **4.3.2 Core areas of analysis:**

Four main categories of analysis were established after this process, namely: genre, theme, gender and race. These four emerging categories formed the basis of the next phase of coding – *axial coding*. These categories need to be of similar abstractness and comprehensively account for all established signifiers (Glaser & Strauss, 1967:38–39).

### a) Genre

Much has been written about the concept of genre. In the book *Music's Meanings* (2012), Philip Tagg cites Franco Fabbri (1999, 2008) in his interpretation of the meaning of genre. He writes:

I interpret Fabbri to mean that particular types of language (lyrics, paralinguistics, metadiscourse, etc.), gesture, location, clothing, personal appearance, social attitudes and values, as well as modes of congregation, interaction, presentation and distribution, are all sets of rules that, together with musical-structural rules, build a larger set of rules identifying a particular genre (Tagg, 2012:266 citing Fabbri 1999, 2008).

While I believe that this is a succinct definition of the term, I find that it disregards the nuanced nature of music, especially in heterogeneous countries like South Africa. In a country with as much diversity as South Africa, combined with socio-political and economic factors (including inequality, unemployment, poverty) that affect most of the population, there is bound to be an overlap in the performance of 'local' expression through music genres. Meaning, genre is a concept with sets of rules (Tagg, 2012:266) that allow for easy identification and analysis, but could never be an all-encompassing rule of thumb that represents an accurate depiction of the range of music that exists globally. These specified rules and limitations bring to the foreground conversations of authenticity within genre ideology (Fairchild, 2005:305). In a broader African context, the intricacies involved in these discussions on authenticity are compounded, due to the geographical 'home' of genres like hip-hop/rap lying elsewhere. Emielu (2011) posits that the inherent drawbacks of the use of genre labelling are both "historical relativity and historical specificity" and "artistic autonomy and generational contextualization" (2011:375). I say this to emphasise the point that genre exists, in a sense, to confine art into easily identifiable and commodifiable boxes, and has the ability to produce more limitations and generalisations than anything else. It is for this reason that genre affiliations, although occasionally self-evident, should not be presumed unless clearly specified by the artist him/herself. Consequently, in formulating the rationale behind my

analysis, I have made use of the genre-based categorisations of songs within the SAMAs in order to determine which genre classifications to make use of in my research. This was a major consideration for me, as I did not want to assume classifications and distort the intended representations by the performers. I have made use of the genre-based categories in order to identify what genre the stipulated local artists (or their management/record labels) have chosen, by conscious submission, as their categorisation.

As much as genre-based categories are inherently embedded within identity discourse, these stereotypical genre-based signifiers are noted, but do not hold any significant value within the context of this study. Genre classifications, in this sense, will “provide crucial reference points” on the way in which “musicians construct their public presentation of self”, but will not “impose penalties on producers for illegitimate role performance” (Silver et al., 2016:1). Meaning, that while genres like *hip hop* hold inherent politics of authenticity, the absence of these stereotypical signifiers does not in any way diminish the value or significance of these songs within the context of this study. In addition to this, it is noted that “genre expectations are weakening” due to the reimagined boundaries of genre-based representations, which has the potential to consequently “reconfigure the traditional genre frameworks”, meaning, “rather than being a fixed and static system, genres emerge, evolve, and change over time” (Silver et al., 2016:1). With this in mind, as much as genre boundaries and expectations are weakening (Silver et al., 2016:3), genre classifications are still valuable “in structuring musical production and consumption” (Silver et al., 2016:4). The represented genre categorisations in the listings are: *hip hop*, *dance*, *pop*, *gospel* and *kwaito*.

### *Hip Hop*

Hip hop is a contemporary genre in the context of the South African music scene. The genre emerged in the 1980s, predominantly in the Coloured community (Künzler, 2011:28; Swartz, 2008:17), as a music highlighting the socio-economic conditions of the time. The hip hop classification is comprised of artists/songs nominated for SAMA genre-based award categories under hip hop or rap music.

### *House/ Dance*

The Dance music classification is comprised of artists/songs nominated for SAMA genre-based award categories under dance or house music.

### *Pop*

The pop music classification is comprised of artists/songs nominated for SAMA genre-based award categories, namely: R&B, Soul and Reggae; African Adult; Adult Contemporary; and the Afro Pop category. The term 'pop' includes all contemporary music forms that are produced for the commercial music market (Scheckter, 2006:105), but is not to be used interchangeably with the term 'popular music' – all pop music is popular music, but not all popular music is necessarily pop music (Scheckter, 2006:106).

### *Gospel*

The gospel music classification is comprised of artists/songs nominated for SAMA genre-based award categories, namely: Traditional Faith Music and Contemporary Faith Music.

### *Kwaito*

The kwaito music classification is comprised of artists/songs nominated for SAMA genre-based award categories under kwaito, and what has been considered to be sub-genres: gqom and amapiano (SAMA News, 2020).

### *b) Theme*

In the analysis of the Record of the Year listings, I have arranged thematic groupings that encompass a concise range of dominant themes presented in South African popular music over the stipulated period. This is not an exhaustive list of all possibilities but rather a representation of the range according to my interrogation of the listings. The reasoning behind this choice is the role of popular media in the “ideological battleground” through which “meanings, values, and identities are driven, constrained, and contested” (Glantz, 2013:29 citing Meyers, 2008). It is, however, noted that many of these thematic groupings do, at times, overlap. In such cases, the researcher’s discretion is applied in designating specific signifiers into the most appropriate thematic grouping. Within the overarching

thematic groupings (for example, 'love') that have been established, are lists of the range of representations or signifiers (for example, 'heartbreak') identified through the coding process. There is an intentional broadness in referencing these signifiers due to inherent "abstractness" and "looseness of reference" in popular music which allows for its absorption and personalisation of these songs into the audience (Frith, 1996:121).

The thematic groupings are:

1. Love (romantic relationships; heartbreak; lust; jealousy; forgiveness within relationship; repentance within a relationship; seeking lost love back; needing attention/ affection; vulnerability; pursuit of relationship/ love)
2. Reflection (longing for better days; life struggles; reflecting on lessons learnt; speaking one's truth; having faith/hope for a brighter future; exemplification/acknowledgment of those that have come before you)
3. Party lifestyle (night life; consumption of alcohol, drugs; having a hangover; dancing well; the sexualisation of women dancing, the objectification of women; competition for women; competition for a man who is already in a relationship; sex, an orgy)
4. Uplifting (religious message of reassurance; empowering; encouraging; reaffirming)
5. Status (popularity; dressing well; material possessions and ownership; competition with others; the love of money; the need for money, wealth, power/ authority over others; work ethic)
6. Bravado (toxic masculinity; self-glorification; dominance over women; patriarchal society)

7. Township (nostalgia; speaking of the beauty of the township; drinking/partying in the township; impressing everyone in the township; an ode to kwaito; pride in one's upbringing in the township)
8. Upbeat (light-hearted, playful)

*c) Gender*

Gender based discussions are difficult to interrogate unless the singer/performer has articulated which gender or sexual orientation they identify themselves, or if the subject matter has been explicitly articulated as referencing a particular gender or sexual orientation. It is with this in mind that I have attempted to analyse the gender representations within the listings. Due to the palpable dominance of cisgender<sup>8</sup> heterosexual-orientations<sup>9</sup> in South Africa, and the global community at large, I have articulated the gender representations within these confines, unless overtly stated or suggested by the performer(s). I do, however, acknowledge that these assumptions are problematic. My intention here is to analyse the representation of gender in the overall listings, as well as by genre in order to interrogate whether genre in the South African music scene is a gendered entity.

*d) Race*

The importance and endurance of race as a social classification system has been discussed at length in Chapter Two. Thus, forming a rationale for the use of 'race' as a key signifier in the context of this study. In as much as many transformations have taken place since the dawn of a democratic South Africa, racial profiling is still a sensitive subject as much of South African society is still grappling with systematic oppression and

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<sup>8</sup> Defined as being "used to describe someone who feels that they are the same gender (= sex) as the physical body they were born with" (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus, 2013).

<sup>9</sup> Defined as referring to "a person who is sexually attracted to people of the opposite sex" (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus, 2013).

racial prejudice – an artefact of the social engineering that underpinned the apartheid regime. People are still marginalised on account of their skin colour, culture and/or race. Robertson (2011) argues that “the legacies of colonialism and apartheid have carved ‘race’ indelibly into the South African social landscape as a category of difference. This structural system of division has imbued every aspect of life, and has become unremarkable through its ubiquity” (2011:457).

In designating race terminology, the following terms have been a part of public discourse through its use in the Population Registration Act 30 of 1950 (Population Registration Act, 1950): African, Coloured, Indian and White. In addition, the term *Black* has been used to “encompass all the victims of apartheid [Africans, Coloured(s) and Indians]” (Martin, 2013:viii) and, at times, used interchangeably with the term African - for example, its use in the context of ideology within Steve Biko’s ‘Black Consciousness Movement’ and systems, like ‘Black Economic Empowerment’ (BEE), which attempt to redress the ills of apartheid in the South African economy. It is also necessary to note that these labels do not in any way hold any intrinsic value, but are merely terms which depict the societal structuring in post-apartheid South Africa. While the Population Registration Act of 1950 may have been repealed in the Population Registration Act No. 114 of 1991 (Population Registration Act No. 114, 1991), the deeply segregated nature of society as a consequence of the previous population registration act has been sustained into democratic South Africa. When confronting these classifications, it is acknowledged that it may not be the general consensus to self-identify using these terms, but for the purpose of this academic study it has been considered to be more appropriate to make use of the four main race groups stipulated by the apartheid government’s legislation.

#### **4.4 Content Analysis**

The process of codifying the chosen data in the case of this study’s research process has led to the identification and organisation of initial signifiers to form a set of four key categories that will dictate the next phase of this study – “systematically and concertedly” coding the categories articulated during the *axial coding* process (Strauss, 1987:33). Thereby, directing the process of *selective coding* in this study under the categories:

genre, theme, gender and race. The trends identified during this process will formulate discussion points which will aid in moving this study towards the formulation of a theory.

#### 4.4.1 Genre

In my analysis of the frequency of genre appearances in the Record of the Year category, I have made the following observations:

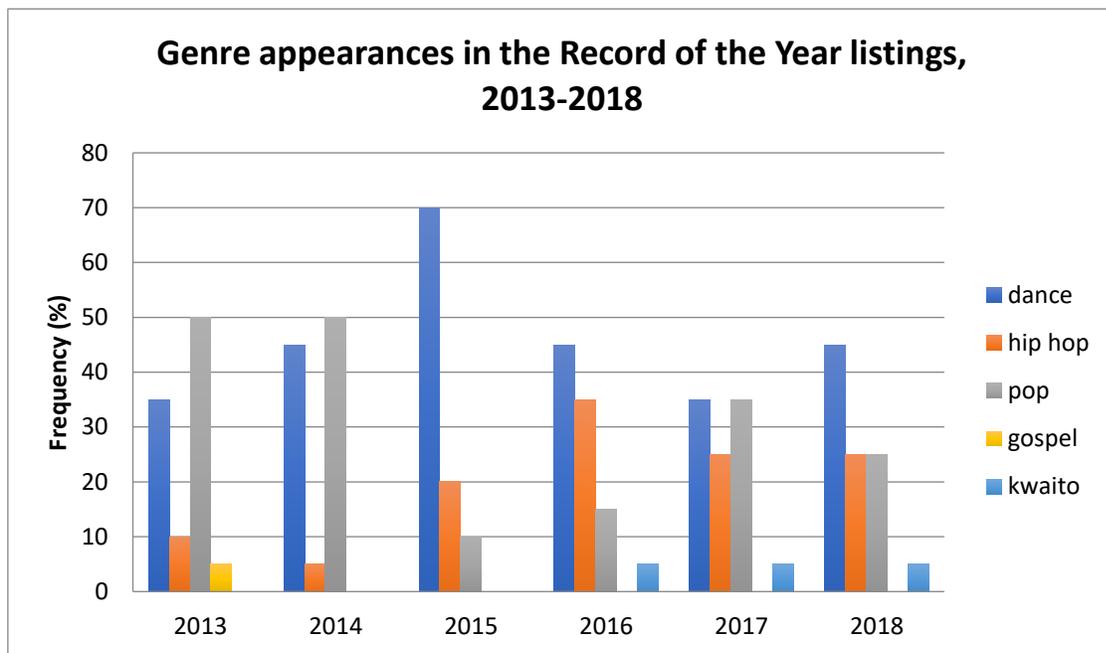


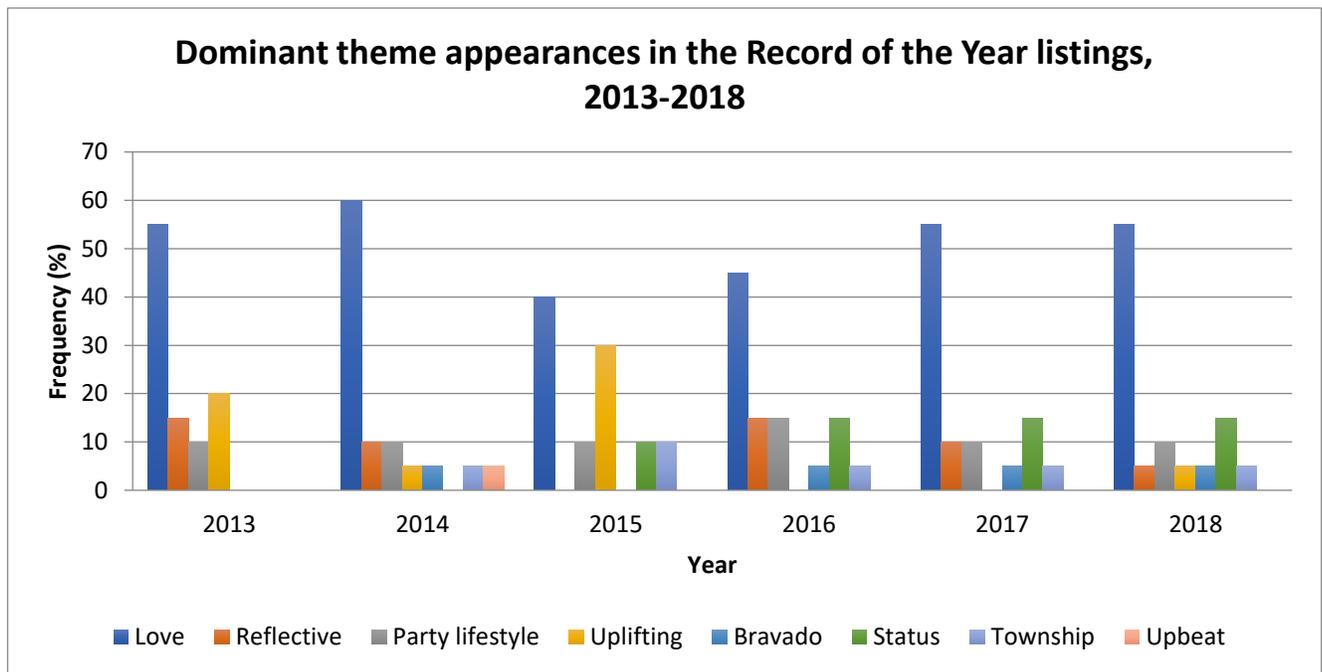
Figure 1. Frequency of genres in the SAMA Record of the Year category from 2013 to 2018

Firstly, the dance music genre has consistently been a preference amongst South African audiences. This is displayed in Figure 1, in which the *dance* column displays the highest frequency of appearances for three years (2015, 2016 and 2018). In the other three years, the *dance* category follows behind the *pop* category (2013, 2014) or indicates an equal frequency (2017). The second noteworthy observation made through Figure 1 is the increase in popularity of *hip hop* from 2014, which peaked in 2016. This is an important development, as prior to this, there was a minimal presence of *hip hop* within the Record of the Year listings. The *pop* classification, which was the most represented genre between 2013 and 2014, has shown an increase in appearance since 2016, after a decrease in representation due to the subsequent increase in the *dance* and *hip-hop*

categories. The gospel classification has only appeared once, in 2013. And lastly, kwaito has made a slow re-emergence into the mainstream music scene since 2016.

#### 4.4.2 Theme

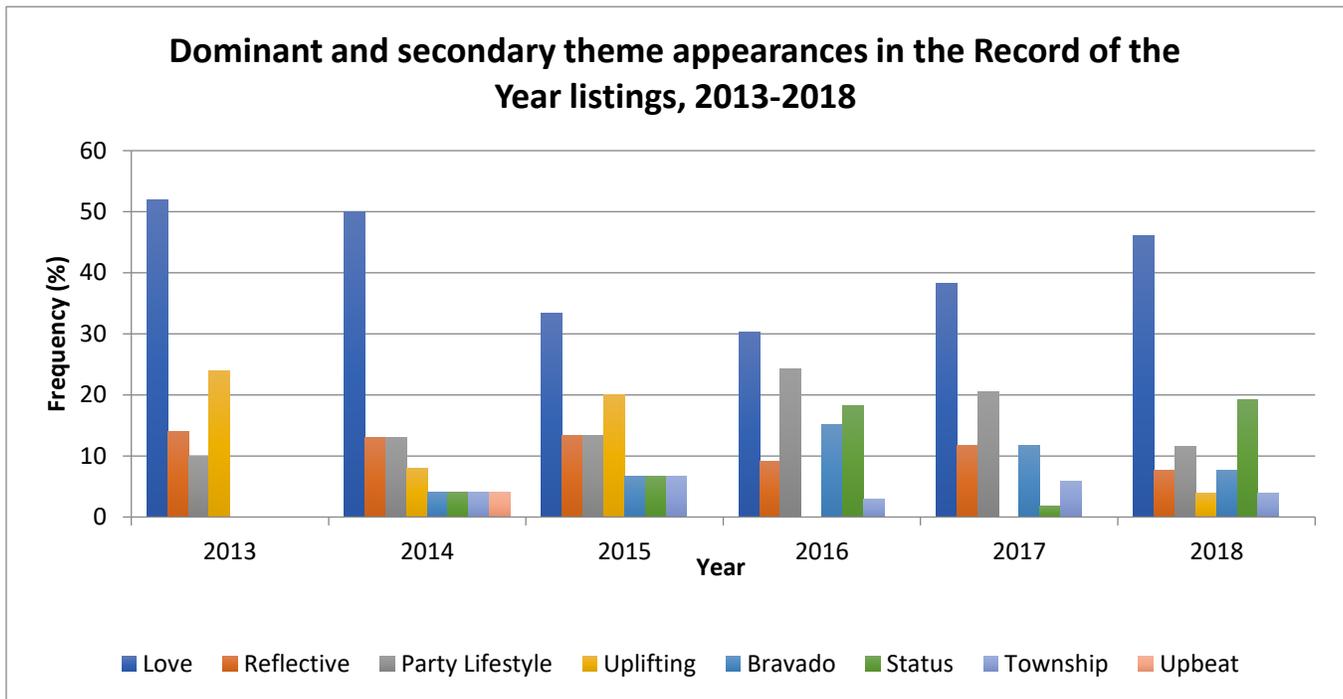
Within my analysis, I have attempted to identify the dominant theme of each song. This however is not an attempt to minimise the vastness of thematic expression presented within these playlists. I have, additionally, made provision for the appearance of secondary, coexisting themes within the listings.



**Figure 2.** The appearance of the dominant themes in the SAMA Record of the Year listings from 2013 to 2018

In order to provide the most accurate analysis, all values of representation have been calculated and converted into percentages due to the reduction of the number of songs in 2015 to half the number when compared with other years, as well as irregularity in total number of themes presented with the inclusion of the secondary themes.

The addition of these secondary themes is presented in the following chart:



**Figure 3.** The appearance of dominant and secondary themes in the SAMA Record of the Year listings from 2013 to 2018

In my analysis of the appearance of themes in the Record of the Year category, I have made the following observations:

Firstly, as seen in both figure 2 and 3, *love* as a thematic expression has dominated every year. This thematic representation is referenced in pop, hip hop and dance music. The second most frequent representation is *reflective* expression, which has also been consistently a part of the themes appearing in the listings over the six-year period. This could translate as ‘local’ music being representative of the social troubles facing many South Africans. A substantial portion of the songs with *reflective* thematic expression falls under the dance music classification, for example: Black Motion’s *Father To Be* (2013); Prince Kaybee’s *Better Days* (2016); Mobi Dixon’s *City Rains* (2016) and Heavy K’s *Inde* (2018). This could in a sense, be perceived as a form of concurrent affirmation and escapism due to the positioning of what could be considered to be quite sombre subject matter, over an electronic house beat. The inclusion of further context like setting, which

is assumedly linked to nightlife, further emphasises the notion that the contrasting combination messaging and musical backing in this context could be a form of escapism.

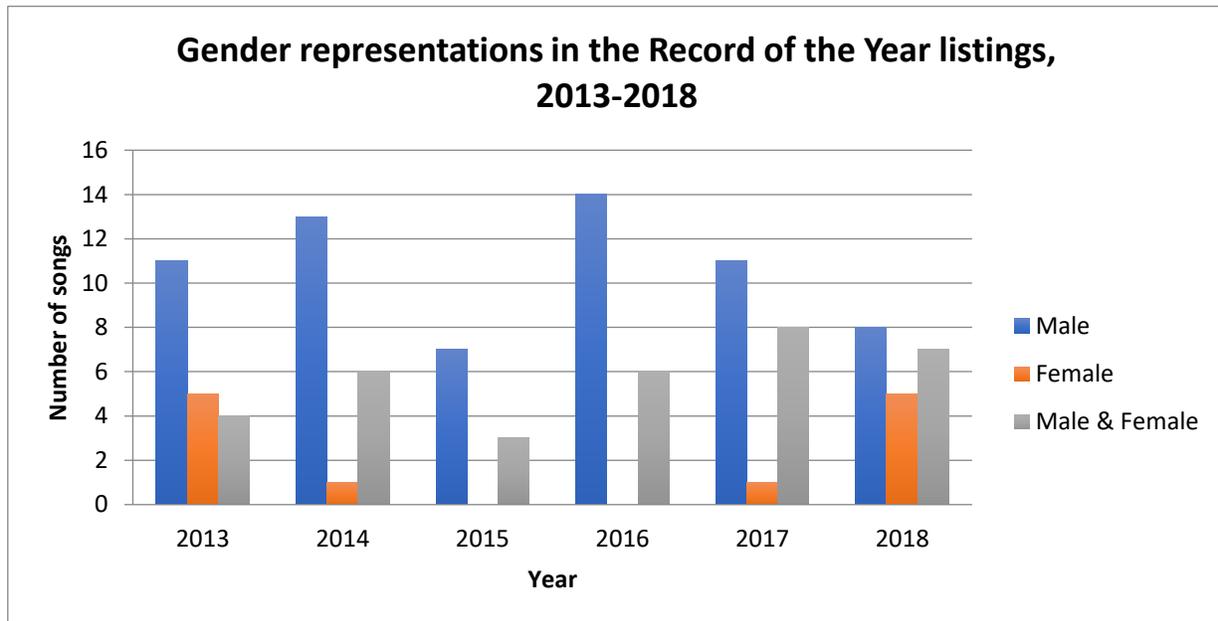
Figure 3 demonstrates that music reflecting the party culture thematic expression peaked in 2016 and has been slowly decreasing towards its average frequency from 2013 to 2015 (slightly above 10% of the total year's listings). The *party lifestyle* is referenced in the dance, hip hop and kwaito genres, with songs like Dj Zinhle's *My Name Is* (2013); MiCasa's *Jika* (2014); Uhuru's *Y Tjukutja* (2015); Dj Merlon and Mondli Ngcobo's *Kose Kuze* (2016); and Babes Wodumo's *Wololo*. As much as the party culture is not directly referenced in certain thematic expression (outside of the dance genre), this does not prohibit it from being the context within which certain music is located due to up-tempo, dance-like beats, for example: Donald's *I Deserve* (2013); Mafikizolo's *Khona* (2014); Timo ODV's *Save Me* (2016); Goodluck's *Thinking About You* (2017); Timo ODV's *I Need You* (2017). I say this to emphasize that the party lifestyle thematic expression is overtly referenced in hip hop, dance and kwaito, but also contextually through its location for some pop songs.

