

Rappin' in America: A Regional Music Phenomenon

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Music geographers have examined myriad American music genres; however, rap, the most influential form of African American popular music during the past three decades, has been ignored from a geographical perspective. In addition, music geographers have overlooked several basic cultural geography concepts in investigating music as a culture trait, such as the core-domain-sphere culture region model as developed by Syracuse University cultural geographer Donald W. Meinig.¹

According to Meinig, the *core* is the centralized zone of concentration of the culture trait and displays the greatest strength and homogeneity of the trait under consideration. The *domain* is an area in which the culture trait is dominant but with markedly less intensity and complexity of development than the core. The *sphere* is the zone of outer influence in which only parts of the culture trait are represented or in which the effect of the culture trait is less significant and becomes a transitional cultural border.

This chapter, therefore, applies these concepts to rap, one of the key innovations in American music, by identifying and delimiting three general rap regions in the United States (East Coast, West Coast, and South) and determining the internal variation within each region by employing the concepts of core, domain, and sphere. Criteria for analyzing rap within the context of the model include innovation and creativity, number of groups and importance, number of artists and significance, number of record labels and output, and number and significance of venues. Biographical information on rap

artists and groups, formation base of rap groups, birthplaces of individual rap artists, and location of important rap recording studios and performance venues were compiled by the author from six secondary sources: *Rap Whoz Who: The World of Rap Music* (1996), *Hip Hop America* (1998), *The Vibe History of Hip Hop* (1999), *Rap Attack 3* (2000), *The Hip Hop Years: A History of Rap* (2001), and *The Rolling Stone Encyclopedia of Rock & Roll* (2001).²

Definition and Explanation of Rap

Some confusion exists over the terminology associated with rap and hip hop. Hip hop is a term used interchangeably with the word "rap" to describe the music. Hip hop, however, is more than the music. It is a culture complex that includes not only rap music but also graffiti art, break dancing, lingo, and fashion (see appendix).

Rap is a form of music that absorbs all other music genres from jazz to classical. Thus, it is transstylistic and transmusal and often referred to as "music beyond music theory." Rap is derived from the oral traditions of African Americans traceable to the West African griots, tribal and village elders whose main function is to keep an oral history of a tribe or village intact. The spoken rather than the written word remains the most important means of communication among African Americans. Thus, rap's roots are found in all types of chants (e.g., children's games, military cadences, and auctioneering), work songs, talkin' country blues, rhythmic sermonizing by Black preachers, and Muhammad Ali's rhymes.

During its initial stages, rap remained largely an underground phenomenon, music by Blacks and for Blacks and largely out of the view of White society. The DJ (disc jockey) was the "root of rap," according to early rappers, such as Grandmaster Flash and Chuck D.³ The necessary ingredients for "deejaying" are an extensive collection of records, a sound system, and turntable skills. In its early days, the genre took advantage of the increasingly popular twelve-inch single format that received its greatest popularity in dance clubs rather than the more traditional means of radio play and large-scale record sales. As a nonalbum-oriented form in the 1970s, rap relied on such independent labels as Tommy Boy, Cold Chillin', and Tuff City, which became the primary conduits for the genre, similar to early rock and roll in the 1950s.

East Coast Rap Region

The East Coast rap region is centered on the Bronx core. The Bronx, one of the five boroughs of New York City, was a fertile breeding ground for the de-

velopment of innovative techniques, formation of rap groups, and birthplace of individual rap artists. The *domain* of the East Coast rap region includes New York City areas to the south and west of the Bronx (Queens, Brooklyn, Staten Island, Harlem, and Long Island), and across the Hudson River, there is a portion of northeastern New Jersey that embraces the cities of Paterson, Englewood, East Orange, Newark, Jersey City, and Elizabeth. The *sphere* of the East Coast region extends southwest to Philadelphia and northeast to Boston (figure 5-1).

In delimiting the areal extent of the East Coast rap region, the Bronx clearly qualifies as the core for several reasons. First, the Bronx is the locality of origin, or *culture hearth*. It was where the first rap sessions were held in neighborhood parks, block parties, and public housing community centers. Moreover, the Bronx was the origin of the creative techniques associated with the genre, such as "break beats," "scratching," "sampling," "cutting," "backspinning," "punch-phasing," and "rhyming" over music (see appendix). In essence, Kool DJ Herc, Afrika Bambaataa, Grand Wizard Theodore, Grandmaster Flash, and DJ Hollywood served as the human innovators and the Bronx acted as the place incubator. As KRS One

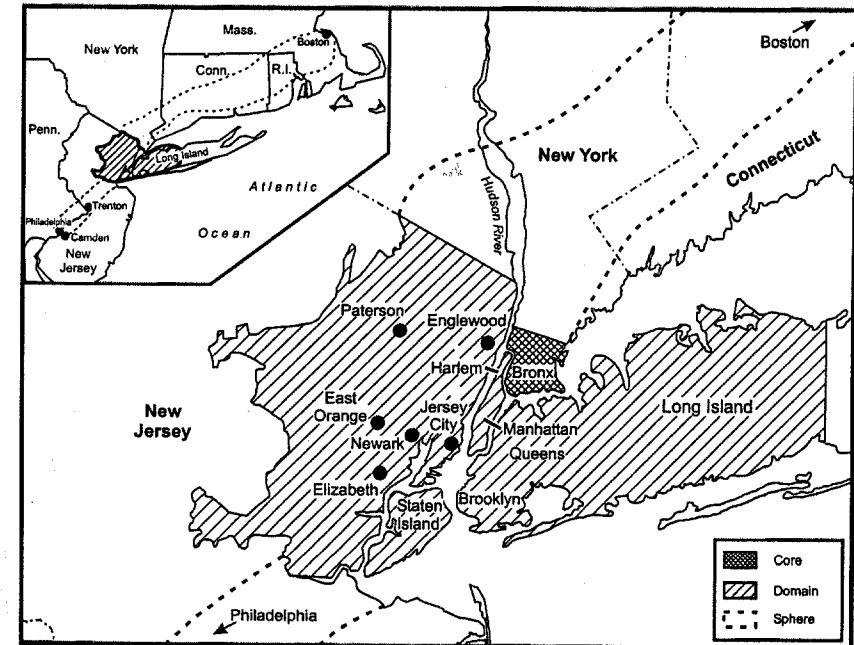


Figure 5-1. East Coast rap region

exclaimed in a recent documentary, "It was the Bronx where all the energy was felt for rap."⁴