The appearance of music expressing a need for or the prominence of 'status', peaked in 2016 and 2018, with songs like AKA's *All Eyes On Me* (2016); Dj Dimplez's *Way Up* (2016); Sun El Musician's *Akanamali* (2018); AKA's *The World is Yours* (2018) and Black Motion's *Imali* (2018). Thematic representation expressing the need for status and money is referenced in pop, hip hop and dance music. The *bravado* thematic expression peaked in 2016, due to the concurrent peak in *hip hop* representation, as seen in Figure 1, with songs like: AKA's *All Eyes On Me* (2016); Ricky Rick's *Boss Zonke* (2016); Emtee's *Roll Up* (2016); Anatii and AKA's *The Saga* (2016); and Dj Dimplez's *Way Up* (2016).

The appearance of thematic expression referencing the *township* lifestyle or nostalgia has been consistently present in the listings from 2014. Even though the representation is minimal, the persistent presence of the township thematic expression in the kwaito throughout the listings speaks to its longevity, through its rebirth in the form of new subgenres *gqom* and *amapiano*. The township is referenced in both kwaito and hip hop.

#### 4.4.3 Gender

In my analysis of the frequency of gender representations in the Record of the Year category, I have made the following observations:



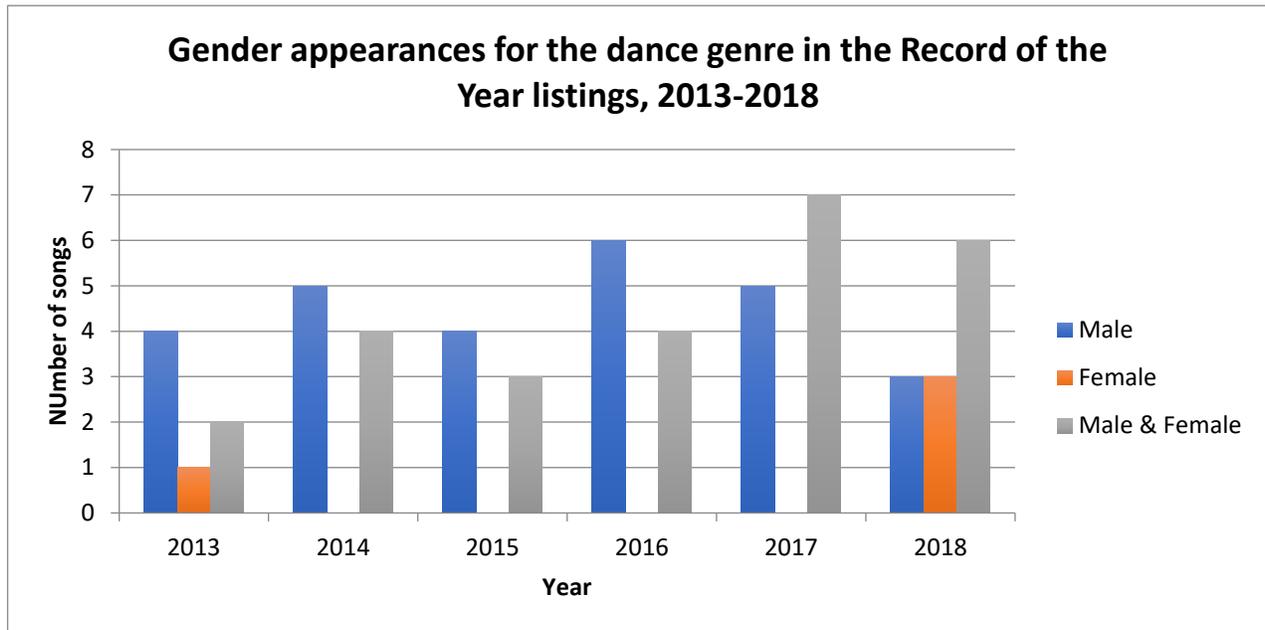
**Figure 4.** Frequency of gender representations in the SAMA Record of the Year category from 2013 to 2018

My deduction as seen in Figure 4, is that the South African music scene is male dominated, and even though there is consistent female representation throughout the listings, it is mainly representations of male and female performers together. For example. Kabomo and Nothende's *Colour of You* (2013); Fistaz Mixwell and Mellow Soul's *I'm Free* (2014); Bucie and Heavy K's *Easy To Love* (2015); Shekinah and Kyle Deutsch's *Back To The Beach* (2016); Mobi Dixon and Inga Hina's *Trigger* (2017); and Prince Kaybee and Lady Zamar's *Charlotte* (2018). This is clearly apparent as the presence of female only performers is consistently lower than that of male only performers.

#### 4.4.4 Gender and Genre

Dance:

In my analysis of the frequency of gender representations within the dance genre, in the Record of the Year category, I have made the following observations:

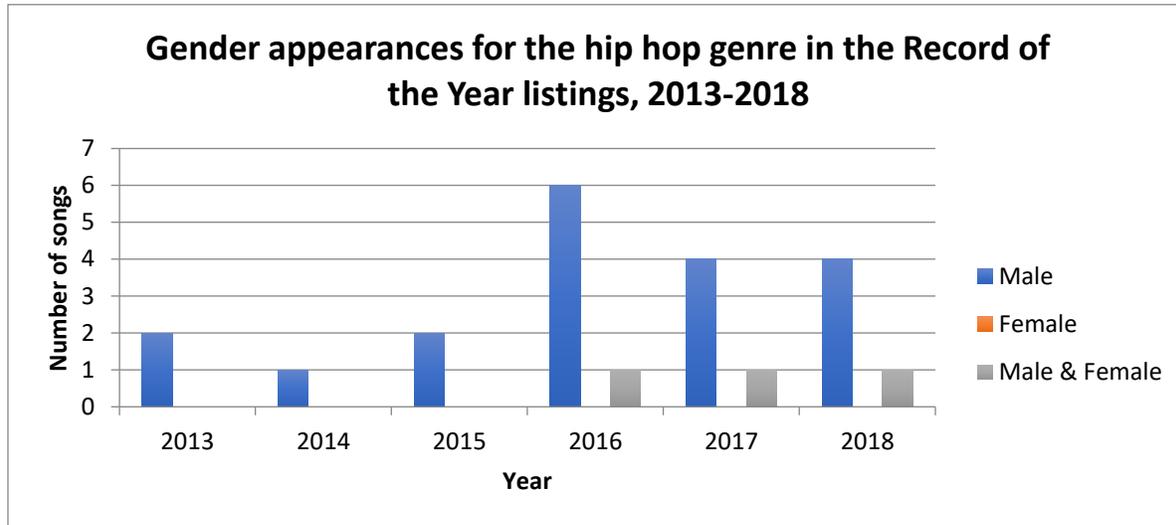


**Figure 5.** Frequency of gender representations in the dance genre, in the Record of the Year listings 2013-2018

It is demonstrated, through Figure 5, that the dance genre is male dominated, however, there is a strong presence of female vocalists accompanying male Djs in the genre. For example: Euphonik, Bob'ezy and Mpumi's *Busa* (2015); Black Motion and Xoli M's *Rainbow* (2015); Bucie and Heavy K's *Easy To Love* (2015); Four7 and Tiffany's *J'adore* (2016); Dj Ganyani and Layla's *Talk To Me* (2017); and Dj Maphorisa, Busiswa, Moonchild and Dj Tira's *Midnight Starring* (2018). In addition, Figure 5 indicates a rapid increase in female only representations in 2018, with songs like Lady Zamar's *Love Is Blind* (2018) and *My Baby* (2018); Dj Zinhle and Tamara Dey's *Colours* (2018).

### Hip hop:

In my analysis of the frequency of gender representations within the hip hop genre, in the Record of the Year category, I have made the following observations:

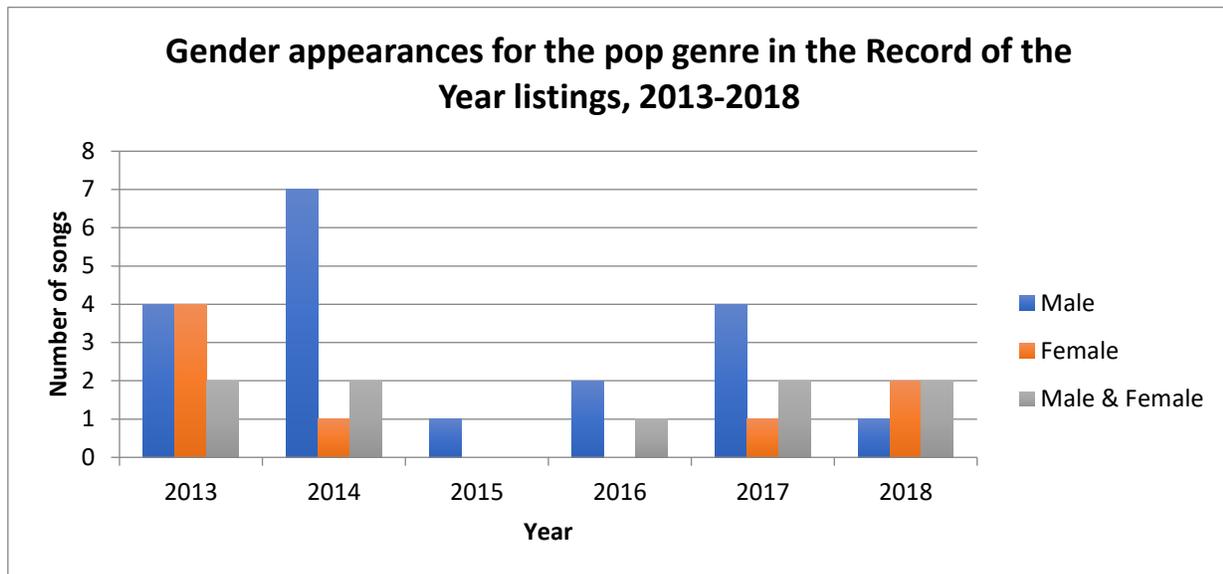


**Figure 6.** Frequency of gender representations in the hip hop genre, in the Record of the Year listings 2013-2018

Through Figure 6, it is clearly demonstrated that South African hip hop is a male dominated genre, with a very minimal presence of female performers, on occasion, accompanying male performer(s). For example: KO and Nandi Mngoma's *Skhanda Love* (2016); Miss Pru, Emtee, Sjava, Fifi Cooper, A-reece, B3nchMarq and Saudi's *Ameni* (2017); and Kwesta and Thabsie's *Ngiyaz'fela Ngawe* (2018). It is also noted that there are no female only hip-hop representations throughout the six-year period. This in no way suggests that there are no female performers in this space, but rather, emphasises the fact that these female performers have not reached the same level of mainstream commercial success as male performers. Examples of songs by female hip-hop performers in the South African music industry are (that are not a part of the ROTY listings): Rouge's *Mbongo Zaka* (2016); Nadia Nakai's *Naaa Meaan* (2017); Moozlie's *S'funukwazi* (2018); and Boity's *Bakae* (2019).

### Pop:

In my analysis of the frequency of gender representations within the pop genre, in the Record of the Year category, I have made the following observations:



**Figure 7.** Frequency of the gender representations in pop genre, in the Record of the Year listings 2013-2018

Figure 7 clearly indicates that the pop genre is male dominated. However, this is different from other genres in that pop has displayed an increased representation of female performers consistently through four out of the six years under examination.

### Gospel:

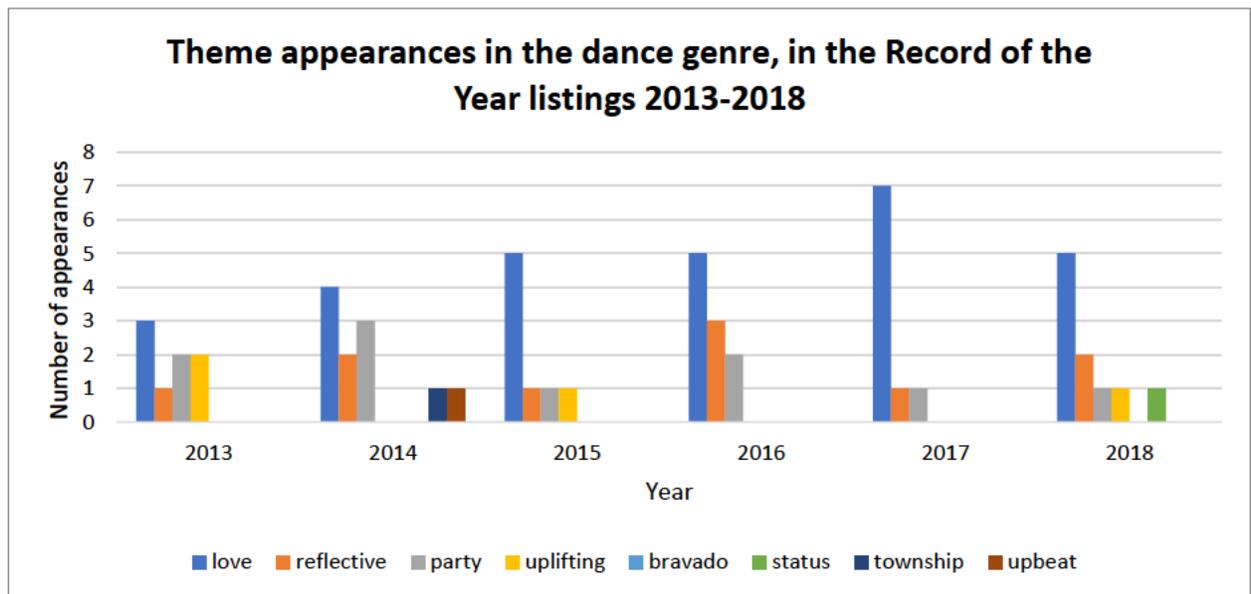
There is only one appearance of this genre in the listings, and therefore insufficient data to articulate in chart form. The only gender representation present in this song – that of a male performer. In the song in question, Sfiso Ncwane’s *Kulungile Baba* (2013), the performer is backed by what is seemingly a female choir, but this has not been established clearly as this choral harmony is more of a backing to the main vocals than a key part of the main song form. The choir creates an echoing, and thus, emphasis of the male vocalist’s hook, “*Kulungile Baba*”.

*Kwaito:*

There are only three appearances of this genre in the listings, and therefore again not enough data to articulate in chart form. The two gender representations present in this song are that of a male performer (with one appearance), and that of both male and female performers (with two appearances) suggesting that kwaito is a male dominated genre, but placing emphasis on female performers as playing an important role in the genre's performance.

#### 4.4.5 Genre and theme

*Dance:*



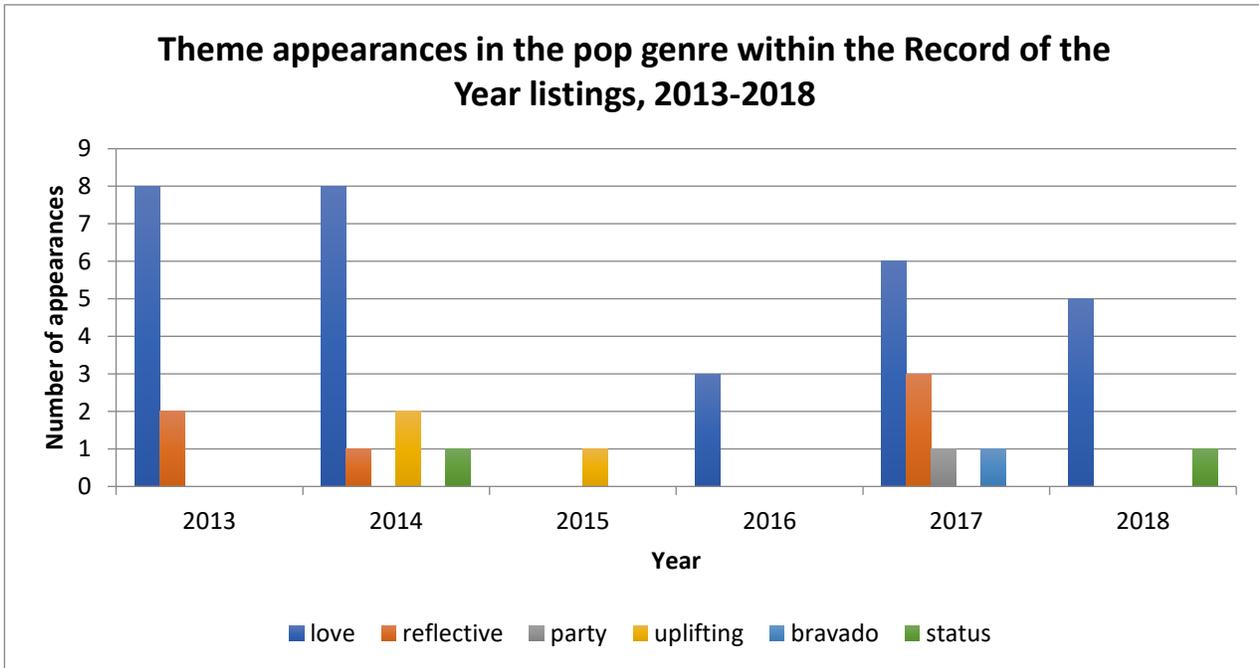
**Figure 8.** Frequency of the thematic expression presented in the dance genre

In my analysis of the frequency of thematic expression within the dance genre, in the Record of the Year category, I have made the following observations:

In Figure 8, love is presented as the most dominant thematic expression in the dance genre. In addition to this, it is shown that dance music's thematic representations aren't overtly centred around the party culture, with around 18% of the songs appearing in the dance listing (10 out of 56 songs), falling under the party thematic representation. The

consistent presentation of *love*, *reflective* and *uplifting* thematic expression suggests that dance music is a reflection of more serious subject matter presented over a dance (up-tempo) beat. There is little focus on *status*, *bravado*, *township* and *upbeat* within the thematic representations presented in the dance genre.

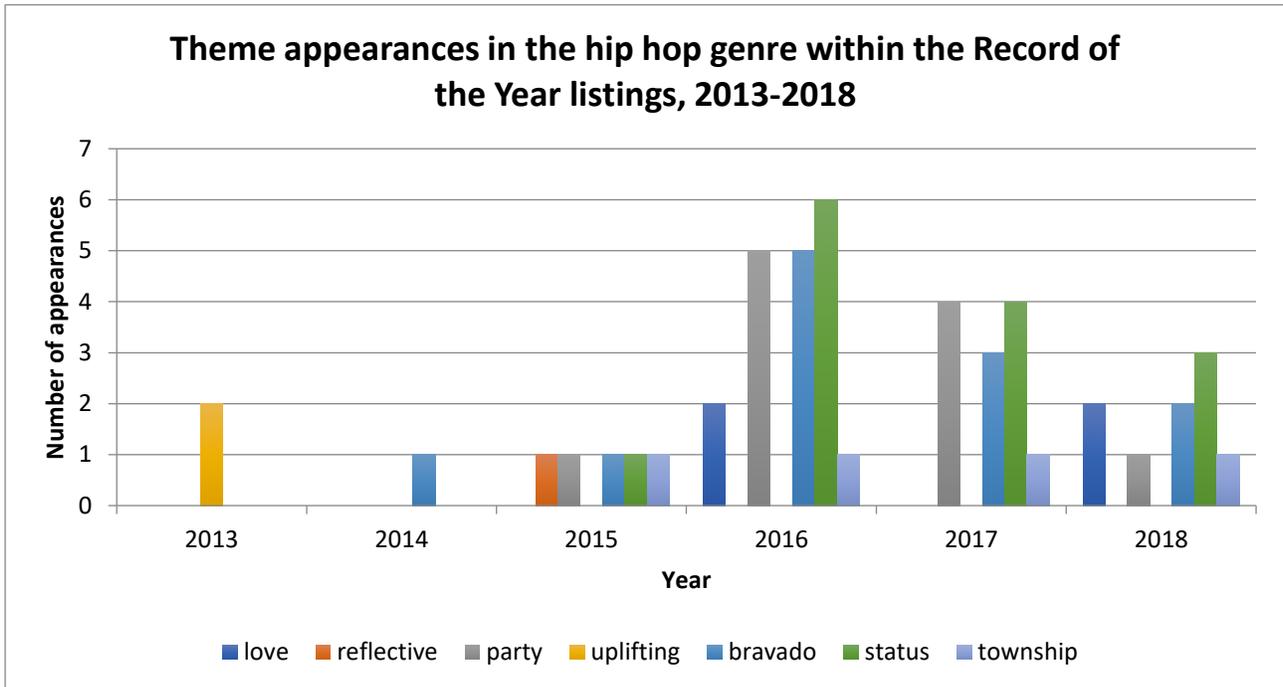
*Pop:*



**Figure 9.** Frequency of the thematic expression presented in the pop genre

The data in Figure 9 depict *love* as the dominant thematic expression in the pop genre. The only other noteworthy thematic representations within this portion of the listings are: *reflective* and *uplifting*.

### Hip hop:



**Figure 10.** Frequency of the thematic expression presented in the hip hop genre

In Figure 10, it is clearly demonstrated that, unlike other genres, hip hop is not centred around the *love* thematic expression - only 8% of the expression presented in the hip hop listings (4 out of 48 songs), represent the expression of *love*. The year 2016, which we have already established through Figure 1, was an important year for hip hop as it had peaked in the amount of representation in the listings. Consequently, there is also an increase in signifiers of power, (masculine) dominance and success in hip hop – i.e. *bravado*, *party* and *status* – in this year, which ultimately continued through to 2018. These thematic signifiers are not unexpected in the South African hip hop genre, as these stereotypical displays are present in the global hip hop scene.

### Gospel:

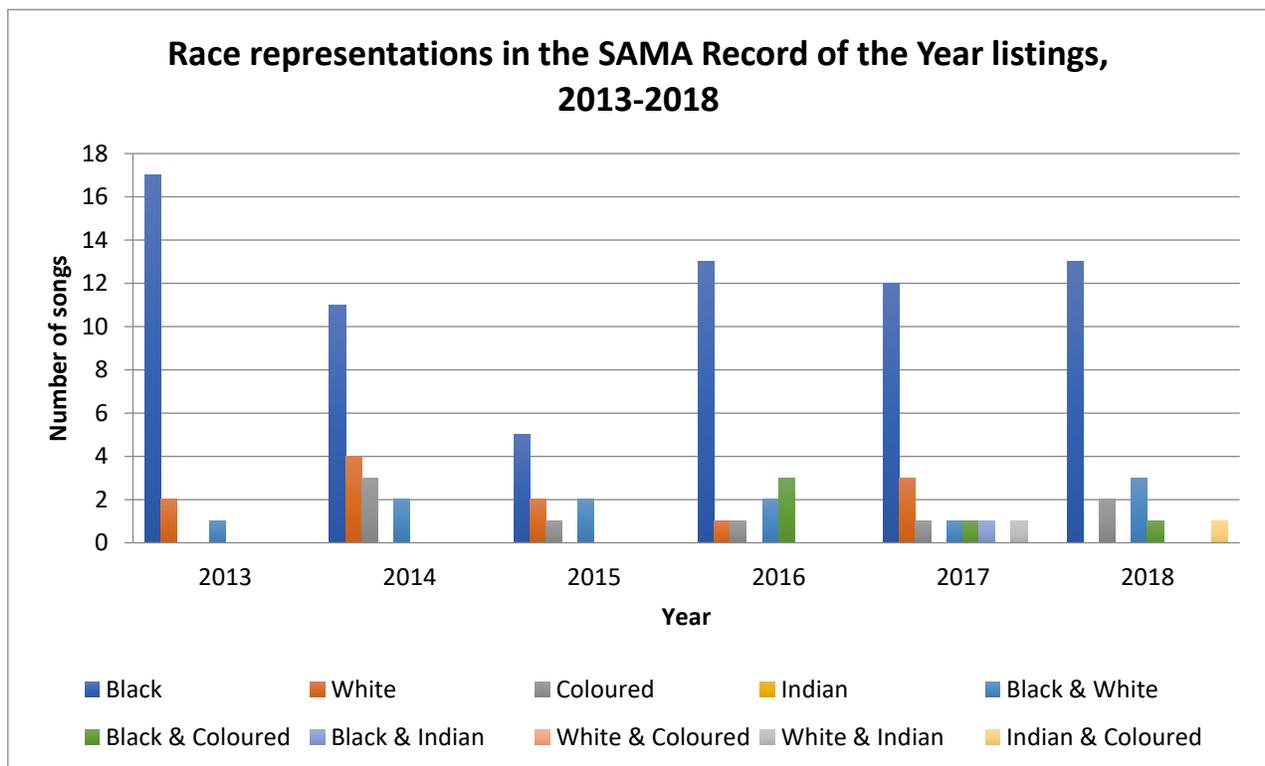
There is only one thematic expression presented in the gospel genre, which is *uplifting*. This is expected due to the inherent reaffirming nature of religious based music.