The first rap DJ was Herc (stature was big and strong, hence, the name Hercules), a Jamaican immigrant, who settled in the Bronx in the early 1960s. As one of the five pioneers in rap, Herc was born as Clive Campbell in the Trenchtown section of Kingston. Using twin Technic turntables and a mixer, Herc endlessly flipped between two records, cuing them visually and feeding the dual signals through a high-powered Macintosh amp and a set of customized Shure speakers. His fame stems from the creation of the cut n' mix style of music manipulation—stitching together "break beats," or brief rhythmic passages of songs.

Known as the "godfather" of rap and "master of records," Bambaataa was born in the Bronx. By 1970, he was already deejaying at house parties in the Bronx and was widely recognized for his large collection of unique break beat records that came from various musical genres such as rock, mambo, reggae, rhythm-and-blues, and calypso. Using these sources, Bambaataa pioneered the art of "sampling," or electronically copying a short riff from a previously released record.

A native of the Bronx, Grand Wizard Theodore achieved acclaim for his introduction of the technique of "scratching," a turntable skill that involves spinning a record clockwise and counterclockwise underneath the needle to create a scratching percussive sound. By using the turntable in this fashion, he made it into a percussive-type instrument that produced a sound similar to a string drum.

Grandmaster Flash (born Joseph Sadler in the Bronx) was another one of the five originators of rap. He is responsible for developing and perfecting time precision on the following DJ techniques: "cutting," or repeating a beat or musical phrase by moving the record back and forth; "backspinning," or repeating a beat or phrase on a record, by alternately spinning both records backward to the desired beat or phrase, thus, repeating it; and "punch-phrasing," or playing certain parts of a record on one turntable in quick volume surges, while the same record plays on the other turntable. Flash is also noteworthy for his hard-hitting 1982 single, "The Message," that stands as a watershed mark in rap history because of its strong socially oriented lyrics. It took an unvarnished look at the realities of ghetto life, rather than the boastful rhymes spoken over percussion grooves and geared to break dancing of the 1970s.

Finally, DJ Hollywood, born in the Bronx, paved the way for MCs by creating the practice of delivering extensive rhymes over recorded music. Hollywood is also noted as the individual who coined the term "hip hop," which he

used as part of a line in his rhymes, "To the hip, hop, the hippy, the hippy hippy hip, hop hoppin', ya don't stop the rockin'."

In addition to the major innovators, the Bronx was also the source of the largest number of rap groups (16) and individual artists (68) in the East Coast rap region, including several other innovative and legendary groups and artists who influenced rap. Among the groups were Funky Four Plus One, a posse that included the first female rapper (Sha Rock); Furious Five and Fantastic 5, two crews noted for their masterful rapping, especially their signature trading and blending of lyrics; Mercedes Ladies, first all-female group to equal men in performance skills; and Cold Crush Brothers, a widely recognized troupe known for their routines based on popular melodies and their rhymes. Furthermore, the Bronx produced such notable individual rappers as KRS-One, Pete DJ Jones, DJ Jazzy Joyce, Coke La Rock, Tupac Shakur (2Pac), and The Big Punisher (tables 5-1 and 5-2).

The *domain* of the East Coast region accounts for fifty groups and sixty-eight artists, including such notables as Big Daddy Kane, Whodini, and Notorious B.I.G. (Brooklyn), Run-D.M.C., Salt-N-Pepa, and LL Cool J (Queens), Jungle Brothers, Kurtis Blow, and Puff Daddy (Harlem), Public Enemy, Leaders of the New School, and EPMD (Long Island), and Wu-Tang Clan, Force M.D.'s, and GP Wu (Staten Island). The New Jersey section of the *domain* contributes such luminary rappers as Naughty By Nature and Queen Latifah (East Orange), Double XX Posse, Heather B, and P.M. Dawn (Jersey City), Ice-T and Redman (Newark), and Redhead Kingpin (Englewood) (tables 5-3 and 5-4). Englewood, located in the *domain*, is the location of the first recording studio (Sugar Hill) to release rap records (table 5-5).

Of the groups formed in the *domain*, two are prominent in the history of rap: Run-D.M.C. and Public Enemy. Formed in Queens in 1982, Run-D.M.C. set the sound and style for the next decade of rap with its use of

Table 5-1. East Coast rap region—rap groups formed in Bronx core (n=16)

Boogie Down Productions	Grandmaster Flash & Furious Five
Cold Crush Brothers	Grand Wizard Theodore & Fantastic 5
Cosmic Force	Jazzy Five
DJ Breakout & DJ Baron	L Brothers
DJ Smokey & the Smoketrons	Mercedes Ladies
Double Trouble	Showbiz & AG
Dr. Jeckyll & Mr. Hyde	Ultramagnetic MCs
Funky Four Plus One	US Girls

Table 5-2. East Coast rap region—individual artists born in Bronx core (n=68)