*Kwaito:*

The thematic representation which is dominant in the kwaito genre is one that references the party lifestyle. The township is only represented once in this genre.

#### 4.4.6 Race

In my analysis of the race representations in the Record of the Year category, I have made the following observations:



**Figure 11.** Frequency of race representations in the SAMA Record of the Year listings, 2013-2018

Given the population demographics in South Africa, as seen in Table 2, the race representations in the SAMA Record of the Year listings could be expected to follow a similar trajectory.

Table 2

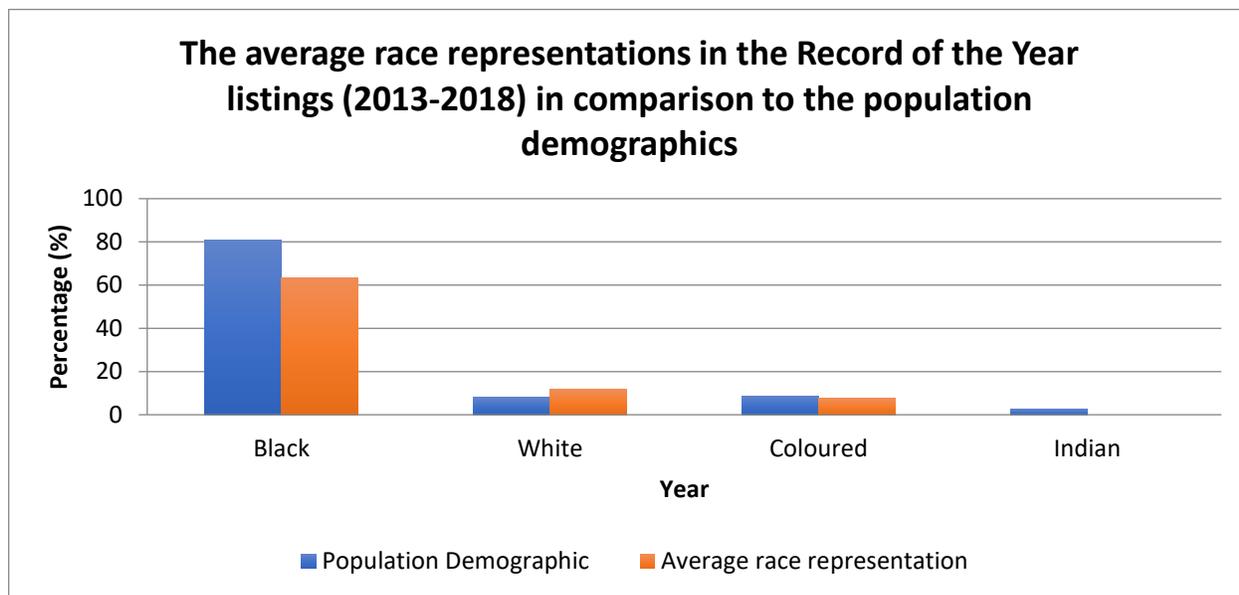
Mid-year population estimates for South Africa by population group and sex

Population group	Male		Female	Total		
	Number	% distribution of males	Number	% distribution of females	Number	% distribution of total
Black African	23 124 782	80,7	24 318 477	80,8	47 443 259	80,7
Coloured	2 513 221	8,8	2 663 530	8,8	5 176 750	8,8
Indian/Asian	768 594	2,7	734 413	2,4	1 503 007	2,6
White	2 266 151	7,9	2 385 855	7,9	4 652 006	7,9
Total	28 672 747	100,0	30 102 275	100,0	58 775 022	100,0

Source: Table 1 in Mid-year population estimates, 2019 (Statistics South Africa, 2019)

Figure 11, indicates an increased variation in race representation over the six-year period, with 2013 presenting two race groupings (*Black* and *White*) and 2018 presenting all four race groupings (*Black*, *White*, *Coloured* and *Indian*). The dominance of *Black* representations is expected as this grouping makes up the dominant race demographic in South Africa (as seen in Table 2).

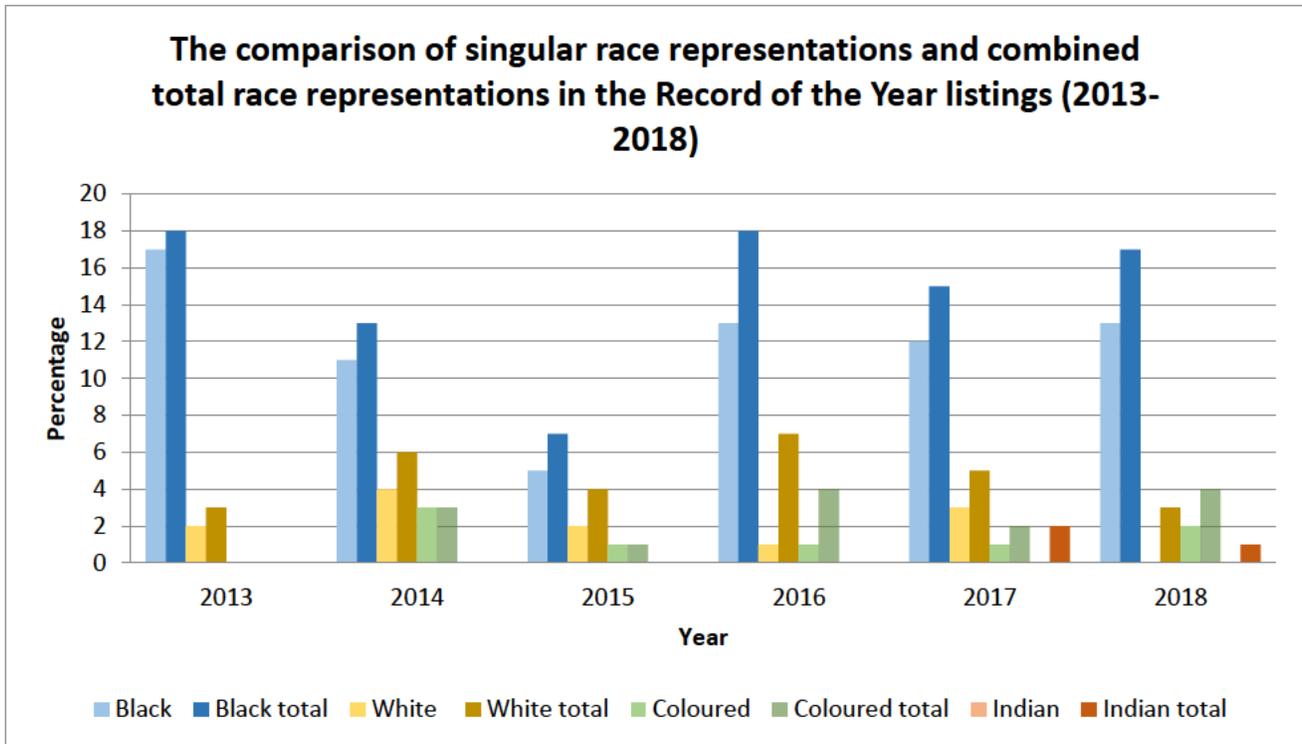
Below, in Figure 12, is a chart comparing the race representations in the SAMA Record of the Year listings to the demographics of the South African population, according to the estimates provided by StatsSA (2019), as seen in Table 2.



**Figure 12.** Comparison between the average race representations in the Record of the Year category and the South African population demographics according to StatsSA (2019)

The data presented in Figure 12, suggests that all race groups, except for the White population, are, on average, underrepresented. While this data does provide a correlation between the presented representations, it is in no ways causal. Meaning, there could be a number of contributing factors to this resultant representational model. In order to further examine this set of data, the total race representation including one data point for every combined race representation (for example, *Black & White*), which was not included in the first data set (as seen in Figure 12), was analysed. This was articulated in order to accurately interrogate the possibility of a relationship between certain combinations of race groupings in the listings. However, in order to obtain a more accurate representation of the comprehensive number of race representations that are presented in the listings, the additions of the total data counts for each group is beneficial.

Having considered the additions to the data set, when analysing Figure 13, it was noted that the all-inclusive race representational figures are substantially higher than the singular representation figures.



**Figure 13.** A comprehensive account of the number of race representations presented in the record of the year listings 2013-2018, with the comparison of the singular race representations and the combined total race representations.

With this in mind, we are able to calculate the complete number of songs per capita<sup>10</sup>, for all four population demographics. This is demonstrated in Table 3, below. Through this data, we are able to clearly illustrate the apparent differentiation between the representation of race representation in the Record of the Year listings, which, as a representation of the broader ‘local’ music industry, suggests that there is inherent disproportion in race representation in the broader context of the South African music industry.

<sup>10</sup> The average measurement per population demographic.

Table 3

*Per Capita Representation for Population Demographics in the Record of the Year Listings, 2013-2018*

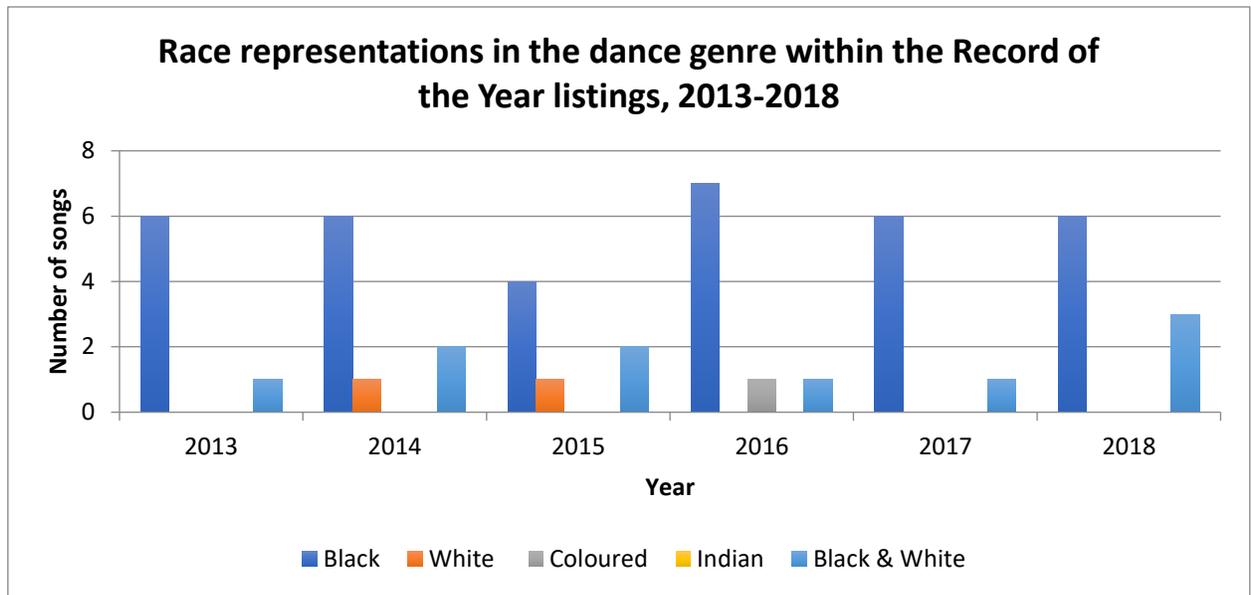
Population demographic	Average representation	Per capita
Black	14.67	0.18
White	4.67	0.59
Coloured	2.33	0.27
Indian	0.5	0.19

The data in Table 3 demonstrates the inherent hierarchy present in the representational model in the listings, and the industry at large. The significant presence of White representation (0.59 per capita), when compared to Black representation, is over three times higher. Meaning, notwithstanding the data depicted in Figures 11, 12 and 13, the Black race demographic is underrepresented. In contemplating the two other minority groups, that is, the Coloured and Indian demographics, it could be said that they are both underrepresented in comparison to the White demographic, but also comparably overrepresented in comparison to the Black demographic. While the difference between the Coloured and Black demographics' representation (0.09 difference per capita) is substantially higher than that of the Indian and Black demographics (0.01 difference per capita), nine out of the fourteen *Coloured* song representations are by the same performing artist, rapper AKA. In this sense, the high representation for this race demographic could be attributed largely to one performer, who is, in addition, the artist with the highest number of appearances in the Record of the Year listings during the six-year period. Additionally, all race representations for the Indian demographic is by Durban-based, Sketchy Bongo.

#### **4.4.7 Race and genre**

*Dance:*

In my analysis of the frequency of race representations within the dance genre, in the Record of the Year category, I have made the following observations:



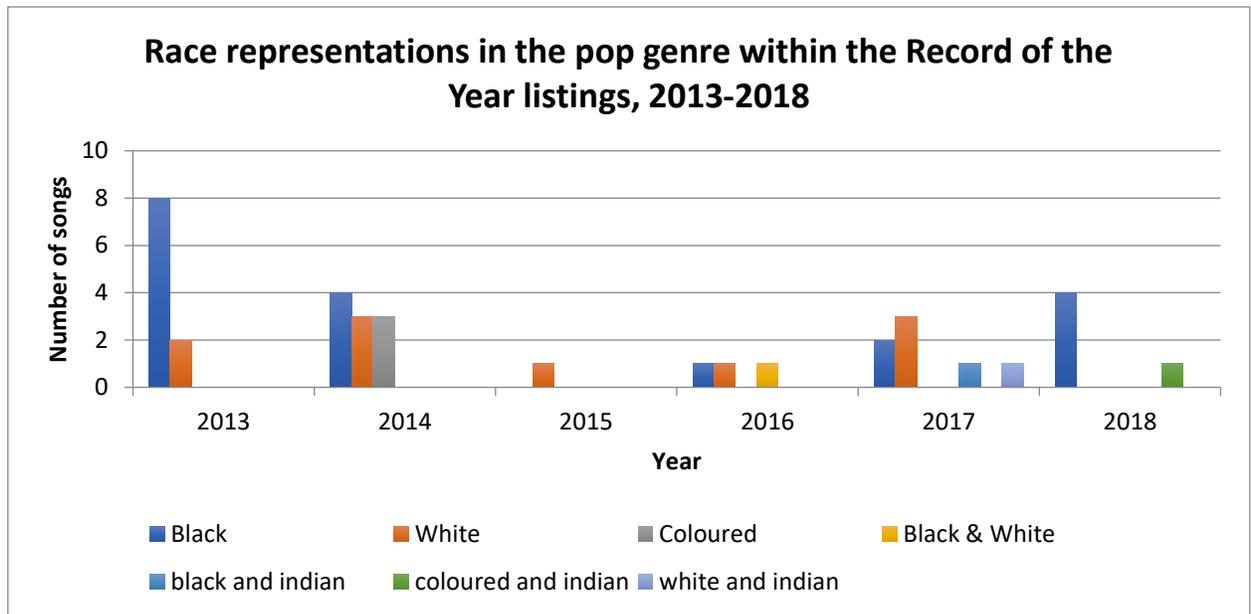
**Figure 14.** The frequency of race representations in the dance genre, in the Record of the Year listings 2013-2018

A consideration of Figure 14, indicates that dance music is dominated by the Black race representation. The other noteworthy observation made through the interrogation of this data is that the second most frequent presentation is that of the Black and White race representation.

*Pop:*

In my analysis of the frequency of race representations within the pop genre, in the Record of the Year category, I have made the following observations:

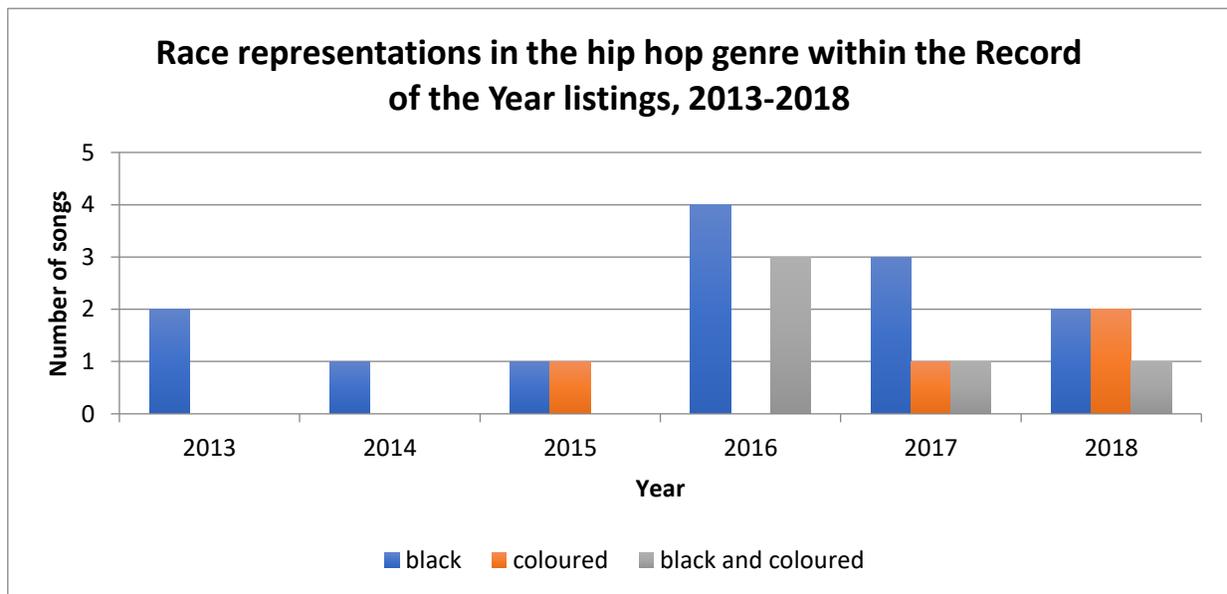
Through Figure 15, it is shown that both Black and White representation are consistently present over five of the six years under examination. All other noted race representations have only one appearance, except for the Coloured representation which has three in 2014.



**Figure 15.** The frequency of race representations in the pop genre, in the Record of the Year listings 2013-2018

*Hip hop:*

In my analysis of the frequency of race representations within the hip hop genre, in the Record of the Year category, I have made the following observations:



**Figure 16.** The frequency of race representations in the hip hop genre, in the Record of the Year listings, 2013-2018

The interrogation of the data in Figure 16 attests to Black representation dominating the rap genre. The only other appearing race representations are: the *Black and Coloured*, and the *Coloured* representations.

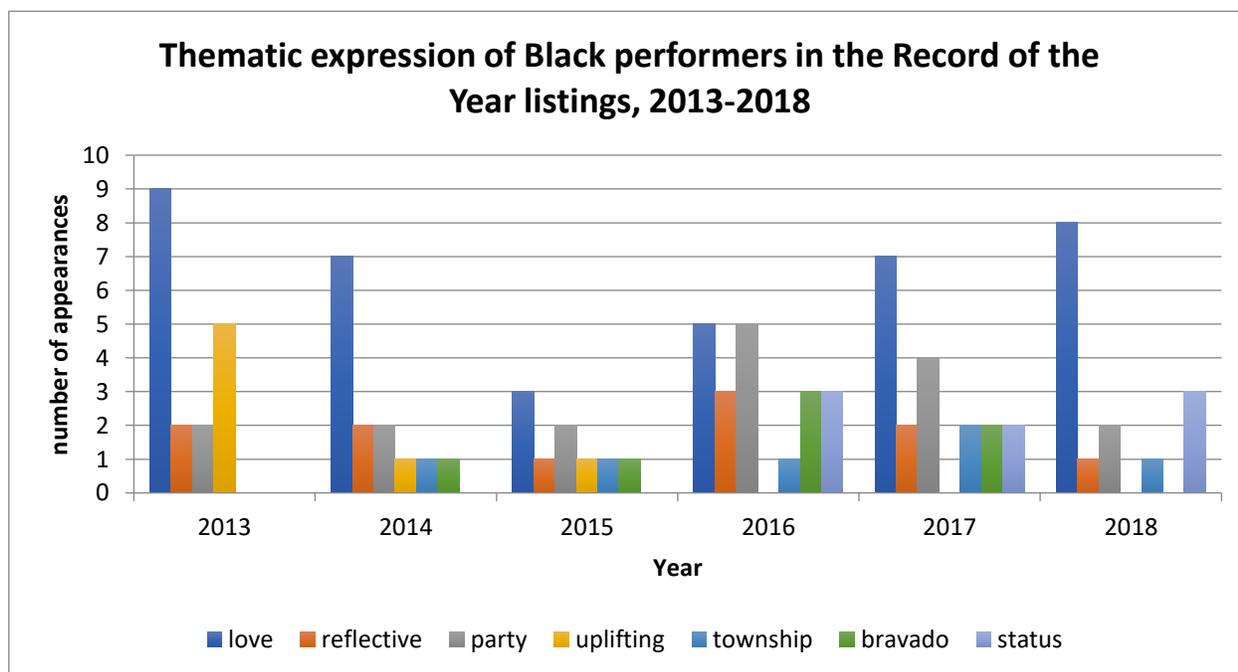
*Gospel and Kwaito:*

The Black race classification is the only representation presented in the listings in both gospel and kwaito.