Afrika Bambaataa	Donald D.	MC Master Ice
AJ Les	Dot-A-Roc	MC Shy D
Amad Henderson	Dr. Jeckyll	MC Tatiana
Andre the Giant	Eva Deff	Mr. Hyde
Big Bank Hank	Fat Joe	Mr. Magic
Big Punisher	Gordeo	Pete DJ Jones
Brucie B	Grand Wizard Theodore	Posnuos
Charlie Chew	Greg Nice	Positive K
Coke La Rock	Jazzy Jay	Prince Whipper Whip
Disco King Mario	Jazzy Jeff	Psycho Les
DJ Baby D	Keith Keith	Punpkin
DJ Breakout	KK Rockwell	Rubie Dee
DJ Chuck Chillout	Kool KJD	Sha Rock
DJ Hollywood	KRS-One	Sherry Sheryl
DJ Jazzy Joyce	Lil' Rodney Cee	Showbiz
DJ Kid Capri	Lisa Lee	Smooth B
DJ RC	Lord Finesse	Tim Dog
D.J. Smokey	Lovebug Starski	T LA Rock
DJ Whiz Kid	Love Kid Hutch	Tupac Shakur (2Pac)
Da Original	Master Bee	Van Silk
Debbie Dee	Master Rob	Water Bed Kevie Kev
Diamond D	Mean Gene	Zena Z
Disco Bee	Mr. Freeze	

metallic guitar samples, drum machines, and politicized lyrics. In 1983, the trio released their first single, "It's Like That"/"Sucker M.C.'s," that paved the way for a positive social message without ignoring the cruel realities of inner-city life. Their signature Cazal eyeglasses, black fedoras, and matching Adidas or black leather suits gave rap musicians a new persona. In 1986, they teamed with the White rock group, Aerosmith, to record "Walk This Way," the first racial crossover event in rap history. Also in 1986, Run-D.M.C. released *Raising Hell*. It became the first rap album to reach number one on the R & B charts, to chart the pop top ten, and first to go multiplatinum; all of which resulted in the first rap act to receive airplay on MTV and appear on the cover of *Rolling Stone* magazine.

Formed in Long Island in 1982, Public Enemy rewrote the rules of rap in the late 1980s. Led by the authoritative lead rapper, Chuck D, the group pioneered the "hardcore" style that presaged the "gangsta" subgenre. Their two albums, *Yo! Bum Rush the Show* (1987) and *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back* (1988) were laced with aggressive lyrics, often punctuated with anti-Semitic, homophobic, and sexist references.

Table 5-3. East Coast rap region—location of groups formed in domain (n=50)

Afros—Queens	Leaders of the New School—Long Island
All City—Brooklyn	Main Source—Queens
Audio Two—Brooklyn	Masta Ace—Brooklyn
Beatnuts—Queens	Mike & Dave—Harlem
Black By Demand—Queens	Naughty By Nature—East Orange
Cocoa Brovaz—Brooklyn	Newcleus—Brooklyn
Company Flow—Queens	No Face—Brooklyn
Crash Crew—Harlem	Orange Krush—Queens
Das EFX—Brooklyn	Organized Konfusion—Queens
De La Soul—Long Island	Original Concept—Long Island
Disco Twins—Queens	P. M. Dawn—Jersey City
Double XX Posse—Jersey City	Public Enemy—Long Island
Easy Abadaba—Harlem	Run-D.M.C.—Queens
EPMD—Long Island	Salt-N-Pepa—Queens
Eric B & Rakim—Long Island	Shyheim—Staten Island
Fat Boys—Brooklyn	Rob Base & DJ EZ Rock—Harlem
Finesse & Synquis—Queens	Skarhead—Queens
Force M.D.'s—Staten Island	Talib Kweli—Brooklyn
Full Force—Brooklyn	3rd Base—Queens
Fu-Schnickens—Brooklyn	UFTO—Brooklyn
GP Wu—Staten Island	Whodini—Brooklyn
Jungle Brothers—Harlem	Word of Mouth—Elizabeth
Kid 'n Play—Queens	Wreckx-N-Effect—Harlem
Kool G Rap & DJ Polo—Queens	Wu-Tang Clan—Staten Island
Kwame & A New Beginning—Queens	X-Clan—Brooklyn

Finally, the East Coast *domain* produced one pioneer rapper: Queen Lati-fah. Although not the first female in rap, she was the first to introduce a feminist perspective to the genre's political agenda with her groundbreaking 1989 debut album, *All Hail the Queen*, and its single "Ladies First." *Black Reign* (1993) became her most popular album and produced the hit single "U.N.I.T.Y.," which won her a Grammy for Best Rap Solo Performance.

The East Coast *sphere* extends southwest to Trenton and Philadelphia and northeast to Boston. Accounting for sixteen groups and thirteen individual artists, it includes such well-known groups and artists as Digable Planets, Tracey Lee, DJ Jazzy Jeff and Fresh Prince, Schooly D; Da Youngsta's (Philadelphia); Poor Righteous Teachers (Trenton); Marky Mark, Ed O.G. and Da Bulldogs, Almighty RSO, and Mr. Lif (Boston) (table 5-6).

Of the fifty-seven total independent rap studios documented, thirty-six were located in the East Coast *core-domain-sphere* zones (63%). Many of them

Table 5-4. East Coast rap region—individual artists born in domain (n=68)

Antoinette—Queens	Larry Smith—Queens
Apache—Jersey City	Lauryn Hill—South Orange
AZ—Brooklyn	Lil' Cease—Brooklyn
Big Daddy Kane—Brooklyn	Lil' Kim—Brooklyn
Big L—Brooklyn	LL Cool J—Queens
Bill Stepheny—Harlem	McGruff—Harlem
Biz Markie—Harlem	Marley Marl—Queens
Cam'ron—Harlem	Master Ace—Brooklyn
Chino XL—East Orange	MC Craig G—Queens
Craig Mack—Long Island	MC Lyte—Queens
Daddy-O—Brooklyn	Memphis Bleek—Brooklyn
Davy DMX—Queens	Mic Geronimo—Queens
DJ Flowers—Brooklyn	Mister Cee—Brooklyn
DJ Mixmaster Muggs—Queens	Ms. Melodie—Brooklyn
DJ Scratch—Brooklyn	Nas—Long Island
D-Nice—Harlem	Notorious B.I.G.—Brooklyn
Fab Five Freddy—Brooklyn	Ol' Dirty Bastard—Brooklyn
Fabulous—Brooklyn	Prime Paul—Queens
Father—Brooklyn	Puff Daddy—Harlem
Foxy Brown—Brooklyn	Q-Tip—Brooklyn
Genius—Staten Island	Queen Latifah—East Orange
Heather B—Jersey City	Queen Mother Rage—Brooklyn
Hurby Azor—Queens	Ralph McDaniels—Brooklyn
Ice-T—Newark	Real Roxanne—Brooklyn
Intelligent Hoodlum—Long Island	Redhead Kingpin—Englewood
Ja Rule—Queens	Redman—Newark
Jeru the Damaja—Brooklyn	Rick Rubin—Long Island
Joeski Love—Harlem	Shazzy—Queens
Just-Ice—Brooklyn	Special Ed—Brooklyn
Killah Priest—Brooklyn	Sweet Tee—Queens
Kool DJ Red Alert—Harlem	Teddy Riley—Harlem
Kurtis Blow—Harlem	Vandy C—Brooklyn
Lakim Shabazz—Newark	Vietnam Sadler—Long Island
Large Professor—Harlem	YZ—Paterson

were the most significant labels during the 1970s and 1980s (e.g., Def Jam, Tommy Boy, and Profile) when the major recording companies were not willing to invest in this new music phenomenon (table 5-5).

The East Coast *core-domain* zones also boasted the greatest number of rap venues (35/40) documented in the three regions (87.5%). These premier clubs were launching pads for several rap careers, including Danceteria (Rus-

Table 5-5. Independent companies that recorded rap music with known locations of studios (n=57)

Prism/Cold Chillin'—New York City	Brooktown—New York City
Tommy Boy—New York City	Nia—New York City
Tuff City—New York City	Sugar Hill—Englewood, NJ
Def Jam—New York City	Hilltop Hustler—Philadelphia
Enjoy—New York City	Pop Art—Philadelphia
Profile—New York City	Tec—Philadelphia
Fever—New York City	Schooly D—Philadelphia
Next Plateau—New York City	Death Row—Los Angeles
Paul Winley—New York City	Ruthless—Los Angeles
Rainbow—New York City	Delicious Vinyl—Los Angeles
Quad—New York City	Macola—Los Angeles
Happy House—New York City	Rhyme Syndicate—Los Angeles
Reelin' and Rockin'—New York City	Egyptian Empire—Los Angeles
Bozo Meko—New York City	Power Tools—Los Angeles
Spring—New York City	Rag Top—San Francisco
Uptown—New York City	Bust-It—Oakland
B-Boy—New York City	Dangerous—Oakland
Idlers—New York City	75 Girls—Oakland
Loud—New York City	Sick Wid It—Oakland
Zakia—New York City	So So Def—Atlanta
Fun House—New York City	Short—Atlanta
Rat Cage—New York City	LaFace—Atlanta
Select—New York City	Po Broke—Atlanta
SOUL—New York City	No Limit—New Orleans
Wild Pitch—New York City	Cash Money—New Orleans
Jive—New York City	Rap-A-Lot—Houston
Sleeping Bag—New York City	Underground—Houston
StepSun—New York City	Suave House—Memphis
Prelude—New York City	

sell Simmons and Rick Rubin met to form Def Jam Records), The Mudd Club (Afrika Bambaataa and Fab 5 Freddy performed), Red Zone (Puffy Combs hangout), Charles's Gallery (DJ Hollywood started "rhyming"), and the Roxy and Negril (promoter Kool Lady Blue's clubs that featured such artists as Kool DJ Herc) (table 5-7).

Although rap spread to other regions of the United States, the *core-domain-sphere* in the East Coast region remains its chief stronghold. The three zones have produced 82 groups, 149 artists, 36 record labels, and 35 venues.

Table 5-6. East Coast rap region—sphere

Location of Groups Formed (n=16)	Artists Birthplaces (n=13)
Bahamadia—Philadelphia	Beanie Sigel—Philadelphia
Da Youngsta's—Philadelphia	Charli Baltimore—Philadelphia
Digable Planets—Philadelphia	Cool C—Philadelphia
DJ Cash Money & MC Marvelous—Philadelphia	DJ Cash Money—Philadelphia
DJ Jazzy Jeff & Fresh Prince—Philadelphia	Lady B—Philadelphia
EST—Philadelphia	MC Rell—Philadelphia
Hilltop Hustlers—Philadelphia	Schooly D—Philadelphia
Illegal—Philadelphia	Steady B—Philadelphia
Last Emperor—Philadelphia	Tracey Lee—Philadelphia
MFSB—Philadelphia	Eve—Philadelphia
Ramsquad—Philadelphia	Ed O.G.—Boston
Roots—Philadelphia	Marky Mark—Boston
Three Times Dope—Philadelphia	Mr. Lif—Boston
Poor Righteous Teachers—Trenton	
Ed O.G. & Da Bulldogs—Boston	
Almighty RSO—Boston	

Table 5-7. Known venues for rap music in the three regions (n=40)