**4.4.8 Race, Gender and Theme**

*Black:*

In my analysis of the frequency of thematic expression within the Black race representation, I have made the following observations:

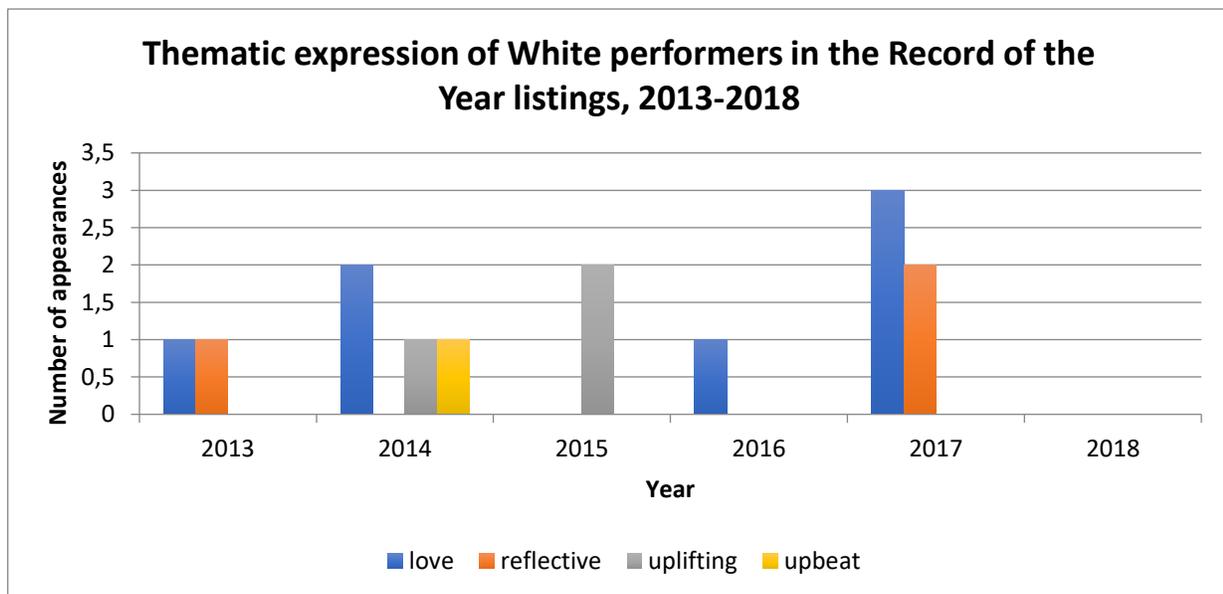


**Figure 17.** The frequency of thematic expression of Black performers in the Record of the Year listings, 2013-2018

Through the analysis of the data in Figure 17, it is evident that love is the dominant thematic expression amongst Black performers. The bulk of other thematic expressions are signifiers of power, (male) dominance and material success, which is predominantly by male performers. For example, Khuli Chana’s *Mnatebawen* (2014); KO and Kid X’s *Cara Cara* (2015); and Distructions Boyz’s *Omunye* (2018). Black female expression is predominantly centred on *love*, with the alternate thematic expression of black females being of a *reflective* or *uplifting* nature. For example, Zonke’s *Feelings* (2013); Amanda Black’s *Amazulu* (2017); and Lady Zamar’s *Love Is Blind* (2018).

*White:*

In my analysis of the frequency of thematic expression within the White race representation, I have made the following observations:

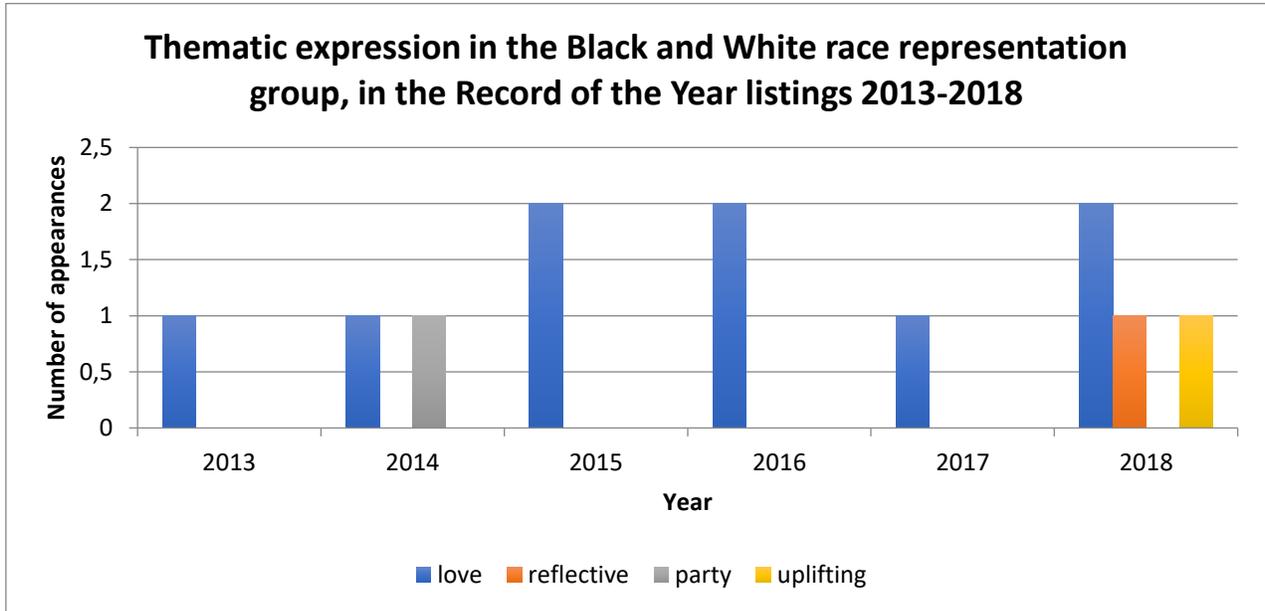


**Figure 18.** The frequency of thematic expression of White performers in the Record of the Year listings, 2013-2018

Through the analysis of Figure 18, it is evident that *love* is the dominant thematic expression. There is a relatively small range of thematic expression, with *reflective*, *uplifting* and *upbeat* appearing in this set of data.

*Black and White:*

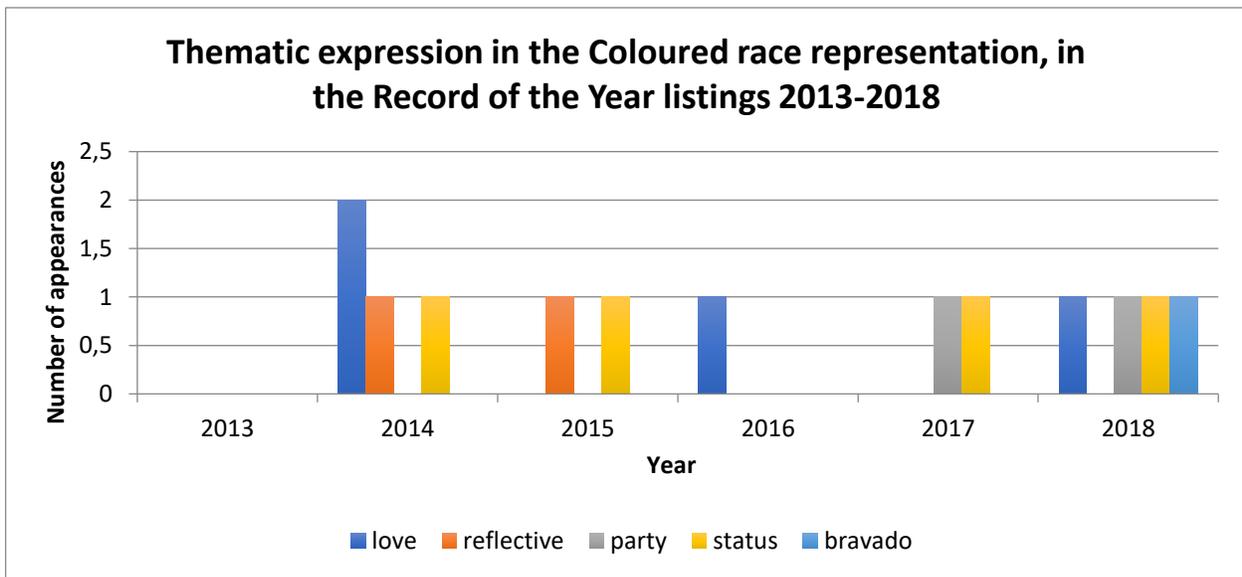
In my analysis of the frequency of thematic expression within the *Black and White* race representation, I have made the following observations:



**Figure 19.** Thematic expression of black and white performers in the listings

*Coloured:*

In my analysis of the frequency of thematic expression within the *Coloured* race representation, I have made the following observations:

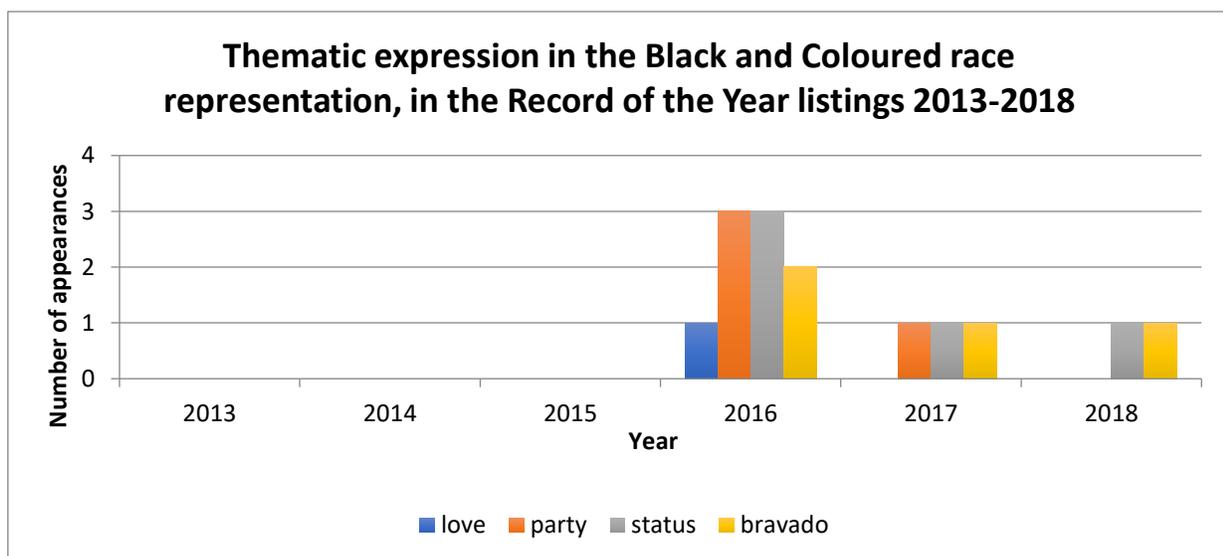


**Figure 20.** Thematic expression of Coloured performers in the Record of the Year listings, 2013-2018

Through the analysis of Figure 20, it is evident that *status* is the most consistently appearing thematic expression, with *love* as the next frequently appearing theme. All thematic expression in this data set is by male performers, except one song in 2016: *J'adore* by Four7 and Tiffany.

*Black and Coloured:*

In my analysis of the frequency of thematic expression within the *Black and Coloured* race representation, I have made the following observations:



**Figure 21.** Thematic expression of Black and Coloured performers in the Record of the Year listings, 2013-2018

The analysis of Figure 21, reveals that *status* is the dominant thematic expression, with *party* and *bravado* being the next frequently appearing themes. It is also noteworthy that all appearances by this race grouping are by male performers in the hip hop genre.

#### *Black and Indian:*

There is only one song presenting this race representation, titled *Let You Know* (2017) by Sketchy Bongo and Shekinah. The only appearing theme for is *love*, by a male and female.

#### *White and Indian:*

There is only one song presenting this race representation, titled *Cold Shoulder* by Locnville and Sketchy Bongo (2017). There is one appearance each of the thematic expressions, i.e. *bravado*, *love* and *party*, by the male performers.

#### *Coloured and Indian:*

There is only one song presenting this race representation, titled *Love Me In The Dark* by Skatchy Bongo and Kaien Cruz (2018). The only theme presented is *love*, by the male and female performer.

#### **4.4.9 Artists with the most appearances in the listings:**

The period, 2013 to 2018, brought about many developments within the South African music industry including the increased popularisation of local hip hop music (Figure 1). This study has demonstrated particular development, along with the fact that dance music is the most popular genre in South Africa (Figure 1) and that the music industry is male dominated (Figure 4) – which consequently indicated that all the music genres in South Africa I analysed, are male dominated (Figures 5,6 & 7).

With that said, it comes as no surprise that the two musical acts with the most appearances in the listings are rapper AKA, with 9 appearances, and the dance music group MiCasa, with 6 appearances. Comparatively, these acts have demonstrated a consistent and noticeably higher amount of airplay over the six-year period in question. For that reason, I have singled them out as noteworthy signifiers of local identity(s). In as much as this is a consistent trend between the two acts, it is also worth mentioning that, both had released their debut albums, AKA's *Alter Ego* and MiCasa's self-titled *MiCasa*, in 2011. The factors contributing to their popularisation during this period could be

attributed to, amongst others, technological advancements, increased accessibility to the internet and/or increased social media usage. However, from my perspective these issues are not central to a discussion around their inherent localness. What is important is that we do not undermine the consumers' decisions to actively and consistently listen to the music of these two musical acts instead of that of others. This, however, does not in any way suggest that they are more local or more legitimate than any other musical act, but specifically highlights the facts that these two acts have made more of an impression in terms of airplay within the mainstream commercial music market.

In discussing these acts, I find it important to mention their racial categorisations as the South African context cannot be separated from local identity discourse. Dance music trio, MiCasa, is comprised of a combination of two black South Africans, Dr Duda and Mo-T, and a white Portuguese vocalist, J'Something; whereas rapper AKA, also known as Kiernan Forbes, is a Coloured South African. The importance of this within the broader discourse surrounding what it means to be a South African will be discussed in Chapter Five.

When considering the music of rapper AKA, the standout features, in my view, are his use of catchy hooks; rap verses filled with South African colloquialisms; 'feel good' lyrical content about success, money and the party/club culture which includes, but is not limited to, the hypersexualisation of the female body, sex, drugs and alcohol – all which could be considered to be a norm in the consumer-driven, patriarchal society in which we live. This topic will be discussed in detail in Chapter Four. While it may be safe to presume that AKA is a favourite amongst South African hip hop fans, the frequency and consistency with which he has maintained popularity could allow us to further presume that his music's innate ability to resonate with listeners crosses any genre related confines.

When considering the music of MiCasa, I would regard them as a group that produces particularly commercially viable music in that it is a combination of relatively simple chord progressions and melodies, as well as a non-offensive, family-friendly theme. Their music is mostly characterised by its catchy hook, dance beat and 'feel good' atmosphere which

all contributes to its sing-along nature. One of the characteristics that separates MiCasa from many other music acts within the local mainstream commercial music scene, is their inclusion of solo instrumental interludes, generally performed by Mo-T on the trumpet. These instrumental interludes are a regular occurrence in certain subgenres of house music but could be seen as an ode to South African jazz, which in turn could be seen as bringing about a sense of nostalgia or 'localness'. However, this is not a frequent musical inclusion in other songs in the mainstream music market, and thus I find it not a substantial enough characteristic to consider as being resoundingly local or signifying anything peculiarly and exclusively South African.

There is nothing about these two musical acts that is overtly 'local' apart from the occasional use of the vernacular, the occasional musical nuance that could potentially reference a local style or in the actual stories within the lyrical content of their songs. To quote Simon Frith (1996):

We hear things as music because their sounds obey a more or less familiar cultural logic, and for most music listeners (who are not themselves music makers) this logic is out of our control ... Some records and performers work for us, others do not - we know this without being able to explain it. Somebody else has set up the conventions; they are clearly social and clearly apart from us (1996:121).

Perhaps with a deeper analysis of the harmonic and melodic structures as well as the production of these songs, these issues could be quantified. This leads me to assume that the 'local' that is experienced and identifiable within these listings lies in the broader social and economic discourse surrounding South Africa. This will be discussed further in Chapter Five below.

# Chapter Five: Discussion on the Identity Signifiers presented in the Listings

*“Popular music is everywhere.  
It is at the centre of several crucial arguments  
concerning the nature of music, of culture, and of modern society.”  
(Middleton, 1990:v)*

## 5.1 Introduction

The intention of this chapter is to discuss, by way of a three-step process of coding necessitated by a grounded theory approach, the signifiers of possible South African, or rather, ‘local’ identity(s) through an analysis of the South African story(s) identified in the Record of the Year listings from 2013 to 2018. Through the systematic interrogation of the data set, dominant trends, dictated by the data, will be foregrounded.

## 5.2 What is ‘local’?

The presence of African musical acts in the global popular music scene has been substantially amplified in recent times, with acts like Burna boy, Wiz kid and Black Coffee, to name a few, making a significant imprint internationally. The South African popular music industry has developed into a sector that has undoubtedly matched global standards in music making. The gap between global and local has somewhat disintegrated over time, due to the almost instant access that the internet, streaming services and social media have granted us.

When returning to the root of the initial motivation for my research, the SABC’s 90% local content quota, the conversation was centred on the promotion of ‘local’ for sociocultural and economic gain. One way that this was proposed to ensue was through ensuring that more local musicians benefit from royalties, thus enhancing the ecosystem of the music industry. In principle, I do believe that there is a necessity to encourage and promote the increased efficiency of the industry. However, I do believe that the local content quota

was implemented in a way that deviated from its initial rationale, in the sense that the focus became about Hlaudi Motsoeneng and the SABC, and not the music industry and artists at large.

As I am writing this, we are a few months into a countrywide lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic that is sweeping the globe. One of the problems that arise out of pandemics like this is the sustainability of the industry and the lack of stability that many musicians face. Being a performer in South Africa is not a sustainable career unless you are consistently topping charts, acquiring brand sponsorships or ambassadorship deals or touring. In this sense, the increased playlisting of a variety of local artists would give a sense of passive income to many. While I do believe that royalties alone cannot possibly make enough of a financial difference in the lives of local artists, the knock-on effect that the increased visibility could provide, in theory, should open more opportunities that may aid artists financially. At the risk of sounding idealistic, I believe that this is possible once we figure out what exactly is going on in the industry, and trying to uplift it holistically – we cannot address the core of the problem if we have no idea what is going on within the music industry, and understand the audience and its preferences. Through the data that I have collected and analysed, I have attempted to discuss the signifiers of ‘local’ within the chosen listing within the broader social and economic discourse in present day South Africa. I have identified six categories that I will discuss, namely: local is capitalistic; local is political; local is patriarchal; local is policed; local is not colourless; and lastly, local is multifaceted.

### ***5.2.1 Local is capitalistic***

Whenever discussions surrounding the monopolisation of industries are brought to the fore, I tend to liken it to the notorious South African example of the now infamous Gupta family and the state capture inquiry. Perhaps, as a millennial,<sup>11</sup> this was my first encounter with something as incomprehensible as a country being run as if it was a family business,

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<sup>11</sup> A person reaching young adulthood in the early 21st century.

overwhelmingly favouring a select few. This type of anarchic rule is something that is however not as rare as I would have liked to believe. The commercialisation of various industries has led to the increased monopolisation of these industries by those in power, in order to retain wealth. In this sense, issues that concern the South African music industry are in no way peculiar to this country – capitalism is a global phenomenon. These issues are felt and debated in music industries globally (Antonio & Bonanno, 2000; Brown & Lauder, 2001; Robinson, 2014; Smart, 2007).

While popular music and its culture exist as a performance art or means of expression by musicians, one cannot forget that it is ultimately a business. The music industry is no different from other industries in its positioning as an economically driven market. It does, however, differ in the sense that it (the music industry) is filled with all of the glitz and glamour that is associated with fame and immense material success. Bearing in mind the widespread unemployment, inequalities and poverty, the music industry may indeed capture the imagination of many as a quick source of reprieve.

Access to the market is largely determined by what is referred to as ‘enablers’ by Jonathan Shaw (2010). In his book, *The South African Music Business* (2010), Shaw makes reference to a concise diagram illustrating the “value chain for a creative industry” (2010:34), which demonstrates the mechanics behind the music industry from the ‘creators’ to the ‘consumers’. With regards to radio airplay and audience reach, the diagram suggests that ‘creators’ have to make use of the ‘enablers’ and ‘facilitators’ in order to gain increased access to the music market and subsequently, increased exposure from particular ‘revealers’ that would not necessarily be accessed without gatekeepers like the ‘enablers’ (record companies, distributors, music publishers, booking agents etc.) and ‘facilitators’ (education, networking, bargaining, royalty collections etc.). With that in mind, we could say that ‘local’ primarily lies in the hands of the ‘enablers’ and ‘facilitators’. I would argue that a reinterpretation of the diagram is necessary as ‘facilitators’ in the contemporary music scene have become less of a prerequisite for success. While the networking aspect of ‘facilitators’ may be an important factor, I do believe that networking could also fall under the umbrella of the ‘enablers’ grouping.

Additionally, I believe that the royalty collection proponent that is considered to fall under the 'facilitators' umbrella should fall into a category of its own subgrouping in between the 'revealers' and the 'consumers'. In my opinion, the act of facilitating is something that comes prior to the product being revealed and distributed. In this sense, royalty collections would follow the distribution of the product, i.e. airplay. Royalty collections companies have limited interaction with or provide limited promotion for artists, thus separating them from the proposed value chain of the industry, based on their function and how they carry out their services to performing artists. In all actuality, another way of interpreting it would be to place royalty collections in a separate area congruent to the main value chain as it is an isolated interaction that provides financial gains which are distributed to the enablers and creators. Thus, 'local' can be said to predominantly lie in the hands of 'enablers', and even though consumers may "guide market taste" (Shaw, 2010:35), the version of 'local' that a large part of the South African population consume is one that is prepared and prescribed by 'enablers' and thus, packaged into what is they believe is a palatable, marketable version of local identity.

Upon my interrogation of the Record of the Year listings, it came as no surprise to me that most of the artists were affiliated to major record labels. If we look at things from an economic perspective, as an artist, if your goal is to have mass commercial success in the mainstream music market, the easier route to increase your reach, and ultimately, access into the music market would be to align yourself to a major record label. While this may compromise the artist's initial intended musical output, due to the label's ability to dictate and shape the product into something that is more easily marketable in their eyes, it is the tried and tested route to potential success. This is in no way saying that independent artists cannot or do not have immense commercial success, it is just to say that it is less likely for independent artists to become as successful in the mainstream music market, especially in terms of reach and radio airplay – nor is it saying that label affiliation guarantees success. An example of this, which came as a surprise, is rapper Cassper Nyovest and the lack of airplay he has received and, subsequently, the lack of presence in the SAMA record of the year listings. Cassper Nyovest is arguably one of the biggest performing artists in South Africa. Since 2015, the rapper has successfully held

his #FillUp concert series, the most successful hip hop focused event in Africa, through which he has filled major stadiums across the country (Samsung Press Release, 2019). Most notable of these concerts is perhaps the rapper's accomplishment of being the "first South African hip-hop artist" to fill Africa's biggest stadium, the FNB Stadium in Johannesburg, to capacity, with a crowd attendance of approximately 68 000 (Magwaza, 2017). It seems implausible that an artist who is able to sell hundreds of thousands of tickets to his concerts would not be receiving major airplay across the same period. This is something that the rapper has publicly addressed on social media platform, Twitter, on numerous occasions:

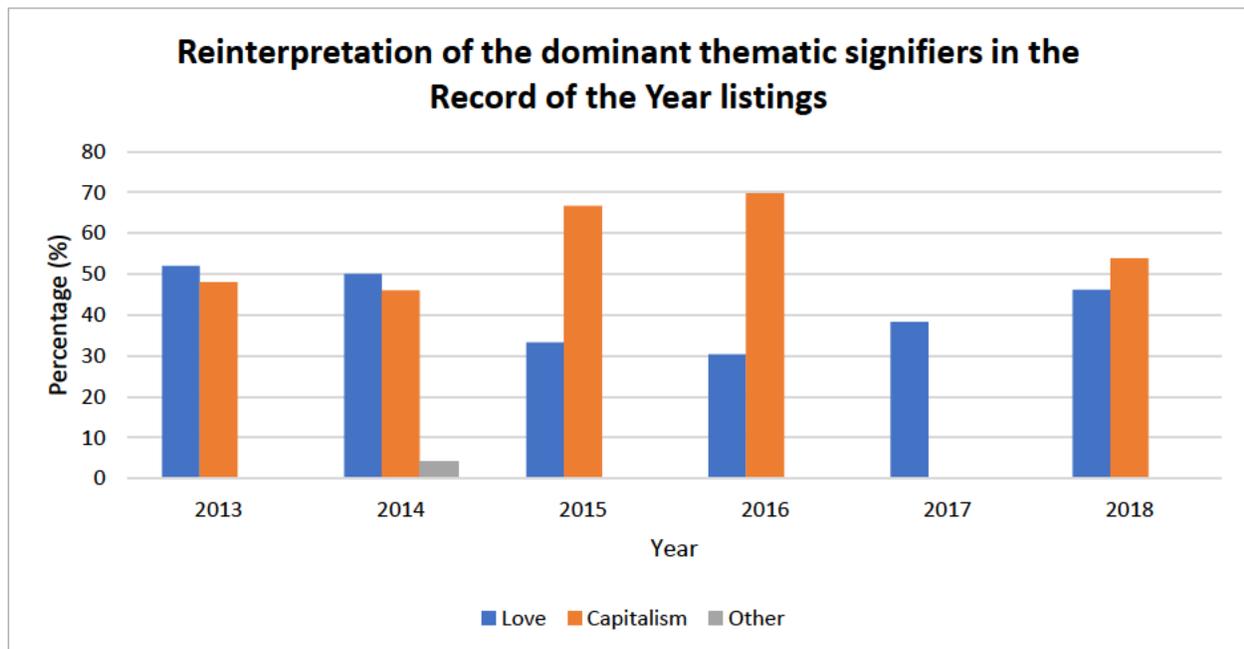
Major record labels fucked up the game. The airplay is the only reason we ain't never gone get another song of the year. We gone get the street rocking doe. Year in, year out!!! #TeamNyovest are the real ones!!! No shaky shit!!! (Phoolo, 2018).