Red Zone—New York City	Savoy Manor Ballroom—New York City
Disco Fever—New York City	Club 371—New York City
Twilight Zone—New York City	Night Fever—New York City
Hevalo—New York City	Ecstasy Garage—New York City
Executive Playhouse—New York City	Nell Gwyn's Disco—New York City
Audubon—New York City	Club New York—New York City
Stardust Ballroom—New York City	Charles's Gallery—New York City
Area—New York City	Leviticus—New York City
Danceteria—New York City	Justine's—New York City
Funhouse—New York City	Club Saturn—New York City
The Mudd Club—New York City	Super Star 33—New York City
The Ritz—New York City	Marrs—New York City
Peppermint Lounge—New York City	Powerhouse—New York City
Back Door—New York City	USA Roller Rink—New York City
Negril—New York City	Claremont Center—New York City
Roxy—New York City	Radio—Los Angeles
Harlem World Disco—New York City	Eve's After Dark—Los Angeles
T Connection—New York City	Rhinestone—Houston
Small's Paradise—New York City	Spud's—Houston
Broadway International—New York City	4604 Club—Baltimore

West Coast Rap

Although the Bronx gave birth to rap, the genre possesses West Coast roots in both the Los Angeles and San Francisco Bay areas. During the late 1960s, the Watts Prophets, a Los Angeles trio, built a local following with a 1971 album entitled *Rappin' Black in a White World*, a hard-to-find classic that creates poetic chants.⁵ In the early 1980s, the sounds and lyrics of West Coast rappers were similar to the East Coast groups, such as "Gigolo Rap," featuring Disco Daddy and Captain Rapp. Released in 1981, it imitated the "old school" East Coast idiom.

But in the late 1980s, West Coast rap achieved an innovative and distinctive locus. Compton, a southern suburb of Los Angeles, became the core of the southern region of West Coast rap (figure 5-2). In a Compton garage, Andre Young (Dr. Dre), Eric Wright (Eazy-E), Lorenzo Patterson (MC Ren), and O'Shea Jackson (Ice Cube) assembled in 1988 to produce

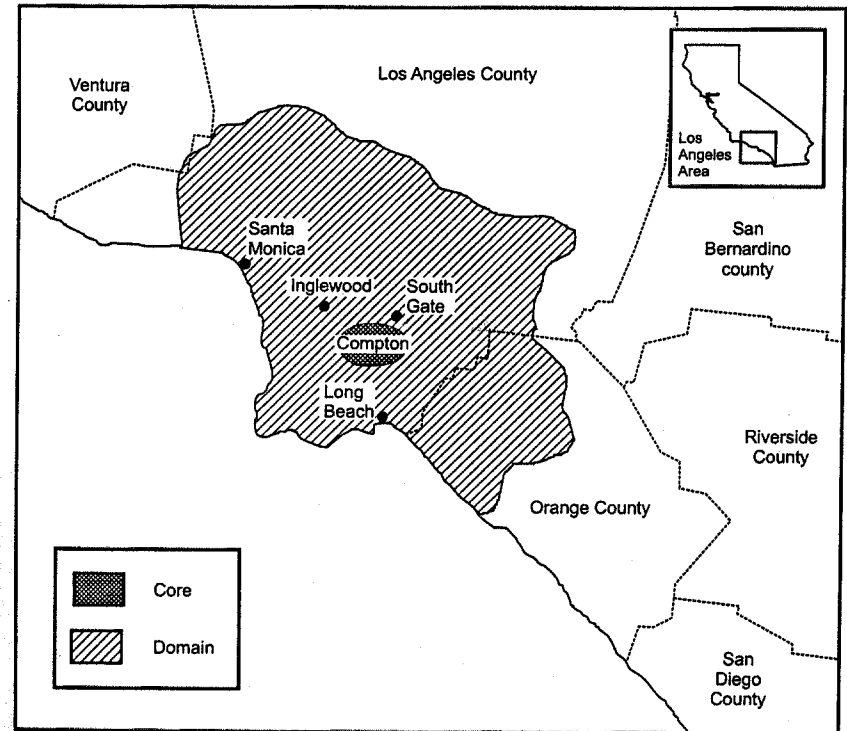


Figure 5-2. West Coast rap region—Los Angeles

a new subgenre known as the “gangsta” style. The following statement from MC Ren reflects the regional bias of the group:

New York was on the map and all we was thinking, man—I ain’t gonna lie, no matter what nobody in the group say—I think we all was thinking about making a name for Compton.⁶

After releasing Eazy-E’s first single in 1988, “Boyz N the Hood,” penned by Ice Cube and Dr. Dre, the group further exalted their hometown by releasing their first album entitled *Straight Outta Compton*. Calling themselves N.W.A. for Niggaz With Attitude, the crew set the tone for West Coast rap from the late 1980s to the mid-1990s. Their hard-hitting violence-laced lyrics tinged with angry social commentary became the model for this new substyle of rap. Inspired by N.W.A., several other “gangsta” style groups were formed in Compton, including Above the Law, South Central Cartel, and Compton’s Most Wanted (CMW). The latter posse reaffirmed Compton’s role in the creation of the “gangsta” style with its 1990 debut album, *It’s a Compton Thing*. Finally, another Compton native, Toddy Tee, further acclaimed Compton’s importance as the core with her 1995 release of *Compton Forever*. Individual rappers born in Compton serve as a further indicator of its core qualifications, including all members of N.W.A., as well as such notables as Coolio, DJ Quick, Chill MC, and DJ Pooh (table 5-8).

Two Compton-born members of N.W.A. pursued solo careers and substantiate the importance of Compton as the core of West Coast rap—Dr. Dre and Ice Cube. After leaving N.W.A. in 1992, Dre became the pioneer producer of the “gangsta” style. His production techniques provided the blueprint for such “gangsta” stylists as Ice Cube, Warren G., Snoop Doggy Dogg, Tupac Shakur (2Pac), and Coolio. Finally, he and Suge Knight formed Death Row Records, the most significant rap label in the early 1990s, with its production studios located in Los Angeles.

Ice Cube, after departing N.W.A., soon established himself as one of rap’s best and most controversial artists. Rather than refer to his style as “gangsta,” he called it “reality rap,” in a recent documentary on rap.⁷ His “gangsta” style rhyming was profane and political, reflected in his first two solo albums—*AmeriKKKa’s Most Wanted* (1990) and *Death Certificate* (1991). As one of the most influential rap artists throughout the 1990s, Ice Cube helped form several new posses in Compton, such as Da Lench Mob, and produced the debut album for his female protégée, Yo-Yo, also born in Compton.

Surrounding the Compton core is the *domain* that includes Long Beach to the south and South Gate to the north. Long Beach produced such notable rappers as Snoop Doggy Dogg, Warren G, Daz Dellinger, Bad Azz, and Tha

Table 5-8. West Coast rap region—Los Angeles (n=48)

<i>Groups/Artists in Core</i>	<i>Groups/Artists in Domain</i>
<i>Groups:</i>	<i>Groups:</i>
Above the Law	Cypress Hill
Compton’s Most Wanted (CMW)	Mexakinz
Da Lench Mob	Tha Dogg Pound
L. A. Posse	<i>Artists:</i>
Low Profile	Bad Azz
N.W.A.	Big Lady K
Pharcyde	Daz Dillinger
Second II None	Defari
South Central Cartel	Lil’ Half Dead
Tha Alkaholiks	Mack 10
Tha Eastsidaz	Snoop Doggy Dogg
W. C. & the Maad Circle	
Westside Connection	
World Class Wreckin’ Crew	
<i>Artists:</i>	
Arabian Prince	
Bobcat	
Chill MC	
Coolio	
Darky B.	
DJ Mike T	
DJ Pooh	
DJ Quick	
DJ Slip	
DJ Yella	
Dr. Dre	
Easy-E	
Egyptian Lover	
Ice Cube	
KK	
MC Eiht	
MC Twist	
MC Trouble	
Nate Dogg	
Ras Kass	
Sir Jinx	
Tha D	
Toddy Tee	
Yo-Yo	

Dogg Pound, while South Gate accounted for Cypress Hill. Most significant of this group is Snoop Dogg. He quickly became one of the most famous stars in West Coast rap, partly because of his drawled, laconic rhyming and partly because of the violence his lyrics implied. His arrest on charges of acting as a murder accomplice strengthened his “gangsta” image and propelled his first album, *Doggystyle*, to hit the charts at number one, the first debut album to attain that feat. Eventually cleared of charges, Dogg was the embodiment of 1990s “gangsta” rap and has inspired a legion of followers including Tha Dogg Pound, Tha Eastsidaz, and Doggy’s Angels. As Nelson George proclaims in *Hip Hop America*, “The recordings from the Compton–Long Beach axis tell the story of the poverty, guns, and despair” of southern California in the 1980s and 1990s.⁸

Overall, the Los Angeles *core-domain* was the formation base for seventeen of the thirty documented West Coast rap groups (57%) and was the birthplace for thirty-one of the fifty-four (57%) individual West Coast artists (table 5-8). Finally, Los Angeles was the major center for West Coast rap recording studios, including Death Row, Ruthless, Macola, and Delicious Vinyl (table 5-5). Radio and Eve’s After Dark were the major rap venues in the Los Angeles area (table 5-7).

The Bay Area region consists of the San Francisco/Oakland *core* and a *domain* that includes three suburbs of Oakland (Richmond and Vallejo to the north and Hayward to the south) and Sacramento to the northeast of the core (figure 5-3). No *sphere* of influence zone is identified. The San Francisco–Oakland *core* produced a diverse set of groups and artists, but is widely recognized early on as a center for two subgenres of rap, “pop” and “alternative,” although by the mid-1990s, it became a West Coast base for the “gangsta” substyle.

Born in Oakland, MC Hammer (later dropped the MC) was one of the pioneers of “pop-rap,” a subgenre that emphasizes dance beats with strong melodic hooks and nonaggressive party-type lyrics. Hammer became the first internationally recognized rap super star with his 1990 album, *Please Hammer, Don’t Hurt ‘Em*, and its single, “U Can’t Touch This” that featured his eccentric attire and manic dancing. His profound influence in the Bay Area core is reflected in the formation of several groups, such as the female posse Oaktown’s 3-5-7.

The *core* also produced a number of “alternative rap” groups, including Digital Underground, Disposable Heroes of Hiphoprisy, and The Coup. “Alternative rap” is a nonconformist substyle that defies traditional stereotypes of rap and blurs genres by drawing from a variety of sources, including jazz, soul, rock, funk, and reggae. Digital Underground is a bizarre group that presents a weird sense of style, humor-laced lyrics, and outrageous costumes led by Shock-G. The Disposable Heroes of Hiphoprisy is one of rap’s foremost pro-