[...] We could have the same thing but nah, we would rather fight amongst ourselves and cut down our airplay to cut the reach. Disrespect our own sound and artists. That's our vibe here. Niggas not playing your music cause they don't like you, you know? Those vibes. We lost! (Yomzansi, 2019).

The above leads me to think there are other elements involved in the music industry, which may be related to gatekeeping and payola, but that is purely speculation, on my part, based on these tweets. This is something to which we may never have the answers, but adds to our contextual understanding of the type of industry that we have here in South Africa – one that is potentially monopolised. This, again, is not something that is peculiarly 'local', but is in fact, a part of the capitalistic model that has shaped the global music industry.

While we know of the importance of money and financial freedom/stability, the money-driven discourse surrounding the industry at large and the music it produces is something that is overwhelmingly dominant, even if it is not directly referenced lyrically. Thematic expression associated with 'reflecting on life struggles', 'the uplifting to bring hope for

better days' or 'the township life' could be seen as something that is directly linked to socio-economic conditions in South Africa. The more obvious thematic expression that could be linked to a money-centred discourse would be those linked to 'status', the 'party culture' and 'bravado'. If we take this into consideration, when we look at Figure 3, we can conclude that the most dominant thematic signifiers that are present in the listings are not, in fact, love centred signifiers but rather, capitalistic-centred. To put this into perspective, Figure 3 has been refigured below to organise the previous thematic groupings into ones that reflect this truth. Six of the previous categories – *Reflection, Party lifestyle, Uplifting, Status, Bravado and Township* – have been ultimately regrouped to highlight their core underlying principle: capitalism and consumerism. This has been demonstrated below in Figure 22.



**Figure 22.** A Reinterpretation of the appearing themes in the SAMA Record of the Year listings from 2013 to 2018

An example of this is the winner of 2013's Record of the Year award, *Kulungile Baba* by Sfiso Ncwane. The song's chorus consists predominantly of the words "*Kulungile Baba*" which, directly translated from isiZulu into English, means "It Is well Father". This affirmation is reinforced through its repetition throughout the song, and echoing in choral harmony by a female choir, suggests a sense of reassurance through whatever trials that

may be faced through God's plan and protection for His children<sup>12</sup>. The core lyrics of the opening chorus are as follows:

*Baba kulungile ma kuyintando yakho, okwenzek'ezimpilweni zethu  
Kulungile Baba*

*(Kulungile Baba)*

*Kulungile ke, Baba*

*E-kulungile Somandla,*

*(Kulungile Baba)*

*Kulungile ke, Baba.*

*E-Kulungile Makuyintando yakho*

*(Kulungile ke Baba)*

*Kulunge konke Somandle.*

*(Kulungile Baba)*

*Makuyintando yakho Baba*

*E-kulungile ke Baba*

*(Kulungile Baba)*

*Konke okwenzekayo makuyintando yakho Somandla.*

*Ye kulungile ke Somandla, kulungile ke.*

*(Kulungile Baba)*

Which loosely translated means:

It is well Father

If it's Your will almighty

If it's within Your will Father

Everything that is happening Father

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<sup>12</sup> This could reference the bible verse Jeremiah 29:11, which states: "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (New International Version).

It is well Father.

In this sense, one could say that the song conveys a message of hope or comfort in the midst of hardship. The song speaks of an unshakeable faith in the face of trials and the acceptance of the subsequent pain experienced because it is a part of God's will for his servants. In this sense, the song expresses a deep sadness which is brought about through having no hope other than to place trust in God's will, to bring about a positive change in one's life. This speaks to the unfavourable socio-economic conditions that are a reality for many South Africans, which has left them with no hope other than to trust in a higher power or religion for help. This sorrowful hopelessness could be likened to one referenced in Amanda Black's *Amazulu* (2017). The singer conveys a similar sense of immense hardship as she sings "*Ubomi bunzima*", which when translated, highlights the fact that life is difficult. Following this realisation, the singer, in similar fashion to *Kulungile Baba*, puts her faith in a higher power to provide the breakthrough that she requires. She states:

So lift my head up high  
Open my eyes  
And I will fly oh  
I'm barely coping  
I'm feeling closed in  
Looking up, hoping  
The heavens will open

This, in my perspective, highlights the fact that life's struggles are ever-present throughout different age groups<sup>13</sup>. Key to both of these songs messaging is the element of persevering despite the odds.

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<sup>13</sup> Amanda Black's style of music could be deemed to speak to an urban young adult, as opposed to Sfiso Ncwane's gospel which could be assumed to predominantly speak to an older audience base from both urban and rural backgrounds.

Another example of the economic-centred discourse surrounding 'local' is the *status* and *bravado* thematic signifiers in the listings. One such example is Ricky Rick's *Boss Zonke* (2016), in which the rapper speaks of impressing everyone in his neighbourhood because of his popularity and success. In addition, Ricky Rick asserts his envious fashion sense through the lyrics in the hook "*Umswenko bayamazi*". Meaning, people know him for his fashionable outfits. The rapper follows this by stating:

*Ngithi* everything I do they wanna do  
They wanna do  
Everything I say they wanna say  
They wanna say.

Thus, implying that he is a trendsetter of sorts and that people look up to him for inspiration. This type of narrative is something that is common within the hip hop genre, as seen in both Nasty C's *Hell Naw* (2017) and AKA's *Congratulate* (2015). In the hook of the 2017 winner of the Record of the Year category, *Hell Naw*, Nasty C affirms:

Am I ever gonna quit?  
Hell naw  
Will I dumb it down a bit?  
Hell naw  
Am I running with the shit?  
Fucking right I bring the levels to this bitch

Speaking of his status and influence within the industry due to his apparent lyrical prowess – "*I know a couple that could use a couple lyrics from me*", suggesting that he is superior to other rappers in the music industry. The repetition of "*hell naw*" could be seen as the performer affirming himself through him asking questions that he already knows the answer to. This could in a sense, be seen as being a motivational anthem for the artist's audience base – "*I rap for the ones still in high school, probably my age and they think I'm cool*" - to keep working at their dreams, so that they too can be successful. This is

similar to the type of aspirational message conveyed through *Congratulate*. In the bridge of the song, AKA, in similar fashion, asks questions that are immediately affirmed by the ever-present narrative of success, especially of a monetary kind, through dedication – “*I had to pay dues, had to make moves on faith*” - and perseverance – “*Even got booed off stage, trying to put food on plate*”. He states:

Do you see what it took? Is it clearer?  
Who you see when you look in the mirror?  
All the dreams and fantasies that come together  
I'll be shining like a diamond that's forever

Another more obviously money-centred discourse found within the listings is presented in Miss Pru's *Ameni*, which features Sjava, Saudi, A-reece, B3nchMarQ, Emtee and Fifi Cooper. In A-reece's verse, the rapper postulates his money-driven ideology, in saying:

It's about the figures  
Yeah, the dough  
It's about us winners  
Nothing more.

In saying this, the rapper suggests that money and material success is all that matters in the bigger scheme of life, and ultimately suggesting that monetary success equates to winning. This narrative is emphasised in Saudi's verse in the song, in which he states:

*Ngifun' amaMeter*  
*Ngifuna uMadiba*  
*Igolide njengGibhithe*

Which, roughly translated, means:

I want the millions

I want Madiba,<sup>14</sup>  
the gold like its Egypt.

Other such examples are Sun El Musician's *Akanamali* (2018) and Black Motion's *Imali* (2018) which overtly reference money<sup>15</sup> or money-centred motives through the naming of the songs.

### **5.2.2 Local is political**

*"People get used to anything.  
The less you think about your oppression, the more your tolerance for it grows.  
After a while, people just think oppression is the normal state of things.  
But to become free, you have to be acutely aware of being a slave."  
- Assata Shakur (2001)*

The abovementioned quote by Assata Shakur (2001) references a society that is enslaved in ways that are not easily distinguishable. In this sense, it brings to the fore the concept of certain oppressions and inequalities being veiled through normalisation. This could, in a sense, be applied in the South African context. Poverty, inequality and prejudice are three of the many injustices that plague South African society and are, when taken into consideration, somewhat normalised. Various factors could have contributed to this; however, I believe that the tirelessness and relentlessness of these injustices have contributed to the focus shifting from contesting infrastructures and power structures to merely coping. Thus, a substantial part of society become slaves to the repression. In saying this, it is important to note that this systemic oppression of Black people is something that is not innately South African, but is, in fact, a global phenomenon.

In a post-colonial, post-apartheid society like South Africa, the level of influence of that our history has had on every aspect of our existence is significant. In a society where

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<sup>14</sup> The South African currency (Rand) consists of notes depicting the face of Nelson Mandela. Hence, it is colloquially referred to as 'Randelas' or 'Madibas'.

<sup>15</sup> *Imali*, is an isiZulu word which means money.

many of the systems and power structures that have been put into place have been created by, and are rooted, in a Eurocentric narrative, the othering of Black people and Blackness becomes so deep-rooted that it goes almost unnoticed without proper interrogation. An example of this in a rather common setting may be seen in the hair - care aisle in a grocery or beauty store where the portion of space dedicated specifically to the needs of black hair care are more often than not a fraction of the size of the area dedicated to sleeker hair types which are mostly attributed to those of European descent. In a country in which the majority of the population is Black, this is problematic. Additionally, you might see the aisle subdivided into two categories, with the Black hair care section referred to as 'ethnic' hair care (as opposed to simply 'hair care').

If we consider this in the broader scheme of 'local', it might, in fact, be a reflection of (lack of) access to capital. Meaning, the othering of 'Black-ness' could be seen as a symptom of the economic exclusion that still plagues the South African society. In this sense, we could say that the othering of 'Black-ness' in certain spaces exactly reflects the othering of Black-ness in the economy itself. This issue connects to the previous category, 'local is capitalistic', in the sense that the socioeconomic and socio-political aspects of the South African society permeate a number of sectors of society. But, because music is a reflection of society, these aspects would additionally permeate the local popular music industry. This significant interrelation between a capitalistic society (as discussed in 'local is capitalistic) and this category, could inherently allow for them to be considered as one adjoined grouping. However, given the immeasurable inequalities still faced by many South Africans as a consequence of both colonisation and apartheid, I have isolated this particular group in order to provide it with the significance that it requires. In order to establish the grounding of this discussion, it is necessary to define the parameters of 'political'. Within the context of this study, political is defined as the vehicle through which power is enacted. In this sense, Black expression is political because power, in this context, is the attempt to move something (i.e. systemic oppression) that would not have moved on its own. Meaning, Black freedom, Black liberties and Black expression is an act of power, and it is a communication of power because it is trying to enact its will on something else that would not have been moved. So, expressing something as

fundamental as joy is an expression of power, especially within the context of a post-apartheid South Africa. I say this to emphasise that the enacting and communicating of this power through music, and communicating, in a sense, the idea that ‘yes I am Black, yes I am having fun, yes I am free to dance’ is in itself an act of power and is thus political. It is normalising the liberty or emancipation of Black people, and in normalising this freedom it is trying to enact a change in a system that has historically been anti-Black<sup>16</sup>.

In Chapter Two, in articulating this study’s theoretical underpinning, it has already been established that the creation and dissemination of culture, and more specifically popular music, within the South African context is political. Additionally, there is an inherent tripartite association between culture industries, the economy and the government. Black expression in particular, is political due to the fact that the Black lived experience is markedly political. The effects of oppression and colonisation are so deeply ingrained within the society in which we live that the very essence of Blackness is political – Black bodies (through the imposition of Eurocentric beauty standards; Black lives (through the mass incarceration of people of colour), Black art (through the politicisation of the Black lived experience and its subsequent stories/expression), Black hair (through the policing of Black hair in various spaces), Black dialect. Whether or not the artist/person consciously acknowledges it, the Black experience is very political. It goes without saying that this would apply to a wide array of types of expression in varying contexts and circumstances – meaning, the decision to focus on or deflect from the social and economic conditions that face Black South Africans is political. Throughout the Record of the Year listings, there are several examples of this.

In referencing the socioeconomic and socio-political reality of South African society, the songs mentioned in the previous section depicting money-centred discourse are applicable. Following, but still falling under the same representational model, are songs like Vetkuk vs Mahoota’s *Via Orlando* (2014), Kwesta’s *Spirit* (2018) and KO, Kid X’s *Cara Cara* (2015) which directly highlight life in the township.

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<sup>16</sup> As seen in and through the apartheid regime.

A song that directly, in my opinion, references the veiled systemic oppression in our society is Prince Kaybee and Audrey's *Better Days* (2016). The song opens with an instrumental, with a repetitive, melodic riff played by the electric guitar that is expanded slowly in order to, in a sense, build tension within the song, with new musical elements being added to the primary riff at 16-bar intervals (or on occasion, 4- or 8-bar intervals). The opening verse by vocalist Audrey brings about a sense of intense hopelessness and despondency, as a result of life's adversities. The lyrics are as follows:

I'm standing on my own  
Trying to face another day  
With tears falling down me  
Thinking where did I go wrong.  
When life has had me so cold (be so cold)  
When I'm trying to do things right (oh right)  
Dear Lord just hear my plea (hear my plea)  
As I pray for better days

In the refrain of the song, the background music is diminished somewhat in an effort to highlight the pleas emulated in the lyrics, which express:

See, I'm going through changes  
I'm trying to be patient  
Oh Lord just hear me  
'Cause I wanna be free

The refrain is repeated with the addition of the guitar riff which was introduced in the beginning of the song. It builds to a climax at the end of the refrain with the word "free" being echoed and drawn out into the silence before the beat is reintroduced. The emphasis on the idea of freedom is interpreted in this case as relating back to socioeconomic struggles. The pleas of the vocalist to the "Lord", and the reinforcement of this through the echoing of the lyrics by backing vocals (the bracketed song lyrics),

emphasises the idea of life being “so cold” and the hope for the Lord to “hear my plea”. While the type of struggle being referenced is not distinctly articulated, it is assumed that the looseness in reference allows for the personalisation of the trials and tribulations inferred within the song. In a sense, references like that in this song in particular, not only highlight township life and its inherent struggles but also highlight those evident within more metropolitan areas, of people from varying cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds.

The other side of the spectrum is Black joy or indifference. While pain and struggles are inherently political, divergent expression is also, in essence, political. An example of this is Uhuru’s *Y Tjukutja* (2015) which is a remake of Angolan singer Yuri da Cuhna’s song, *Atch Tchutchcha* (2013).

*Wa dlal’ uchief*

*Wa jaiv’ uchief*

*Y tjukutja*

*Ai tjukutja*

This, loosely translated references someone dancing, and through the rest of the song, it is further understood that people are envious of this person’s impressive dance abilities. Other examples of Black joy and/or indifference are: Dj Fisherman and NaakMusiQ’s *Call Out* (2016); KO and Nandi Mngoma’s *Skhanda Love* (2016); Bucie and Black Motion’s *Rejoice* (2017); Musa and Robbie Malinga’s *Mthande* (2017); and Dj Maphorisa’s *Midnight Starring* (2018) which, in similar fashion, reference dancing/partying or love. While these songs are not representative of the full range of expression presented in the listings, they are an example of what could, in fact, have been any song by a Black performer(s) in the listings due to the innate political hallmark of Black expression. Meaning, even if the song has nothing markedly political about it, its presence in itself, is political.

In bringing this argument back to the context of identity, it could be said that the Black South African identity is markedly political. In an attempt to understand what it means to be South African, we can say that the various inequalities and injustices that are prevalent in South African society create the possibility of various contending identities, either directly referencing these societal ills or completely avoiding this context. In this sense, due to the fact that local is marked by certain value systems and ways of life, all Black identity discourse under the umbrella term 'local' is inherently of a political nature due to the overtly politicised lived experience of Black South Africans.

### ***5.2.3 Local is patriarchal***

Popular music, as previously mentioned, often reflects the society that we live in. As much as the consumption of the music itself is a social process (Frith, 2007:270), it can give us an indication of what the audience relates to because of popular music's function – to aid “in the creation of identity, in the management of feelings, in the organization of time” (Frith, 2007:268). In this sense, the dominance of love songs in the global music market suggests an innate need for affection and admiration. This is, as established through Figure 2 and 3, a reality in the South African music industry, with love-related thematic expression consistently dominating over the six-year period. The strong presence of *reflective* thematic expression is also one that is of global appeal and thus, I would consider most thematic expression within the listings representative of, not only the South African commercial music market, but also the global market. The same could be said for expression highlighting capitalism and consumerism, as seen in Figure 22. These, along with most other thematic expression presented in the listings, are universal struggles. I say this to link back to the quote referenced at the beginning of this section – that: the consistent expression of certain ideas or ideals have the potential to be normalised through its representation in popular music.

In as much as there are significant similarities between certain expressions of 'local' and global, it is necessary to draw the distinction between the magnitude of some of the struggles faced locally in comparison to those experienced globally. This context is the location within which all expressions of 'local' identity are contextualised. South Africa is

a country plagued by systemic inequalities, crime and an elevated prevalence of violence against women and children. In his speech addressing the nation during the Corona pandemic, President Cyril Ramaphosa described the gender-based violence as being “no less than a war being waged against the women and children of our country”, and further went on to describe this violence as being “another pandemic that is raging out country” (Ellis, 2020). In saying this, it is justifiable to propose South Africa’s brand of patriarchy as being more hazardous than the average global example. Meaning, in a country where the rate of femicide<sup>17</sup> is five times that of the global average<sup>18</sup>, the pronounced presence of expressions of hyper-masculinity alongside the consistent hypersexualisation of women, is problematic. An example of this is Dj Merlon and Mondli Ngcobo’s *Kose Kuze* (2016), which is centred on the male gaze and the lust for a woman who is dancing at a party or nightclub. The pronounced narrative in this song is the objectification of woman and places women as sexual objects for male pleasure. Other examples of this is in DBN Nyts’ *Shumaya* (2016) and Distruction Boyz’s *Omunye* (2018) which both have a similar theme. The male domination in genres like dance, hip hop and kwaito highlight the party/club culture and the hyper-sexualised representations of women within these spaces.

To put this into perspective, local popular music very rarely has any violent messaging associated to crime due to the ever-present threat of crime related attacks in South Africa. Swartz (2008) cites:

[...] perhaps because life for the average young black South African is much more dangerous ... songs glorifying murder do not sell well ... The threat of violence in South Africa is omnipresent. People do not like to be reminded of it (Swartz, 2008:19 citing Anon, 2000:85).

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<sup>17</sup> Defined by Oxford Dictionary of Gender Studies as being “the deliberate killing of a woman... a sex-based hate crime” (Griffin, 2017).

<sup>18</sup> As stated in: <https://www.iol.co.za/saturday-star/opinion/gender-based-violence-and-femicide-is-human-cruelty-in-action-49993750>.

In this sense, gender based violence would presumably follow a similar trend – however, this is not the case. The normalisation and romanticising of messaging that reflects an ever-present danger facing the South African population could be interpreted as being unethical. While we cannot force creators to censor their music, it is a reflection of our society if masses celebrate and consequently engage with such discourse in a positive light. This is the case with signifiers of male dominance, power and material success, along with the extreme hypersexualisation and objectification of women. This consequently brings me to the understanding that we still live in an immensely patriarchal<sup>19</sup> society.

The words ‘patriarchy’, ‘toxic masculinity’ and ‘femicide’, and social media hashtags like #MenAreTrash, #AmINext and #MeToo have highlighted the struggles and inequalities faced by women around the world, all at the hands of men. The principles and values of a society can often be traced back to the music of the time (Neff, 2014:3 citing Rogers, 2013). In this sense, South Africa’s extremely violent, anti-woman sentiments are highlighted in the lyrical content of some songs that made it to mainstream commercial success. Hall et al. (2012) argue that Black male performers have a higher likelihood of conveying hypersexualised lyrics, in comparison to other groups. That is to say that this demographic, which is around 80% of the total male population in South Africa, has a higher propensity to produce content that contains sexualised messaging.

One such song is Anatii and AKA’s *The Saga* (2016) which openly references predatory behaviour and date rape as if it is merely a normal aspect of the party scene. In the song, Anatii’s verse is inherently centred on material success, partying and girls. I say girls specifically (and not women) because the rapper specifically draws attention to the fact that she is at an educational institution to emphasise her youth:

took this girl out on a school day,

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<sup>19</sup> A system of society (or government) in which men hold the power and women are largely excluded from it.

and I dropped her ass off at UJ.

The emphasis on her youthfulness and that he is taking her out brings to the fore two aspects – that the exchange is potentially predatory, in the sense that he is much older, and that the girl is disposable. The chosen tone and choice of words suggests a transactional relationship of sorts in which the girl must prioritise the male partner above all other possible engagements, including her education, while the male has the power and authority to discard her by “dropping her ass off” once he has gotten whatever he needed from her – which is assumed to be sexual.

The violent disrespect for women is carried through the song and confirmed at the end of AKA’s verse:

I think this mami got potential,  
I think this molly got me bustin’ out the friend zone,  
Drop in the champagne like a Mentos,  
We’re in the lobby but your body is a temple.

This explicitly mentions the drugging of a woman at a party and taking her back to his hotel room to engage in sexual activities that she may or may not be conscious enough to participate in – more commonly known as date rape. Given the harsh realities of South Africa and the high rate of gender based violence, the assumed participation in and romanticising of rape is especially alarming. This speaks to the socialisation of the South African society – one where women are seen as objects for male pleasure. Rape and femicide are something that is an ever-present reality or threat for many South African women. This was demonstrated in the social media uproar in September 2019 that followed the rape and murder of 19-year-old UCT student, Uyinene Mrwetyana, after a trip to the post office. One part of the anti-femicide demonstrations included the exposure of rapists on social media platforms like Twitter. While I do believe that with crime, the law must always take its course in order to definitively punish perpetrators, I do also believe that the criminal justice system, as well as the general society, in South Africa is

flawed and may not always act fairly towards women. The authority and power that men establish from birth in a vastly patriarchal society, allows decision making and believability to be swayed in their favour on some occasions – thus, contributing to the many reasons why women do not follow through with pressing charges against their rapists and abusers (SaferSpaces, 2020 citing Machisa et al., 2011). In a study located in Gauteng, it was established that 1 in 25 rapes were reported to police and that, in the broader context of South Africa, precise statistics are difficult to quantify due to the fact that most cases of gender-based violence are not reported to the police (SaferSpaces, 2020 citing Machisa et al., 2011). Meaning, when considerations are made of the statistics presented, there is a higher probability of men who are accused of rape (or gender based violence) of having committed the crime than not. I say this to emphasise the likelihood of this kind of violence being perpetuated in and through the South African music industry and the music it releases.