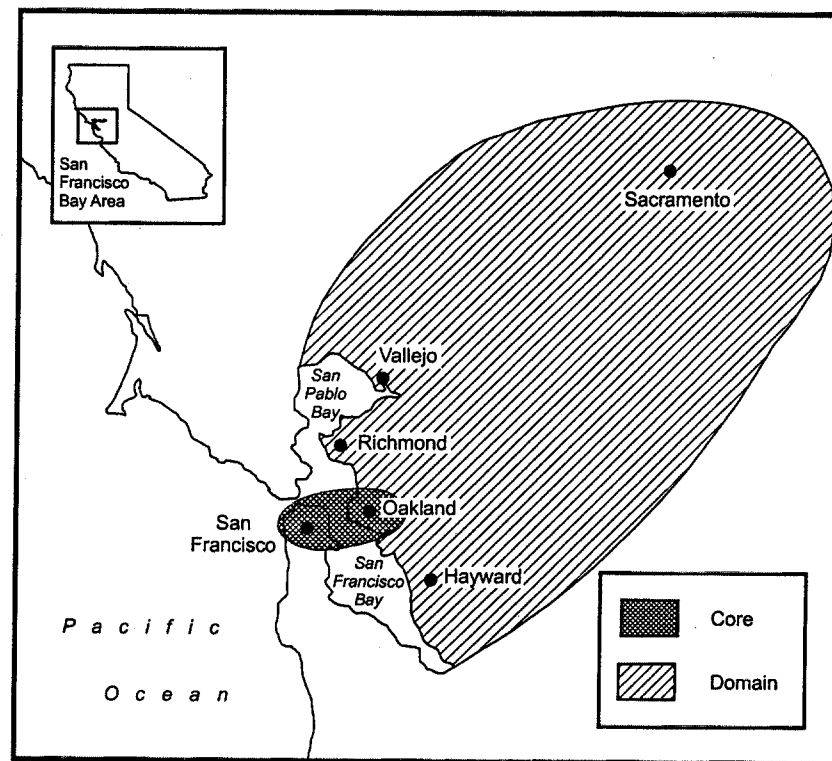


Figure 5-3. West Coast rap region—Bay Area

ponents of multiculturalism and liberalism. The group pointedly attacks the “gangsta” style themes of homophobia, misogyny, and racism. Finally, there was The Coup, one of the most overtly political groups in rap history. The trio, led by lead rapper Boots, was dedicated to social change from a Marxist perspective.

By the early 1990s, the Bay Area *core* was best known for such “gangsta” style artists as Ant Banks, E-40, and Rappin’ 4-Tay. Banks, who began as a producer in Oakland, released his first major album, *Big Thangs*, on which he recruited some of the West Coast’s best-known “gangsta” stylists, including Too \$hort and Ice Cube. One of the most creative “gangsta” rappers was Oakland’s E-40, who created his own language and presented it in varying speeds and voices. After serving time in prison, San Francisco’s Rappin’ 4-Tay released his celebrated *Off Parole*, another album with a “gangsta” approach. The “gangsta” style groups from the Bay Area core include R.B.L. Posse, The Luniz, and T.W.D.Y.

In sum, the Bay Area *core-domain* was the formation base for thirteen of the thirty West Coast rap groups (43%) and accounted for twenty-three of fifty-four artists born on the West Coast (43%) (table 5-9). In terms of recording studios, five were located in the Bay Area, four of them in Oakland, while no important performance venues for rap were located in the core (tables 5-5 and 5-7).

The Bay Area region *domain* produced twelve rap artists, eight of whom are from Sacramento, California's capital city located in the Central Valley, an unlikely center for rap because of its historic association with country music. The artists are overwhelmingly associated with the "gangsta" style, including Brotha Lynch Hung, Ballin A\$\$ Dame, and Young Ridah (table 5-9). On the other hand, the *domain* has not produced any widely

Table 5-9. West Coast rap region—Bay Area (n=36)

Groups/Artists in Core	Groups/Artists in Domain
<i>Groups:</i>	<i>Artists:</i>
Blackalicious—San Francisco	Ballin A\$\$ Dame—Sacramento
Digital Underground—San Francisco	Brotha Lynch Hung—Sacramento
Disposable Heroes of Hiphoprisy—Oakland	C-Bo—Sacramento
Mystic Journeyman—San Francisco	Click—Vallejo
Oaktowns 3-5-7—Oakland	DJ Shadow—Hayward
Posse—San Francisco	Hollow Tip—Sacramento
R.B.L. Posse—San Francisco	Lil Ric—Richmond
Sons of Funk—San Francisco	Lunaticc—Sacramento
Souls of Mischief—Oakland	Mac Dre—Vallejo
Spearhead—San Francisco	Marvaless—Sacramento
The Coup—Oakland	Mic-C—Sacramento
The Luniz—Oakland	Young Ridah—Sacramento
T.W.D.Y.—Oakland	
<i>Artists:</i>	
Ant Banks—Oakland	
Celly Cel—San Francisco	
Dru Down—Oakland	
E-40—Oakland	
J. T. The Bigga Figga—San Francisco	
MC Hammer—Oakland	
MC Mars—San Francisco	
Paris—San Francisco	
Rappin' 4-Tay—San Francisco	
The Automator—San Francisco	
2Wice—Oakland	

recognized rap groups, nor does it include any recording companies or performance venues.

In the final analysis, West Coast rap, often synonymous with the "gangsta" style, began a dramatic decline by the mid-1990s with the departure of Dr. Dre and Snoop Dogg from Death Row Records, the proclamation by Dr. Dre that "gangsta" rap was dead, the murder of 2Pac, and the imprisonment of Death Row Records CEO Suge Knight. By this time, the focus of rap music had turned to the emerging Southern rap.