With regards to our local popular music industry, it is one that is male dominated, with the bulk of the female representation within the listings presented as the combined male and female representation (as seen in Figure 4). This speaks volumes about gender roles within the South African society and the local music industry. The narrative surrounding women in local music is not one that indicates any agency for woman with regards to their expression of womanhood. An example of this is Zonke's *Feelings* (2013), which is a love song in the pop music genre.

Tonight we're gonna talk about all the things  
That I've always wanted tonight  
You're gonna be making up for all the times  
When I needed you and you were not there

The message portrayed in this song, in a sense, normalises a woman's pain and struggle in the context of an assumedly heterosexual relationship. The idea that the vocalist wants to finally "talk about all the things" that she has "always wanted" to talk about, gives the audience a sense that she has been experiencing unfavourable treatment by her male

partner and that she has had to silently manage her feelings in the hopes of preserving the relationship and coddling her partner's feelings. The idea that she believes that her partner has to start "making up for all of the times" when he neglected her, foregrounds the notion of a woman's needs or wants as secondary to that of a man's. This narrative is affirmed in Chiano Sky's *Walking Away* (2013), in which she remarks:

You say you love me, love me  
That you need me, need me  
Then show it, I'll know it  
If falling is so easy then why am I crying  
It's not supposed to be like this

The mistreatment, in this case, has led to the vocalist articulating that she has been crying and that as much as this has been her reality for an unspecified period, she does in fact know that it is not an ordinary relationship dynamic. The reinforcement of her declaration of the fact that "it's not supposed to be like this" throughout the song, gives us a sense that perhaps the context that she speaks of has been taxing on her emotional wellbeing and even potentially abusive. This, again, normalises a woman's pain and struggles as, in a sense, being fundamental to womanhood. In *Charlotte* by Prince Kaybee and Lady Zamar (2018), adultery is highlighted as being the struggle that the female vocalist is referencing, through her voicing:

I need to speak to Charlotte  
I need to call Charlotte  
I need to tell Charlotte  
He don't need you Charlotte

In the context of this song, Charlotte is assumed to be the other woman in the relationship or what is colloquially termed as being the 'side chick'<sup>20</sup>. This narrative is further

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<sup>20</sup> A mistress; a woman one dates in addition to one's girlfriend or wife, usually in secret.

perpetuated through Maphorisa's *Midnight Starring* (2018) through which infidelity, promiscuity and the active competition for a man that is in an assumedly monogamous relationship are highlighted. This further emphasises the idea of a woman as being inferior or secondary in the context of a heterosexual relationship where a man's desires and/or needs come first.

The other narrative presented through the listings is again in the context of love songs in which the woman shows unwavering love and admiration for her male partner. This is seen in songs like Bucie and Heavy K's *Easy To Love* (2015), in which the vocalist articulates her attraction to her partner, by saying that she loves everything about him, including the way he walks, talks, laughs and smiles (as referenced in the lyrics below). The performer then proceeds to say that even if a diamond was put in front of her, no matter what, she would always choose him.

*Indlel'ohambha ngayo*  
*O thetha ngayo*  
*O hleka ngayo*  
*Mmm, ucumo lwakho*  
He's my African man  
*Nob' unobeka idayimane phambi kwami*  
*Uth'angikhetho*  
*Ndihambha nawe oh ndihambha nawe*

In the chorus of the song, the vocalist emphasises her incessant devotion to her partner by affirming the fact that he is "so easy to love". This narrative is replicated in Lady Zamar's *Love is Blind* (2018), in which she expresses her loyalty to her partner through her affirmation of the fact that she is "way in" with regards to her partner and the relationship.

The sample of songs represented by women is too small to make any deductions about the depictions of women in the listings other than the fact that the range of expression is

miniscule, and does not break away from the norms of what could be said to be heterosexual relationships in a patriarchal society; however, I would assume that they differ across racial, socioeconomic and cultural groups. This cannot be quantified due to the limited range of representations presented within the listings. The lack of representation of Coloured and Indian women in the listings is something that I find rather interesting. Does this mean that local music is something that does not resonate with these two female minority groups, or does not abide by prescribed gender roles, or is there merely a lack of representation in the mainstream commercial market? I would like to think that there is a market within which these two groups could thrive outside of that which relies on depictions of them (Black and White women included) as assuming the position of being subservient to men or half naked girls in music videos (not genre specific).

#### ***5.2.4 Local is policed***

Throughout the analysis and coding of the data that I have collected, the most common link between many of the established trends is the policing of the musical output in various forms and to various extents. With reference to the identity discussions on which my research is centred on, there is policing around legitimacy and what is deemed to be authentically 'local'. In as much as we would assume that the term is all encompassing, it does contain certain imposed parameters around what would be seemingly, unquestionably South African.

The term policed is used here in an attempt to highlight the imposed structures or boundaries that have been placed within the confines of the music industry, and that to a certain extent have to be abided by in order to succeed<sup>21</sup>. In this sense, music that aligns more with culturally specific ideals and traditions would more easily be deemed or identified as being 'local' due to the obvious cultural elements pinpointing them as exclusively South African. The policing and subsequent downplaying of an apparent local

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<sup>21</sup> Success in this context refers to mainstream commercial success in the South African music industry.

identity is not conducive to anything positive or productive happening within the local music industry and only isolates and alienates those that do not fit the blueprint. With regards to the listings, I would say that as much as there are certain linguistic, contextual and aesthetic elements<sup>22</sup> that bind the songs specifically to South Africa, music in general is becoming increasingly global in its alignment to musical or stylistic trends. Identity discourse is complex, and the establishment of embedded identities is a process that requires the interrogation of a number of the contexts and nuances within which the data is located. In this sense, as much as it is problematic to polarise the overarching identities that reflect the South African story, it is necessary to acknowledge that there are distinct differences in the lived experience of South Africans due to various socio-political factors, which largely dichotomise the 'local' experience along racial and economic lines. Meaning, identity signifiers that are inherently 'local' differ on the basis of a number of factors, for example: race and socioeconomic standing.

Another aspect of the policing of local is the sanitisation of the musical product for commercial marketability. This correlates with 'local is capitalistic', in the sense that the 'enablers' procure local talent and brand the artist according to what they determine to be easily marketable, and ultimately, profitable. Additionally, conversations surrounding payola and potential gatekeeping are significant when considering the extent of policing within the South African music industry. Although payola and gatekeeping are not something that is exclusive to the South African industry, it could be said that because of the extreme inequalities that plague many in the country, there is a propensity towards the subversion or bypassing of certain systems and structures in order to acquire wealth. In this sense, due to the money-centred narrative that surrounds the industry and (assumedly) the country at large, it could moreover be assumed that to a certain degree success and favour can be bought. In saying this, it could be assumed that there are

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<sup>22</sup> For example, the use of vernacular languages and colloquialisms in songs (e.g. Khuli Chana's Mntebawen (2014); Kwesta's Ngud' (2017)); contextual elements that directly reference South Africa's socio-economic conditions (e.g. KO and Kid X's Cara Cara (2015); Ricky Rick's Boss Zonke (2016); Kwesta's Spirit (2018)); and the usage of aesthetic elements in the music which reference South African music styles, songs or genres (e.g. Mafikizolo's Khona (2014); AKA's Caiphus Song (2018); Heavy K's Inde (2018)).

aspects of policing within the local music industry that impose on and alter whatever natural musical output or progression there may be or may have been, due to the potential monopolisation of the industry.

It is also necessary to point out that the dominant male representation presented is cis-heterosexual<sup>23</sup>, as discussed in 'local is patriarchal'. It could be said that sexuality plays a fundamental role in the local music market, with there being no obvious representation of the LBGTQI+<sup>24</sup> community in the mainstream commercial sphere. To my knowledge, the only openly homosexual artist within the listings is Nakhane Touré, who is the vocalist on Black Coffee's *We Dance Again* (2016). The vocalist has however, in an interview on Red Bull Radio, mentioned that his lyrics were so vague that he was able to "sort of sneak some queer sexuality into South African national radio" (Mkhabela, 2019). In the song, the vocalist speaks of his battle with what could be assumed to be a depression of sorts:

I did a laugh in the middle of a deathly scene  
Just to see how far I'd taken it  
I did a laugh in war just to be seen  
And there and then  
I knew what I should have been

In the chorus that follows, it is suggested that the vocalist uses sexual relations as a means of numbing or healing whatever sadness he is experiencing.

In the middle of the night you'll be here again  
Just to be here by my side again  
Come back and see me once again

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<sup>23</sup> A combination of the words 'cisgender', which is a term for those whose gender identity matches their sex assigned at birth, and 'heterosexual', which refers to those who are sexually attracted to people of the opposite sex.

<sup>24</sup> "LGBTQIA+ means lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, and asexual. However, the plus allows the term to cover all different subsects like allies, pansexual, androgynous, and polyamorous. Keep your exploration of acronyms going by looking at a list of common acronyms." (Your Dictionary, n.d.). See (Currier, 2012; Lee et al., 2016).

Baby, baby, come again

In this sense, the “blackened tunnel with no light to be seen” in verse 2 could be seen as being an extended metaphor for the depression that is being/has been experienced, and that the “we dance again” that follows is, moreover, an extended metaphor likening the act of sexual intercourse to dancing. In this sense, the sanitisation of this messaging and the omitting of an explicitly homosexual narrative is indicative of the subversive policing that is present within the South African music industry. This seemingly suggests an unspoken cognisance of this policing of sexual identity by some in the industry. The repression of female (as discussed in ‘local is patriarchal’ and queer identities further highlights the conservative, heterosexual lens through which the local music industry is policed.

### ***5.2.5 Local is not colourless***

We understand the South African stories through a post-colonial, post-apartheid lens, and additionally through lived experience, things read in newspapers and academic accounts of history, racism and identity. Through this contextualisation we are able to see how and why the multiple South African stories cannot be told in isolation. There are many stories but these have to be understood in terms of local politics and contexts, and global politics such as imperialism. Attempts to interrogate our society without the context within which we live and have lived will always fall short in its pursuit of accuracy. In as much as we may have progressed as a society and are living in a democratic country, the influence that our past has had on our society and the way it functions is an indelible imprint that in many ways, still is has an impact in some way, shape or form. The ‘rainbow nation’<sup>25</sup> narrative is one that, upon close interrogation, was merely a unifying strategy in order to allow for the transition into the ‘new South Africa’ to be as seamless as possible. In Chapter Two, it has already been established that there are evident assertions of a residual segregation in post-apartheid South Africa. In addition, it has been established that because the “symbolic and material manifestations of power” indicative of a

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<sup>25</sup> As discussed in Chapter Two: Post-apartheid South Africa’s Residual Segregation.

segregated society have the capacity to “clarify cultural identity, forge a national consciousness, and contribute to the expression of a national identity”, when attempting to unpack signifiers of a ‘local’ or national identity, it is important to acknowledge that much of the social, political and cultural structure indicative of the post-apartheid society has been “conceptually fixed and visually registered” (Lange & Van Eeden, 2016:61 citing Sauthoff, 2004:35-36). In terms of music, it could be said that the post-apartheid society has also been sonically manufactured due to the contexts that signify constructions of South African-ness through sound.

In Figure 11, we are able to see the race representations in the listings through the specified period. Within this chart it is noticeable that some of the most dominant representations, apart from Black South African, are White and the combination of Black and White representations. The high number of Black race representations is something that is expected, given South Africa’s population demographics. In Figure 12, it can be observed that, apart from the White race representations, the average race representation of all other groups is less than expected given the percentage that each population demographic represents. In Table 3, the disproportion in race representation is demonstrated through the calculation of the average race representation in the listings per capita. Through this data there is an affirmation of the power relations that are evident as a consequence of the past. Meaning, the power relations that were enforced during apartheid have not dissolved, even though at a superficial level (as seen in Figure 11) it may appear as though South African society has transformed. In this sense, one of the theoretical consequences of this study is that indeed it is demonstrated that data is always nuanced, and that it has to be repeatedly rethought because it is the context that actually reveals the meaning, not simply the data itself. The reality of the context that has been established is that there is a racial hierarchy of sorts, the extent of which has not been determined – with the White race representation coming in the first place, followed by the Coloured race, then the Indian race, representation, and lastly, the Black race with the least representation per capita. Thus, strongly inferring that the local music industry is structurally aligned with the segregatory practices of the apartheid government.

In analysing Figure 13, we are presented with the reality that almost half of the *White* race representations are, in fact, the combined *Black and White* race representation. If we consider this alongside the fact that the White group has a higher representation per capita, we can propose that this may in fact be indicative of a degree of privilege possessed by the group which still places them at an advantage in comparison to other minority groups. The extent of this advantage cannot be established through this study but can simply be inferred through the data. Because of the fact that the combined Black and White race representation constitutes a large portion of the White representations in the listing, we are presented with the idea that the ‘rainbowisms’ that highlight a post-apartheid South Africa have the possibility to have been used to gain access to the industry and allow for increased visibility and marketability in the mainstream commercial music market. The prevalence of these combined presentations of Black and White in the dance music genre, further suggests a potential interrelationship between this particular race representation and the buoyant freedoms that are indicative of both the dance genre and the rainbow nation ideology.

An example of this would be MiCasa – who are the second most frequently appearing musical act in the listings. While their use of ‘rainbowism’ may not be intentional, I do believe that it did attract attention from their first single “These Streets” in which lead vocalist, J’Something is heard singing in *Isizulu* within the first few lines of the song, that is:

Good morning, to the world, out there  
*Sanbonani, Ninjani*, out there

The song progresses to ultimately state its rainbow nation-esque ideology through the lyrics:

Black and white, oh so bright  
All I see is beauty

While this song is not a part of the Record of the Year listings in question, it was nominated for and the winner of the 2012 Record of the Year category. There is potentially something intriguing in witnessing a White South African speaking vernacular or dancing to music and styles that are typical of 'Blackness' and Black culture that makes people pay attention and stare in adoration. Perhaps it is a visual stimulus that brings South Africans back to what could be deemed, the 'South African dream' – a reference to the song, *African Dream* (1995) by Vicky Sampson:

All I want is for our hearts to be beating just as one  
To silence the confusion  
Then the pain and the illusion will disappear again  
And we will never run.

While this expresses a desire for unity amongst Black and White, it also distracts from the realities faced on a daily basis. The realities being, the constant reminders of various aspects of society today that are not completely rid of the systemic segregation that has historically, and in some aspects, continues to be an inherent part of South African society. Economic deprivation is something that is still at the core of the inequalities of the South Africa.

Another facet of this underlying theme, is the effects of colonialism and cultural imperialism on the way we interpret and place value on certain visual stimuli. In this case, it would be the combination of what is still deemed by some as being a superior race, being placed side by side with an inferior race which in turn would immediately add significant value and legitimacy to the product. This is to say that, the innate anti-Black sentiments that have been deeply ingrained into society through its history of oppression, slavery and colonisation have led to the admiration of, and attraction to, the alignment with whiteness. These apparent 'rainbowisms' are suggested through the song *Colours* (2018) by Dj Zinhle and Tamara Dey. The pre-chorus and chorus of this particular song, suggest a joint strength that has been acquired through a joint struggle. The lyrics are as follows:

(pre-chorus)

These are the things that make us stronger  
These are the dreams that make us rise each day  
We grow the most in pain it always makes me wonder  
Why we'd ever want to live another way.

(chorus)

I see your colours shining, in synergy my friends  
The stars are re-aligning, so we can start again

In my view, the 'colours' that are referenced through the song and its title are suggestive of the rainbow nation ideology, and more specifically the idea of a free, unsegregated and equal society. The possible use of this ideology could be seen as toying with the idea of what was assumed to be the 'new South Africa' post-1994 and using it to evoke a sense of national pride but also, hope for transformation within the South African society.

The other side of this would be the alignment with Blackness to allow for accessibility into the marketplace. This is in a sense due to an awareness that the local mainstream commercial music industry is Black owned or largely run by Black South Africans. My interpretation is that an example of this within the listings would be the artist with the most appearances over the specified period, AKA. The policing of identities is something that I have mentioned in the previous section but is closely aligned with this – the concept of authenticity by culture or by alignment to culture. The policing of identities in South Africa is a poignant truth that we face on a daily basis, thus the avoidance of definitively asserting certain identities would be a significant by-product of the act of policing. Identity alignment in the music industry could to some extent be linked to brand alignment and marketability – if an artist represents too much of one thing that is offensive or has potentially negative connotations surrounding it or that is not familiar to the majority, the artist would be considered deviant, and consequently not receive as much commercial success as those whose music is more palatable. In this sense, it could be said that AKA

has aligned his brand more with Blackness (as opposed to overt, stereotypical Colouredness) and it has undeniably worked in his favour. In 2019, AKA released a song titled *Main Ou's* with rapper, YoungstaCPT, in which they collectively shared their love and admiration for the Coloured community – specifically the Cape Coloured community, which is home to both rappers. The song did not achieve mainstream success as AKA's other songs, the reason for this is arguable. To me, it symbolises the disconnect in reception from the audience when very specific racial identities are presented. Thus, suggesting that within the South African context, not only are identities policed but they are conditionally accepted. Meaning, AKA had produced multiple songs that had received mainstream success but only because he stuck to his proverbial identity box. Straying from this 'identity box' had potentially alienated his fan base due to them being unable to relate to the represented racial classification being affirmed. In a sense, one could say that because "every identity is an exclusion" (Hall, 1997:14), the overt presentation of identities that exclude particular racial identities presents the notion that the song is for 'them' not 'us'. Meaning, a sense of neutrality and/or alignment with the majority demographic could be seen as favourable to performing artists in South Africa in order to receive mainstream commercial success. AKA's use of samples of iconic South African songs like Caiphus Semenya's *Matswale* in *Caiphus Song* (2018) and Jomada's *Got A Love For You* (1991), which was sampled by the late Brenda Fassie in her hit song, *Ngiyakusaba* (1993), in *All Eyes On Me* (2016) has cemented his position as one who identifies and aligns himself with Black South Africanness. A further example is the assumingly strategic hidden identity of Sketchy Bongo. While we do know that he is an Indian South African, the use of a balaclava in order to create a sense of ambiguity may indeed have been a way of securing greater access into the mainstream through presenting a racially neutral appearance.

I am in no way saying that there is anything wrong with this, nor am I homogenising these race groups – I do however believe it is necessary to mention that there are some who benefit from their alignment with Blackness without having to deal with the struggles that come with the Black South African lived experience. If we factor in elements like racism, sexism and colourism, it would add more nuance to the already convoluted pecking order

that exists within the 'local'. Additionally, it is necessary to contextualise the racial segregation in South Africa by emphasising that racism and anti-Blackness are not monolithic constructs. The nuances of these discussions spill over into prejudices internalised and presented by other race groupings (towards Black people), and is not solely indicative of Black and White relations (Bosch, 2014:904).

Given the socioeconomic conditions and history of segregation and censorship, the South African music industry cannot be separated from considerations on the basis of race. The South African society is still racialised, and identity is understood in racial terms, however, it is important to reiterate that this construction of identity is something that has been inherited through historical imposition. As much as we recognise it as a construction, it is necessary to acknowledge the significant role that it plays in present day South African society.

### ***5.2.6 Local is multifaceted***

If we had to base localness on the record of the year category and the corresponding rules applied to the SAMA award show, there would be a number of loopholes that make the identifying of a specific, geographically based local rather difficult. The SAMA nomination rules read as follows (South African Music Awards, 2019):

RiSA members and non-RiSA members alike. Entries are open in respect of any qualifying groups or individuals being a person who:

1.1 except for the Rest of Africa Award category, is a South African citizen or someone who has been granted a permanent resident status in South Africa for a minimum period of six (6) months prior to the date of entry; and:

1.2 is a South African entity and owns or controls the master recording relating to the entry in question.

1.3 being in a duo or group formation, not less than fifty percent (50%) of

the members of the duo/group must comply with the citizenship or permanent residency criteria set out in Clause 2, above.

In theory, these rules are fair and make understandable distinctions between what is considered 'local' and what is not. Point 1.1, in particular, undermines the idea of local being geographically bound as the criteria suggest that non-South African's can be considered to be 'local' following the stipulated period after residency is granted. This is an understandable distinction that has been made in order to accommodate immigrants who have spent several years in South Africa and gained formal citizenship. I do however believe that the slight leeway in the criteria may, in essence, allow performers who may not be broadly classified or self-identified as local to be eligible for consideration. Meaning, 'local', in a sense, could be considered to be established on the basis of legal South African citizenship. In this sense, the rule specifies South African or 'local' not by sound, lyrics, language or experience, but rather by place of birth or citizenship. This is complicated when considerations are made for the fact that, in this globalised world, one can make music that is rooted in a different location and culture and it would still be eligible, so long as the 'entity' submitting the music has met the above stated criteria. These specific rules may inherently depict how complicated the act of ascribing legitimacy through location is. In this sense, would a South African who resides in and has been granted citizenship elsewhere create a product that could be considered local, within the context of that country? The boundaries between local and global are fickle and are more often than not, unrecognisable without close interrogation. An example of the inexpedient nature of 'local' is the song *Tigi* by Sands which was nominated in the Record of the Year category in 2018, until it was disqualified a short while later, after it was discovered that the artist is a citizen of eSwatini (Sekhu, 2018). I say this to foreground a discussion around what is audibly perceived to be 'local'. This song in particular, given the fact that it was nominated for the Record of the Year category, had received major airplay in South Africa and, moreover, was so entrenched in various contexts within the local music industry, that it was assumed to be local. This is to say that, the perception of what is local or not is volatile in that it cannot only truly be distinguished through legal documentation declaring South African citizenship. The argument then becomes the increasingly blurred

boundaries between what is local and what is global. To put this into perspective, many South African musicians were exiled during apartheid spent years abroad and were subsequently influenced by 'external' forces, yet their music is still largely considered to be South African. Thus, in this sense, it can be suggested that local is not determined by geographical location, but rather, the country of citizenship. To quote Gwen Ansell (2005):

There was another South Africa outside South Africa. It was composed of memories and dreams - sometimes prophetic visions - as much as realities. It was more effectively pan-African in vision and action than the geographical South Africa is, even today, after a decade of liberation. The huge diaspora of exiles, in America, Europe, and, very importantly, the rest of the African continent, was braided together by links of friendship and family and by the cultural structure and policies of the liberation movement. And it was to this South Africa that most of the musicians who left - consciously and explicitly - belonged (Ramanna, 2016:13 citing Ansell, 2005:221).

Therefore, when attempting to identify localness, it is necessary to consider the context and interrelationship of both the pan-African and African diaspora. Thus, making issues around a definitive 'local' even more complex.

Another aspect of the fickle boundaries separating what is local and what is global, is the influence of the West on locally produced music due to the inherent hegemonic presence of Western music in the context of the global music market. Due to globalisation and the increased accessibility of various types of music through mass media and music streaming platforms, the potential for and extent of 'external' influence on local music is, in a sense, irrefutable. In a matter of seconds, someone could access a range of music from almost any country in the world. The increased availability of global influences and samples from other music styles or genres, could essentially be seen as having created a homogenised globally-centred product. This is seen throughout the listings. An example of this is rapper Emtee's *Roll Up* (2016), which consists of a music production and a rap style which is very similar to that of American rapper O.T Genasis' hit song, *CoCo*. Other examples of this are: pop vocalist Danny K's *Brown Eyes* (2014) which is a remake of

American R&B group Mint Condition's 90s hit, *Breakin' My Heart (Pretty Brown Eyes)*; the use of a sample from the house song, *Camino del Sol (Joakim Remix)*, by European group Antena, in Kwesta's *Ngud'* (2017); AKA's use of Scandinavian dance group Boom Clap Bachelors' *Løb Stop Stå* (2011) in his song, *The World Is Yours* (2018); the sampling American house group Jomada's song, *Got A Love For You* (1991) in AKA's *All Eyes On Me* (2016), (which was also sampled by the late Brenda Fassie in *Ngiyakusaba* (1993); AKA's use of a sample of the hook in Harrison Crump's dance song, *Ride*, in his *Congratulate* (2015). These songs are not an exhaustive list of all occurrences, but is rather a representation of the international influence in the listings. Additionally, I am in no way saying that there is anything innately good or bad about this, but merely, presenting this information for analysis.

We can deduce therefore, that some of the things that are represented in the listings suggest that, in essence, our 'local' identity(s) is hallmarked by a distinct global identity(s). The notion of 'local' as something that is tangible or easily distinguishable is in fact something that is dissipating very fast in South Africa. Where there are very specific local signifiers that are consciously appropriated in order to say something about the localness, very often it is because there is a deliberate decision made to distinguish oneself as different, whether that be different from the global – through language or through reference to traditional music – or to be different from what is perceived to be 'local'. In this sense, cultural capital has the potential to be used, in some instances, as a means of evoking the audience's response through sentiment or nostalgia.

A further aspect that can be identified through the listings is the overall dominance of the dance genre, whether it be in the direct representation of the dance genre or the suggested affiliations through the use of stylistic elements associated with dance music culture. Examples of this through the listings are: pop vocalist Donald's upbeat love songs, *I Deserve* (2013) and *Over The Moon* (2014); Toya Delazy's *Love is in the Air* (2013), which is a pop song with rap-like vocal delivery over an electronic dance beat; pop vocalist Danny K's electronic, dance influenced *Pretty Brown Eyes* (2013); Afropop duo Mafikizolo's inclusion of tribal house beats in *Khona* (2014) and *Happiness* (2014); rapper, AKA's use of a sample the hook in Harrison Crump's dance song, *Ride*, in his

*Congratulate* (2015); AKA's *All Eyes On Me* (2016), which sampled American house group Jomada's song, *Got A Love For You* (1991) AKA's use of a sample of *Party Weekend*, a dance song from South African 1980s group, Future, in his song, *One Time* (2017); pop vocalist and producer Timo ODV's electronic dance music influenced songs, *Save Me* (2016) and *I Need You* (2017); the dance centred feel to Babes Wodumo's *Wololo* (2017); the electronic house influenced pop song, *Thinking About You* (2017), by the group Goodluck. My point here is that the influence and dominance of dance music is seen across genres in the listings. In this sense, it could be said that there are a wide variety of musical references within South African popular music and many of them are centred within or influenced by dance music or culture, and/or other local or international influences.

While it is quite clear that there are noticeable musical, linguistic, cultural and stylistic 'localnesses' in the listings, this does not in any way make them any more local than songs with a more global appeal. For example: pop vocalist Zonke's *Feelings* (2013); Connel Cruise's *Not Just Friends* (2014); Jimmy Nevis' *Heartboxing* (2014); Nasty C's *Hell Naw* (2017); or Shekinah's *Suited* (2018). What this does mean is that both are present in the music and that the South African audience finds a source of localness in different types of local music. In an interview with OkayAfrica, rapper Nasty C gave a noteworthy motive for his reason to rap in English and not his home language, isiZulu. He stated:

I don't want you to miss what I'm saying here. I don't want it to distract you ... That's all I speak like when I'm with my friends. But when it's time for me to send a message across, I need it to go further and beyond just me and my crew or me and my country (Kpade, 2018).

This presented an alternative perspective as to why an artist may choose to perform global identities instead of local ones. The need to gain access into the global market and compete alongside global performing artists, in this sense, creates a need to attempt to blend in with what may be considered as the norm. Further, the global standards of music production and recording dictate whether or not music will be played on radio – if music

does not fit these standard for radio broadcasting, it will almost definitely not be played, no matter how 'good' it may be. In this sense, discussions around the Westernisation or Americanisation of music assume that this appropriation is a mimicry of sorts (and sometimes it may be) but, often the rationale behind emulating a global identity may be in the hopes of positioning oneself alongside or within the global music market. These 'Americanisations' of local music exist as a localised interpretation of a global music style because of the fact that they inherently depict a South African story in some way, shape or form.

I say this to emphasise that, when we think about local, there is an idea of local as being made by South Africans and there is also an idea of local in the harmony or cadence of music. In this sense, there is local pop music that has its own inherently local sound - for example: Zahara's *Umthwalo* (2013); Zonke's *Feelings* (2013); Mafikizolo's *Khona* (2014); Nathi's *Nomvula* (2016); Sun El Musician & Samthing Soweto's *Akanamali* (2018) - , there is local hip hop that has its own sound – for example: HHP's *Bosso* (2013); Khuli Chana's *Mnatebawen* (2014); KO & Kid X's *Cara Cara* (2015); AKA's *Caiphus Song* (2018) - , there is local dance music that has its own sound – for example: Brothers of Peace's *Wa Muhle* (2013); Dj Ganyani's *Xigubu* (2014); Heavy K & Mpumi's *Wena* (2014); MiCasa's *Jika* (2014); Black Motion & Xoli M's *Rainbow* (2015) - , et cetera. This music is deemed as having innate musical inflections that allow it to be considered as sounding local. In the same way, there is local pop music that has overt inflections from a global sound – for example: Chiano Sky's *Walking Away* (2013); Kabomo & Nothende's *Colour of You* (2013); Connel Cruise's *Not Just Friends* (2014); Jimmy Nevis' *Heartboxing* (2014); Shekinah & Kyle Deutsch's *Back To The Beach* (2016); Timo ODV's *Save Me* (2016); Matthew Mole's *Run* (2017); Sketchy Bongo & Kaien Cruz's *Love Me In The Dark* (2018); Shekinah's *Suited* (2018); - there is local hip hop that has global inflections – for example: Teargas' *Wake Up* (2013); AKA's *Congratulate* (2015); Emtee's *Roll Up* (2016); DJ Speedsta's *Mayo* (2017); Miss Pru's *Ameni* (2017); AKA & Anatii's *Don't Forget To Pray* (2018); - there is local dance music that has global influences – for example: Liquideep's *Welcome Aboard* (2014); Goldfish's *One Million Views* (2014); Euphonik's *Don't Let Go* (2016); Black Coffee & Shekinah's *Your Eyes* (2017); Dj Kent & Dominic

Neil's *Love You Still* (2018), et cetera. I say this to note the interrelationship between music that is inherently local and music which is inherently globalised. This brings us back to a discussion by Shuker (2008), in saying that both types of 'local' music are of equal importance and further, music that is inherently local or "culturally local" should "not be overly valorized" (2008:271–272). This type of cultural essentialism, in this sense, alienates or 'others' music that does not fit this blueprint, which subsequently creates a segregation of sorts with regards to what is considered local. Additionally, because music is a reflection of the society, it in essence invalidates the local experience or local story, suggesting that there is a right or wrong way to enact one's South Africanness.

'Local' cannot be defined by an arbitrary percentage of South African people in a group (as stipulated in the SAMA rules), because this suggests that if there is one more foreign artist who is a part of that group (which would consequently decrease the total percentage of 'local'), that it is somehow less credibility or validity in being classified as 'local'. Similarly, 'local' cannot be distinguished or validated/invalidated on the basis of it sounding more or less South African due to a globalised influence. In the same light, what has been deemed as being 'local' (as shown with the example of *Tigi* by Sands) by the South African academy was, in fact, not actually South African. Thus, demonstrating the porous nature of South Africa's musical culture with surrounding countries. We cannot strictly define signifiers of 'local' identities in music because we have the potential to falsely identify something as being local - as was displayed by the highest authority of South African music (in terms of award shows, i.e. the SAMAs).

Identifying something as a local song just because it meets some kind of intuitive prism of a 'local' sound, without checking the nationality of the artist, implies that 'local' is something that crosses borders, is cross cultural and is essentially located beyond the confines of South Africa. This seemingly indicates that there is no overarching definition of 'local' in the context of South Africa because South African music is impacted by or impacting on (borrowing and sharing) musical traits with other music from people and places outside of South Africa. Moreover, 'local' is not solely local anymore because of inherent globalisations and assimilations through the history of colonisation. The idea of 'local' music is becoming exponentially blurred, because it just does not resonate as a

tangible concept. The same could be said for music in the global sphere. Within the context of the hip hop genre, a large portion of artists (local and abroad) sound like the American hip hop group, Migos<sup>26</sup>. Their distinctive use of a rap flow based on a triplet rhythm and the distinctive placement ad-libs, is emulated by many because it could be said to be the 'in thing' at this present moment. In this sense, the arbitrary lines that have been drawn to define 'local' are porous.

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<sup>26</sup> This can be seen through the songs *Versace* (2013) and *One Time* (2015) by Migos.

## Chapter Six: Denouement

### 6.1 Restatement of Research Questions and Objectives

Globally, popular music is very often about the issues that impact young people's lives. The South African popular music scene, which is considered as "an important way of participating in the post-apartheid nation" (Hammond, 2010:2), is no different. While it may be assumed that the youth constitute the majority of the audience for popular music, it is also possible that due to the high unemployment rate and systemic inequalities that plague many South Africans, the audience would include working-class adults who have the buying power or excess income to spend on recreation, including music consumption. This is important to consider when analysing the messaging reflected by the music that this group (the youth and working-class adults) chooses to consume, and suggests that the subject matter referenced in South African popular music should resonate with this group and their lived experiences. I say this to emphasise that, in attempting to distinguish signifiers of local identity through the chosen listings, the South African stories identified through Chapter Five would assumedly resonate with both the youth and adults – my assumption would be that the age range in question would predominantly occupy the space between teenagers and forty-year olds. Music gains currency when it resonates with people's lived experience and thus feeds into the broader discourse around what it means to be a South African. These songs, in some sense, give form to South African identity(s) and are a resource to understand what is happening in post-apartheid South African society. Through this body of music, a number of broad identities have been revealed as being useful for our understanding of the recent dynamics of South African society, particularly of the younger generation who tend to be the main consumers of many of the prominent popular music genres that feature in this discussion.

So, what is local? The local ideology, along with the concept of there being one particular local, is essentially a paradigmatic construct (as are all ideologies). In the spirit of nationhood and with the hope of redressing the ills of South Africa's oppressive history, one can understand why a sense of oneness created by the possibility of 'localness' is important within the South African context. This ideology, however flawed it may be,

did/does serve a purpose in creating a sense of unity in a once deeply divided nation. The downside is that the real facts and intricacies about our society, and more particularly our music, are bypassed and dismissed all in the name of post-apartheid transformation. From this study, we can infer that local identity lies within the broader social and economic discourse surrounding South Africa. In this sense, we can effectively theorise that there is no singular localness, nor is local a static concept. Meaning, local is not only heterogeneous but is, in addition, intersectional. In this sense, as stipulated by the principles of Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw's (1989) concept of intersectionality, the socio-political and socio-economic implications and contexts discussed in Chapter Five intersect in multiple contexts and at multiple, varying degrees. Crenshaw (1989) states:

Because the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism, any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which Black women are subordinated (1989:40).

Intersectionality, in the case of this research project, forms the frame within which any conclusive deductions can be formed and, additionally, allows for an in-depth analysis of the current state of the local music industry and the South African society at large. In a keynote address on intersectionality at the World of Women Festival, Kimberlé Crenshaw (2016) describes her concept as allowing her to “draw attention to an intersectional crisis unfolding today, particularly how many of the battles that we’re fighting today are problems that grow out of intersectional failures from yesterday”. This narrative is affirmed consistently through the acknowledgment of the many socio-economic factors that affect South African citizens on a daily basis, as a result of past and present social and political ills. Meaning, when we look at the context within which local identity is located, we need to additionally look at what discriminations and institutional structures are at play which in essence contribute to the inclusion and subsequent exclusions of particular ‘local’ identities.

## 6.2 Re-contextualizing local and its kwaito<sup>27</sup>-isms<sup>28</sup>

The South African music landscape is one that has been closely aligned with a history of oppression, censorship, inequality and vehement mistreatment under colonial authority. The earliest recorded musical interaction dates back to 1497 when Portuguese explorer, Vasco da Gama, was entertained by Khoi Khoi musicians (Martin, 2013:xv). What this means is that South African music was first formally documented by settlers in 1497, and thus, the earliest writings or historic accounts of the local music were transcribed through the gaze of the first explorers that settled on the west coast of South Africa. Given the nature of this history, if we were to retrace and rethink what South African music is or would be without any external influence, we would realistically have to trace back to a South Africa pre-Vasco da Gama. The practicality or fruitfulness of that is highly unlikely – as a consequence, academically, all accounts and descriptions of South African-ness in music are in fact unlikely to be a comprehensive account. Meaning, the growth trajectory of a solely South African music can never be uninfluenced. This does not imply that local is less than or better than other music, but is simply an observation of the difficulties encountered when labelling ownership of an ‘authentic’ South African-ness.

The notion of a postcolonial African identity has been unpacked in detail by Mudimbe (2003). In his article titled ‘Globalization and African Identity’, he discusses the necessity of understanding the context from which many narratives around African-ness originate by asking ourselves, “Who’s speaking, and from which intellectual background, and in order to produce what and communicate a knowledge to whom?” (2003:205). In order to understand the South African-nesses within our music, we ought to come to an understanding of this context and what it means in present day South Africa. I am in no way undermining or dismissing the vast South African musical history, I am rather, as eloquently expressed by Stuart Hall (1996), emphasising the need to use “resources of

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<sup>27</sup> See (Allen, 2004; Steingo, 2010; Swartz, 2008).

<sup>28</sup> Kwaito is defined as a South African genre which ‘draws on an eclectic range of local and international sources’, i.e. Bubblegum, rap, reggae, rhythm and blues and Western house music (Peterson, 2003:198). Additionally, it is considered as having captured the ‘sense of release that young people felt after the demise of apartheid’ (Peterson, 2003:199). Hence, local music’s ‘kwaito-isms’ would encompass these qualities.

history, language and culture in the process of becoming rather than being” and the need to discuss “not ‘who we are’ or ‘where we come from’”, but rather to place emphasis on “how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves” (1996:4). In this sense, history is a place that we draw upon as a resource, but it is necessary to rethink these narratives and identities in order to detach oneself from remnants of colonialism, which we may or may not be conscious of. To draw authenticity or validation from ideals constructed by, what Mudimbe (2003) terms, the ‘colonial library’ is problematic, consequently making the idea of a tangible ‘localness’ about South African music unrealistic.

Following the unrest that characterised apartheid, emerged kwaito (Peterson, 2003:199), a South African musical rebuttal of sorts. The kwaito generation has been characterised by its amalgamation of bubblegum music and *mpantsula* and its association with the party atmosphere that followed South Africa’s newfound freedom. To quote Brenda Fassie in her highly emotive song, *Black President* (1990), “they broke rocks, but the spirit was never broke”. To me, that sums up the spirit of the kwaito generation and the music which followed. Kwaito laid the foundations of hybrid music while retaining subliminal political messages that are not overtly challenging in any way. In a sense, it encouraged you to enjoy the freedoms of being in a democratic South Africa while reminding you with subtle nuances of the political state of the country; freedoms which included a new-found freedom of expression and being – a new identity. The focal point moved on from the overtly politically charged music that preluded the 1994 election, like ‘Black President’, to what could be considered as a transitional phase post-94, where there was still noticeably political music, but it also was a period of celebration and release, as characterised by Arthur Mafokate’s hit song titled ‘K\*\*\*\*’, in which he almost sarcastically dismisses a racist slur directed at black South Africans in an attempt to strip it of its power.

After the demise of apartheid, the suffering and various forms of oppression that were characteristic of the apartheid regime was expressed through South African creators in both music and film. The HIV/Aids epidemic as well as the high rate of poverty that still characterised many areas in the country, were a monumental area of concern for many

South Africans and even though the 1994 election was meant to have brought 'freedom', the reality seemed obscure. Movies like: *Tsotsi* (2005), *Gangster's Paradise: Jerusalema* (2008), *Jozi* (2009), *Invictus* (2009) highlight the assumed ideals of post-apartheid society and the struggles that it continues to face. In more recent times, the appearance of newer themes and stories in South African film, many aligned with themes of a global nature, have shown a progression towards a country increasingly focused on life beyond our oppressive history; movies like: *Tell me Sweet Nothings* (2015), *Happiness is a Four-Letter Word* (2016), *Mrs. Right Guy* (2016), *Catching Feelings* (2017), *Keeping Up With The Kandasamys* (2017), *Five Fingers for Marsilles* (2017) and *Baby Mamas* (2018). The light-hearted nature of these cinematic productions, many centred on love and city life, has brought a new dimension to the industry. This however is accompanied by a consistent resurgence of films referencing an oppressive history or current struggles against discrimination, crime and poverty that are a reality for many South Africans. These include films like: *Vaya* (2016), *Kalushi* (2016), *Noem My Skollie* (2016), *Krotoa* (2017), *The Wound: Ixeba* (2017), *Ellen: The Ellen Pakkies Story* (2018). My point here is that the South African audience and creators are very aware of the current state of the country and, in a similar fashion to the kwaito generation, have chosen to selectively focus on the politics while enjoying the freedoms that democracy offers. Kwaito has, from my observation, birthed a new modality – the freedom of the new democracy became a tangible entity through the music and culture of this period. The freedom to be or do, recreate or emulate, show complexity or simplicity in whatever form speaks to your post-apartheid state of being.

### **6.3 Theorising the research findings**

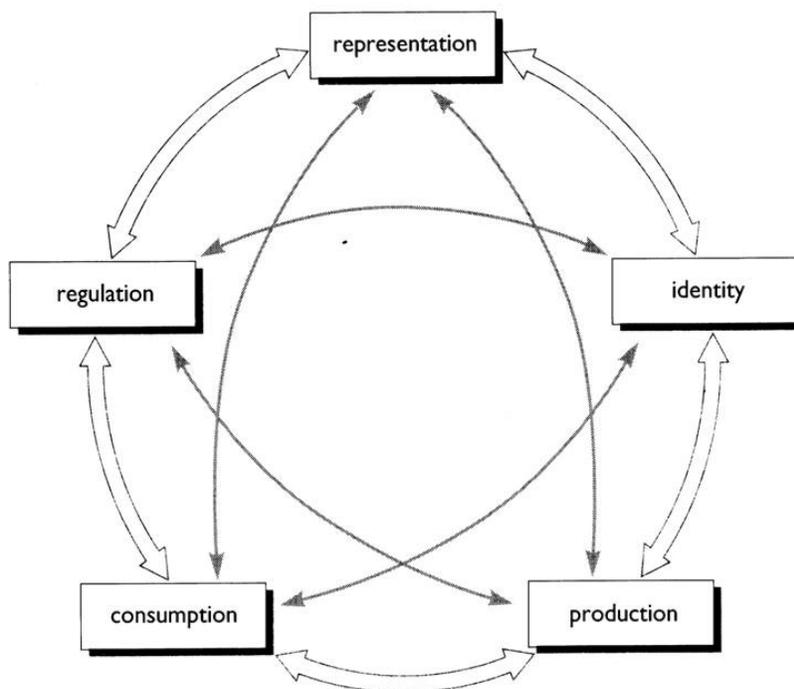
Over the course of this study, a number of 'local' identities have been identified within South African commercial music during the stipulated time period. Discussions around what 'local' music is, are often centred on discourse focusing on the apparent 'Americanisation' of the South African music industry. What these discussions fail to acknowledge is the agency of the performer in depicting their intended identity expression, whether it be distinctly 'local', distinctly global or ambiguous in nature. While there are many overt 'Americanisations' and globalisation of the 'local' music industry,

one cannot separate these from discussions on the inherent cultural imperialism that has prevailed as a result of colonial imposition and the positioning of the West as the economic hub of the world. Perhaps, a more fruitful discussion would focus less on the 'local' as closely aligned with the global, but rather focus on providing the South African audience and South African creators with the autonomy to consume and create what they deem to be desirable. Additionally, if music is a means through which identities are made, or rather, a medium of experience, one cannot separate a large portion of the 'local' from the global due to a significant portion of the global experience aligning with the local.

When we analyse these signifiers of 'local' identities, my analysis shows that it would be reasonable to reference most as being identifiable and potentially located within global discourse and the global music market. This issue of a negotiation with the local and global is one that exists within, and is discussed in, various contexts (see Meintjies, 1990; Olsen, 2000; Jensen, 2011; Becker, 2012; Westjohn et al., 2012; Darling-Wolf, 2014; Dervin and Risager, 2014; Weiss, 2014; Barbour et al., 2019). The one contextual exception to these discussions, in my view, is particular aspects of race relations which are specifically unique to South Africa. This could be said to be a result of the extensive and comprehensive social engineering that characterised the apartheid regime. While there are similarities and specific nuances in all race related discourses that are universal, the South African example is a noteworthy outlier. In this sense, it could be said that history is an important node of reference when considering identities. This reaffirms Kimberlé Crenshaw's (2016) idea of "the battles that we're fighting today" as being "problems that grow out of intersectional failures from yesterday". Crenshaw (2016) furthers this idea by stating that "intersectionality is not primarily about identity – it's about how structures make certain identities the consequence of and the vehicle for vulnerability". In the context of this study, I have interpreted this as reaffirming the notion of the socioeconomic and socio-political context as dictating and in a sense prescribing the realities of the local experience which is ultimately depicted through the identity signifiers discussed in Chapter Five. Crenshaw (2016) speaks of the importance of not only acknowledging singular presentations of identity but also their intersectional combinations because these signifiers are often not neutral, and if its intersectionality is

not precisely considered, these signifiers could potentially reinforce each other. In saying this, it is necessary to state that you cannot pinpoint a singular South African identity, but rather, you can register the bounds of its experience and the issues that still impact on how our lives are lived in this moment.

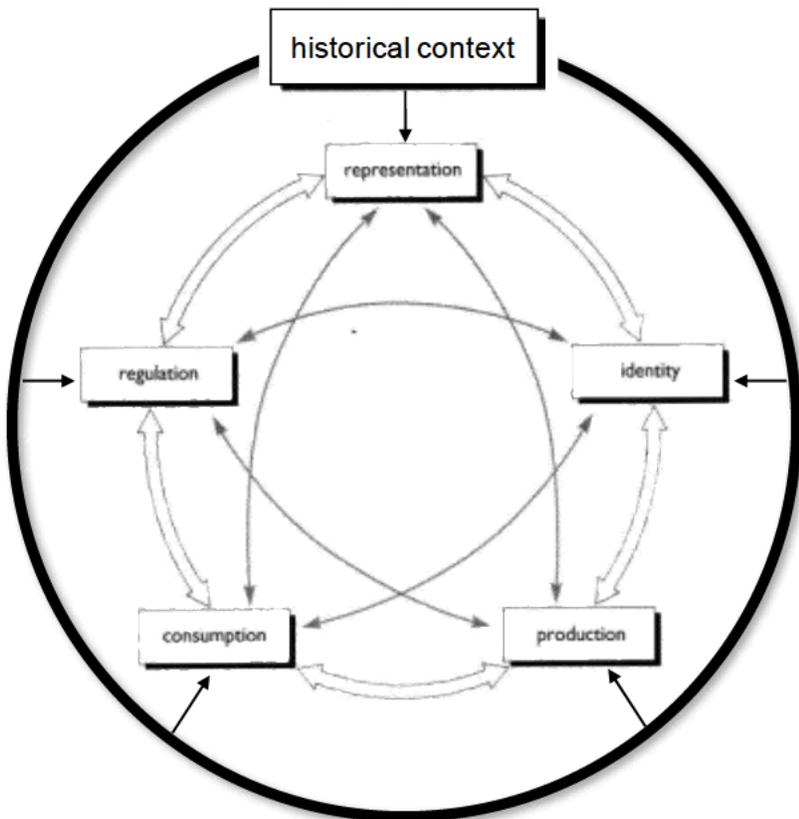
In the context of this study, several broad identities have been revealed as being useful for our understanding of the recent dynamics of South African society. Through these broad identities, which have been discussed in Chapter Five, namely: local is capitalistic; local is political; local is patriarchal; local is policed; local is not colourless; and local is multifaceted, we can reinforce the critical role that the historical and socio-economic contexts play in the construction of the many South African stories. In this sense, it can be said that local identity is grounded in a capitalistic society which is inherently rooted in principles of historic imposition, racialism and patriarchy. From this deduction, it is possible to formulate a representational theory for this context. In the formulation of this theory, I have chosen to use Stuart Hall's circuit of culture (1997), as seen below in figure 23, as my theoretical grounding (as discussed in Chapter Two).



**Figure 23.** The Circuit of Culture (Hall, 1997, p. 1)

This model elucidates the flow of cultural content through various components, i.e. representation, consumption, production, regulation and identity. What this model fails to acknowledge, especially when relating to this discussion on local identity, is the context within which these components are located and the foundation upon which the resultant identity(s) are contextualised, which is the historical context. In this sense, the addition of this component would result in a comprehensive account of what constitutes local identities.

This study of local identity in South African popular music has, in a sense, affirmed the need for a critical interrogation of the data in order to attain a comprehensive account of the nuances present in and through the data. This has been facilitated through a grounded theory methodological approach, through the consistent, multi-layered coding of the data. When referring back to this study's research question, which is centred on signifiers of identity within the 'local' paradigm, we can strongly suggest that everything is based on or affected by our historical context. In this sense, we can infer that local



**Figure 24.** My revision of Stuart Hall's Circuit of Culture (1997)

identity in the South African context is largely grounded on ideals ingrained through historical imposition. Meaning, this consciousness (or unconsciousness) of our history is a strong part of what it means to be a South African. It is inherent in the way we think or see ourselves as South African. With reference to Figure 24, the addition of the 'historical context' node is important due to the fact that the past, the present and the way we imagine the future are not separate entities – one infiltrates or seeps into the other, whether directly or indirectly. With regards to identity signifiers, this study brings to the fore an affirmation of the power relations that are evident as a consequence of the past.

Contrary to the transformational façade suggested through nation-building ideologies like the 'Rainbow Nation', these structures have not dissolved. At first glance, the data might lead to the assumption that there may appear to be certain evident transformations, but in reality, upon additional analysis and coding of the data, when considering the data per capita, the proportion and percentage or distribution depicts a different story. One of the theoretical consequences of this study is that indeed it is shown that data is always nuanced. The data has to be repeatedly rethought or re-contextualised because it is the context that actually reveals the meaning, and not the data itself. In this sense, it could be said that the figures addressed in Chapter Four can be found to prove different agendas through the way these matters are spoken about or the way the information is presented thus highlighting the notion that the context is in fact as important as the information itself. This means that from a theoretical perspective, it cannot be said that quantitative data is objective. This has been demonstrated through the progression of this study. This study necessitates the contextualisation of quantitative information because it is through this that we allow numerical data to reflect lived experience.

Identity discourse is complex in nature. Similarly, the identities imbedded in the listings in question reflect these complexities. The notion of 'local' as being something that you can easily pinpoint is in fact something that is fast dissipating in a country like South Africa. Where there are very specific 'local' signifiers that are consciously appropriated in order to say something about the localness, this is often used as a means of distinguishing

oneself as something different – different from the global. These differences are portrayed through the use of language or through reference to traditional music and/or culture. There is, however, very little of that aspect presented within the chosen listings. Another aspect of this is the fact that most of the music produced for commercial radio has to meet particular standards of recording production in order to be considered for airplay. These standards are aligned with global radio and broadcasting requirements; thus, it could be said that the concept of radio airplay and broadcasting in its most fundamental form, is global and not local. While I do acknowledge that this is not the only mechanism of identity construction, this study makes consideration of what identities are presented within this particular platform.

When considering the fact there is a considerable amount of music that does not meet radio standards, it brings to the fore an understanding that although radio broadcasting is impactful and is a primary music consumption source for many, it does not depict the full scope of music within the South African soundscape. In his discussion of the 'cycle of popular music', Jonathan Shaw (2017) stated that "radio airplay is regarded as the most effective way of creating exposure for a song" (2017:415). Thus, an interrogation of the signifiers of local identity through radio airplay is justified. I say this to highlight the absence of the top selling genre in South Africa, i.e. gospel, on this particular platform. When considering why this may be the case, I would suggest that it may be because gospel, due to its connection to religious affiliation, is in fact an experience of their religiosity. Meaning, the very limited presence of gospel in the listings could be considered to be due to the consumption of this particular genre being located elsewhere. The consumption of this religious music would be more closely aligned with live performance as it may be considered to be an extension of the religious experience. Additionally, this music could also be consumed via other platforms such as music streaming services which would enable the consumer to fulfil their personal religious needs through the conscious selection of what to listen to and when to listen to it. These factors are acknowledged as being gaps that may be apparent in this study that may also carry important information about how and why South African society works as it does.

## 6.4 Final thoughts

In attempting to discuss questions of identity within a local popular music, this study highlights aspects of the identified local signifiers that bring into focus certain aspects of South African society. In his writings on the importance of popular music, Simon Frith (2007) has stated that:

The question we should be asking is not what does popular music *reveal* about 'the people' but how does it *construct* them ... But popular music is popular not because it reflects something or authentically articulates some sort of popular taste or experience, but because it creates our understanding of what popularity is (2007:137).

In this sense, these listings not only represent signifiers of local identity but also contribute to the construction and understanding of new 'localnesses'. Meaning, the music reflected in these listings not only represent local identity as being grounded in a capitalistic society which displays principles of historic imposition, racialism and patriarchy, but more importantly, that local identity and local music subsequently reaffirm these ideologies. In this sense, all local identities carry conscious or unconscious affirmation of these ideologies: nothing is of neutral standing. While we cannot definitively pinpoint a 'local' identity, we can nevertheless register the bounds of its experience through the context that is the South African experience.

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## Appendix A – SAMA Record of the Year (ROTY) Listings 2013 – 2018

### Record of the Year 2013

	Artist(s)	Song title
1	Brothers of Peace, Nokwazi and QOB	Wa Muhle
2	Black Motion, Dr Malinga	Father To Be
3	Chiano Sky	Walking Away
4	Vetkuk vs Mahoota	Stokfel
5	Donald	Deserve
6	Dj Zinhle feat. Busiswa	My Name Is
7	Elvis Blue	Lifeline
8	HHP	Bosso
9	Kabomo feat. Nothende	Colour of You
10	Khaya Mthethwa	Move
11	Liquideep	Still
12	Lloyd Cele	Hero
13	MiCasa	Heavenly Sent
14	Oskido feat. Candy & Mabhiza	Tsa Ma Ndebele
15	Riot feat. Zahara	Thetha Nami
16	Sfiso Ncwane	Kulungile Baba
17	Teargas	Wake Up
18	Toya Delazy	Love Is In The Air
19	Zahara	Umthwalo
20	Zonke	Feelings

(News24, 2013)

## Record of the Year 2014

	<b>Artist(s)</b>	<b>Song title</b>
1	Black Byrd	I Feel Good Today
2	Connel Cruise	Not Just Friends
3	Danny K	Brown Eyes
4	DJ Ganyani, FB	Xigubu
5	DJ Kent, Liquideep	Top Of The World
6	DJ Kent, The Arrows	Spin My World Around
7	Vetkuk vs Mahoota, Dr Malinga	Via Orlando
8	Donald	Over The Moon
9	Fistaz Mixwell, Mellow Soul	I'm Free
10	Goldfish	One Million Views
11	Heavy K, Mpumi	Wena
12	Jimmy Nevis	Heartboxing
13	Jimmy Nevis	In Love With You
14	Khaya Mthethwa	Move
15	Khuli Chana	Mnatebawen
16	Liquideep	Welcome Aboard
17	Mafikizolo, May D	Happiness
18	Mafikizolo	Khona
19	Mathew Gold, AKA	No Ordinary Guy
20	MiCasa	Jika

(Kia, 2014)

## Record of the Year 2015

(Note: There are 20 songs in every year except 2015, in which there are 10)

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	<b>Artist(s)</b>	<b>Song title</b>
1	Monark	Build It Up
2	Euphonik, Bob'ezy, Mpumi	Busa
3	KO, Kid X	Cara Cara
4	AKA	Congratulate
5	DJ Clock, Beatenburg	Pluto (Remember You)
6	Beatenburg	Rafael
7	Black Motion, Xoli M	Rainbow
8	MiCasa	Turn You On
9	Uhuru, Professor	Y Tjukutja
10	Bucie, Heavy K	Easy To Love

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(News101, 2015)

## Record of the Year 2016

	<b>Artist(s)</b>	<b>Song title</b>
1	AKA, Burna Boy, Da Les, JR	All Eyes on Me
2	Shekinah, Kyle Deutsch	Back To The Beach
3	AKA, Burna Boy, Khuli Chana, Yanga	Baddest
4	Prince Kaybee, Audrey	Better Days
5	Ricky Rick	Boss Zonke
6	DJ Fisherman, Naakmusiq, Dreamteam, Tira, Danger	Call Out
7	Mobi Dixon, M.Que	City Rains
8	DJ Kent, Mo-T	Don't Let Go
9	Four7, Tiffany	J'adore
10	DJ Merlon, Mondli Ngcobo	Kose Kuze
11	Nathi	Nomvula
12	Emtee	Roll Up
13	Timo ODV	Save Me
14	DBN Nyts, Zinhle Ngidi, Trademark	Shumaya
15	KO, Nandi Mngoma	Skhanda Love
16	Heavy K, Nokwazi	Sweetie
17	Anatii, AKA	The Saga
18	DJ Dimplez, Cassper Nyovest, JR	Way Up
19	Black Coffee, Nakhane Touré	We Dance Again
20	MiCasa	Your Body

(yomzansi, 2016)

## Record of the Year 2017

	<b>Artist(s)</b>	<b>Song title</b>
1	AKA	One Time
2	Amanda Black	Amazulu
3	Babes Wodumo, Mampintsha	Wololo
4	Black Coffee, Mque	Come With Me
5	Black Coffee, Shekinah	Your Eyes
6	Bucie, Black Motion	Rejoice
7	DJ Clock, Prom Nights	Wolves
8	DJ Ganyani, Layla	Talk To Me
9	DJ Speedsta, Shane Eagle, Yung Swiss, Frank Casino, Tellaman	Mayo
10	Euphonik, MiCasa	Don't Wanna Be
11	Goodluck	Thinking About You
12	Kwesta, Cassper Nyovest	Ngud
13	Locnville, Sketchy Bongo	Cold Shoulder
14	Matthew Mole	Run
15	Miss Pru, Emtee, Sjava, Fifi Cooper, A-Reece, B3nchmarQ, Saudi	Ameni
16	Mobi Dixon, Inga Hina	Trigger
17	Musa, Robbie Malinga	Mthande
18	Nasty C	Hell Naw
19	Sketchy Bongo, Shekinah	Let You Know
20	Timo ODV	I Need You

(ZAlebs, 2017)

## Record of the Year 2018

	<b>Artist(s)</b>	<b>Song title</b>
1	Kwesta, Wale	Spirit
2	Lady Zamar	Love Is Blind
3	Sketchy Bongo, Kaien Cruz	Love Me In The Dark
4	Sun El Musician, Samthing Soweto	Akanamali
5	Prince Kaybee, Lady Zamar	Charlotte
6	Distruction Boyz feat. Benny Maverick, Dlala Mshunqisi	Omunye
7	La Sauce, Amanda Black	I Do
8	Mafikizolo	Love Potion
9	DJ Zinhle, Tamara Dey	Colours
10	DJ Maphorisa, Busiswa, Moonchild Sanelly, DJ Tira	Midnight Starring
11	AKA	The World Is Yours
12	Black Motion, Nokwazi	Imali
13	Kwesta, Thabsie	Ngiyaz'fela Ngawe
14	Shekinah	Suited
15	AKA	Caiphus Song
16	MiCasa	Nana
17	AKA, Anatii	Don't Forget To Pray
18	Heavy K, Bucie, Nokwazi	Inde
19	Lady Zamar	My Baby
20	DJ Kent, Dominic Neil	Love You Still

(Sekhu, 2018; South Cape Net, 2018)

## Appendix B – SAMA Record of the Year (ROTY) Listing Analysis

2013 – 2018

### Record of the Year 2013:

	Artist(s) – Song title	Genre	Theme(s)	Race	Gender
1	Brothers of Peace, Nokwazi, QOB – Wa Muhle	Dance	Love	Black	Male & female
2	Black Motion, Dr Malinga – Father To Be	Dance	Reflective	Black	Male
3	Chiano Sky – Walking Away	Pop	Love	White	Female
4	Vetkuk vs Mahoota - Stokfel	Dance	Party lifestyle	Black	Male
5	Donald – I Deserve	Pop	Love	Black	Male
6	Dj Zinhle ft Busiswa – My Name Is	Dance	Party lifestyle (Uplifting)	Black	Female
7	Elvis Blue - Lifeline	Pop	Reflective	White	Male
8	HHP - Bosso	Hip hop	Uplifting	Black	Male
9	Kabomo ft Nothende – Colour of You	Pop	Love	Black	Male & female
10	Khaya Mthethwa - Move	Pop	Love	Black	Male
11	Liquideep - Still	Dance	Love	Black	Male
12	Lloyd Cele - Hero	Pop	Love	Black	Male
13	MiCasa – Heavenly Sent	Dance	Love	Black & White	Male
14	Oskido ft Candy & Mabhiza – Tsa Ma Ndebele	Dance	Uplifting	Black	Male & female
15	Riot ft Zahara – Thetha Nami	Pop	Love	Black	Male & female
16	Sfiso Ncwane – Kulungile Baba	Gospel	Uplifting	Black	Male

17	Teargas – Wake Up	Hip hop	Uplifting	Black	Male
18	Toya Delazy – Love is in the Air	Pop	Love	Black	Female
19	Zahara - Umthwalo	Pop	Reflective	Black	Female
20	Zonke - Feelings	Pop	Love	Black	Female

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## Record of the year 2014:

	Artist(s) – Song title	Genre	Theme(s)	Race	Gender
1	Black Byrd – I Feel Good Today	Pop	Uplifting	White	Female
2	Connel Cruise – Not Just Friends	Pop	Love	White	Male
3	Danny K – Brown Eyes	Pop	Love	White	Male
4	DJ Ganyani, FB - Xigubu	Dance	Party lifestyle	Black	Male & Female
5	DJ Kent, Liquideep – Top of the World	Dance	Love	Black	Male
6	DJ Kent, The Arrows – Spin My World Around	Dance	Love	Black & White	Male & female
7	Vetkuk vs Mahoota, Dr Malinga – Via Orlando	Dance	Township (Party lifestyle)	Black	Male
8	Donald – Over the Moon	Pop	Love	Black	Male
9	Fistaz Mixwell, Mellow Soul – I'm Free	Dance	Love (Reflective)	Black	Male & female
10	Goldfish – One Million Views	Dance	Upbeat	White	Male
11	Heavy k, Mpumi - Wena	Dance	Reflective	Black	Male & female
12	Jimmy Nevis - Heartboxing	Pop	Love	Coloured	Male
13	Jimmy Nevis – In Love With You	Pop	Love	Coloured	Male
14	Khaya Mthethwa - Move	Pop	Love	Black	Male
15	Khuli Chana - Mnatebawen	Hip hop	Bravado	Black	Male
16	Liquideep – Welcome Aboard	Dance	Love	Black	Male
17	Mafikizolo, May D - Happiness	Pop	Love (Uplifting)	Black	Male & Female
18	Mafikizolo, Uhuru - Khona	Pop	Love	Black	Male & Female
19	Mathew Gold, AKA – No Ordinary Guy	Pop	Reflective (Status)	Coloured	Male

20 Micasa - Jika

Dance

Party  
lifestyle

Black &  
White

Male

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## Record of the Year 2015:

(Note: There are 20 songs in every year except 2015, in which there are 10)

	<b>Artist(s) – Song title</b>	<b>Genre</b>	<b>Theme(s)</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Gender</b>
1	Monark – Build It Up	Pop	Uplifting	White	Male
2	Euphonk, Bob'ezy, Mpumi - Busa	Dance	Love	Black	Male & female
3	KO, Kid X – Cara Cara	Hip hop	Township, (Bravado, Party lifestyle)	Black	Male
4	AKA - Congratulate	Hip hop	Status (Reflective)	Coloured	Male
5	DJ Clock, Beatenberg – Pluto (Remember You)	Dance	Love	Black & White	Male
6	Beatenberg – Rafael	Dance	Uplifting	White	Male
7	Black Motion, Xoli M - Rainbow	Dance	Uplifting (Reflective, Love)	Black	Male & female
8	Micasa – Turn You On	Dance	Love	Black & White	Male
9	Uhuru, Professor – Y Tjukutja	Dance	Party lifestyle	Black	Male
10	Bucie, Heavy K – Easy To Love	Dance	love	Black	Male & female

## Record of the Year 2016:

	Artist(s) – Song title	Genre	Theme(s)	Race	Gender
1	AKA, Burna Boy, Da Les, JR – All Eyes On Me	Hip hop	Status (Party lifestyle, Bravado)	Black & Coloured	Male
2	Shekinah, Kyle Deutsch – Back To The Beach	Pop	Love	Black & White	Male & female
3	AKA, Burna Boy, Khuli Chana, Yanga - Baddest	Hip hop	Love (Party lifestyle, Status)	Black & Coloured	Male
4	Prince Kaybee, Audrey – Better Days	Dance	Reflective	Black	Male & Female
5	Ricky Rick – Boss Zonke	Hip hop	Township (Bravado, Status)	Black	Male
6	DJ Fisherman, Naakmusiq, Dreamteam, Tira, Danger – Call Out	Dance	Party lifestyle	Black	Male
7	Mobi Dixon, M.Que – City Rains	Dance	Reflective	Black	Male
8	DJ Kent, Mo-T – Don't Let Go	Dance	Love	Black	Male
9	Four7, Tiffany – J'adore	Dance	Love	Coloured	Male & Female
10	DJ Merlon, Mondli Ngcobo – Kose Kuze	Dance	Party lifestyle	Black	Male
11	Nathi - Nomvula	Pop	Love	Black	Male
12	Emtee – Roll Up	Hip hop	Bravado (Party lifestyle, Status)	Black	Male
13	Timo ODV – Save Me	Pop	Love	White	Male
14	DBN Nyts, Zinhle Ngidi, Trademark - Shumaya	Kwaito	Party lifestyle	Black	Male & Female
15	KO, Nandi Mngoma – Skhanda Love	Hip hop	Love	Black	Male & Female
16	Heavy K, Nokwazi - Sweetie	Dance	Love	Black	Male & Female
17	Anatii, AKA – The Saga	Hip hop	Status (Party lifestyle, Bravado)	Black & Coloured	Male

18	DJ Dimplez, Cassper Nyovest, JR – Way Up	Hip hop	Status (Party lifestyle, Bravado)	Black	Male
19	Black Coffee, Nakhane Touré – We Dance Again	Dance	Reflective (Love)	Black	Male
20	MiCasa – Your Body	Dance	Love	Black & White	Male

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## Record of the Year 2017:

	Artist(s) – Song title	Genre	Theme(s)	Race	Gender
1	AKA – One Time	Hip hop	Party lifestyle (status)	Coloured	Male
2	Amanda Black – Amazulu	Pop	Reflective	Black	Female
3	Babes Wodumo, Mampintsha – Wololo	Kwaito	Party lifestyle (Township)	Black	Male & female
4	Black Coffee, Mque – Come With Me	Dance	Love	Black	Male
5	Black Coffee, Shekinah – Your Eyes	Dance	Love	Black	Male & Female
6	Bucie, Black Motion - Rejoice	Dance	Love	Black	Male & female
7	DJ Clock, Prom Nights - Wolves	Dance	Love (Party lifestyle)	Black	Male
8	DJ Ganyani, Layla – Talk To Me	Dance	Love (Reflective)	Black	Male & female
9	DJ Speedsta, Shane Eagle, Yung Swiss, Frank Casino, Tellaman - Mayo	Hip hop	Status (Party lifestyle, Bravado)	Black & Coloured	Male
10	Euphonik, Micasa – Don't Wanna Be	Dance	Love	Black & White	Male
11	Goodluck – Thinking About You	Pop	Love	White	Male & female
12	Kwesta, Cassper Nyovest – Ngud'	Hip hop	Township (Party lifestyle)	Black	Male
13	Locnville, Sketchy Bongo – Cold Shoulder	Pop	Bravado (Party lifestyle, Love)	White & Indian	Male
14	Matthew Mole - Run	Pop	Love (Reflective)	White	Male
15	Miss Pru, Emtee, Sjava, Fifi Cooper, A-Reece, B3nchmarQ, Saudi - Ameni	Hip hop	Status (Bravado, Party lifestyle)	Black	Male & female
16	Mobi Dixon, Inga Hina - Trigger	Dance	Love	Black	Male & female

17	Musa, Robbie Malinga - Mthande	Pop	Love	Black	male
18	Nasty C – Hell Naw	Hip hop	Status (Bravado)	Black	male
19	Sketchy Bongo, Shekinah – Let You Know	Pop	Love	Indian & Black	Male & female
20	Timo ODV – I Need You	Pop	Reflective (Love)	White	Male

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## Record of the Year 2018:

	<b>Artist(s) – Song title</b>	<b>Genre</b>	<b>Theme(s)</b>	<b>Race</b>	<b>Gender</b>
1	Kwesta, Wale - Spirit	Hip hop	Township (Status)	Black	Male
2	Lady Zamar – Love is Blind	Dance	Love	Black	Female
3	Sketchy Bongo, Kaien Cruz – Love Me In The Dark	Pop	Love	Indian & Coloured	Male & female
4	Sun El Musician, Samthing Soweto - Akanamali	Pop	Status (Love)	Black	Male
5	Prince Kaybee, Lady Zamar - Charlotte	Dance	Love	Black	Male & female
6	Distraction Boyz ft Benny Maverick, Dlala Mshunqisi - Omunye	Kwaito	Party lifestyle	Black	Male
7	La Sauce, Amanda Black – I Do	Pop	Love	Black	Female
8	Mafikizolo – Love Potion	Pop	Love	Black	Male & female
9	DJ Zinhle, Tamara Dey - Colours	Dance	Uplifting (Reflective)	Black & White	Female
10	DJ Maphorisa, Busiswa, Moonchild Sanelly, DJ Tira – Midnight Starring	Dance	Party lifestyle Status (Party lifestyle, Bravado)	Black	Male & female
11	AKA – The World is Yours	Hip hop		Coloured	Male
12	Black Motion, Nokwazi - Imali	Dance	Status	Black	Male & female
13	Kwesta, Thabsie – Ngiyaz’fela Ngawe	Hip hop	Love	Black	Male & female
14	Shekinah - Suited	Pop	Love	Black	Female
15	AKA – Caiphus Song	Hip hop	Love	Coloured	Male
16	Micasa - Nana	Dance	Love	Black & White	Male
17	AKA, Anatii – Don’t Forget To Pray	Hip hop	Bravado (Status)	Black & Coloured	Male
18	Heavy K, Bucie, Nokwazi - Inde	Dance	Reflective	Black	Male & female
19	Lady Zamar – My Baby	Dance	Love	Black	Female

20 DJ Kent, Dominic Neil – Love You Still

Dance

Love

Black &  
White

Male

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