Southern Rap

Evolving later than the East and West Coast regions, the Southern rap region fits the Meinig model in terms of five different *cores*; however, the areas surrounding these cores do not include the *domain* and *sphere of influence* zones found in the other two general rap regions. The region emerged in the late 1980s with five cores: Miami, Atlanta, New Orleans, Houston, and Memphis (figure 5-4). During its formative stages, Southern rap's distinctiveness was associated with the so-called "Miami bass sound," characterized by the use of synthesizers and drum machines; faster tempos, usually 150 beats per minute; and high decibels of bass. Moreover, it was recognized for its rump-shaking dance grooves and sexually explicit lyrics. Chief among its proponents were DJ

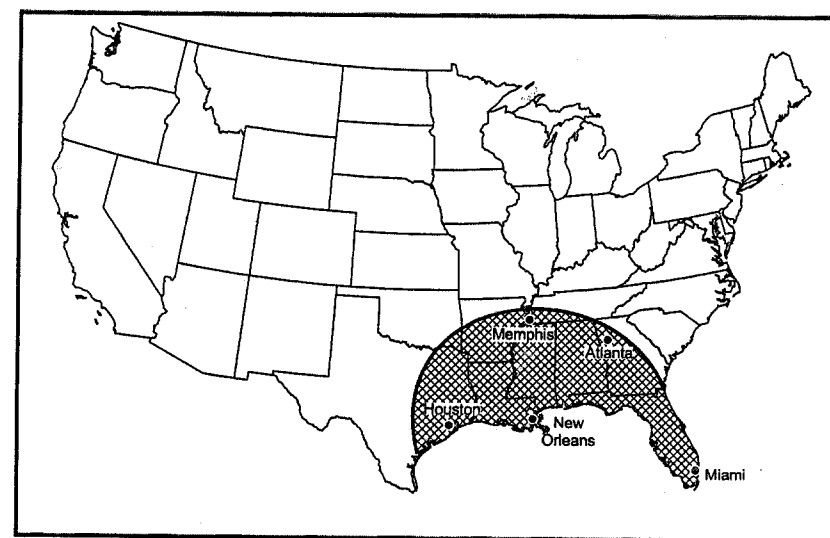


Figure 5-4. Southern rap region

Magic Mike and Luther Campbell's 2 Live Crew, which provoked censorship outcries from across the country. Miami's bass sound, with drum frequencies capable of pulverizing the vast majority of speakers, diffused throughout the South and became a national dance-floor staple with such Southern rap groups as Tag Team (Atlanta) and 69 Boyz (Jacksonville). With all three members born in Miami, Anquette was the first Southern rap female group. Vanilla Ice, the first White American rap star to be recognized by the African American community, was born in Miami. Despite its early success, Miami produced only six of the thirty-seven rap groups (16%) in the Southern region, and only eight of the fifty-nine artists were born there (14%) (tables 5-10 and 5-11). Furthermore, Miami lacked any major rap production studios or popular rap venues (tables 5-5 and 5-7).

As one of the creative *cores* of Southern rap, Atlanta was placed on the regional map in the late 1980s and early 1990s when Arrested Development (a sextet founded in 1989) and adolescent duo rappers Kriss Kross (formed in 1991) hit the national rap charts with Arrested Development's single "Tennessee" (1992) and Kriss Kross's "Jump" single (1992). *Totally Krossed Out*, Kriss Kross's 1992 debut album, sold four million copies. Atlanta's early rap sound incorporated the funk of classic Southern soul; however, later groups presented a harder-edged lyrical content. Among these groups were Goodie

Table 5-10. Southern rap region—location of groups formed (n=37)

Arrested Development—Atlanta	Prophet Posse—Memphis
A-Town Players—Atlanta	Three 6 Mafia—Memphis
Field Mob—Atlanta	Thugs from Da Southside—Memphis
Goodie Mob—Atlanta	Big Tymers—New Orleans
Kriss Kross—Atlanta	Hot Boys—New Orleans
Lil' Jon & the Eastside Boyz—Atlanta	Partners-N-Crime—New Orleans
Organized Noize—Atlanta	Steady Mobb'n—New Orleans
OutKast—Atlanta	Anquette—Miami
Parental Advisory—Atlanta	Dead Prez—Miami
Society of Soul—Atlanta	Dynamix II—Miami
Tag Team—Atlanta	L'Trimm—Miami
Youngbloodz—Atlanta	Not Good But So Good—Miami
Xscape—Atlanta	2 Live Crew—Miami
Crime Boss—Houston	Lords of the Underground—Raleigh
5th Ward Boyz—Houston	Nemesis—Dallas
Geto Boys—Houston	Sequence—Columbia, SC
Herschelwood Hardheadz—Houston	69 Boyz—Jacksonville, FL
Screwed Up Click—Houston	Sam Houston Boyz—Austin, TX
Hypnotize Camp Posse—Memphis	

Table 5-11. Southern rap region—birthplaces of individual artists (n=59)

Crunchy Black—Memphis	Raheem—Houston
DJ Paul—Memphis	South Park Mexican—Houston
Eightball—Memphis	Willie D—Houston
Indo J—Memphis	Yungstar—Houston
Juicy "J"—Memphis	Bass Mekanik—Miami
Koopsta Knicca—Memphis	Beat Dominator—Miami
La Chat—Memphis	DJ Uncle Al—Miami
M-Child—Memphis	JT Money—Miami
MJG—Memphis	Luke [Skywalker]—Miami
Tela—Memphis	Trick Daddy—Miami
The Kaze—Memphis	Trina—Miami
Tommy Wright III—Memphis	Vanilla Ice—Miami
T-Mix—Memphis	DJ Smurf—Atlanta
Gangsta Boo—Memphis	Jermaine Dupri—Atlanta
Gangsta Pat—Memphis	Jim Crow—Atlanta
Baby Gangsta—New Orleans	Lil' Jon—Atlanta
Juvenile—New Orleans	Ludacris—Atlanta
Lil' Romeo—New Orleans	MC Shy-D—Atlanta
Master P.—New Orleans	Pasta Troy—Atlanta
Mia X—New Orleans	Usher—Atlanta
Mr. Serv-On—New Orleans	Big Pimp—Montgomery, AL
Mystikal—New Orleans	B. Fats—El Paso, TX
Silkk tha Shocker—New Orleans	DJ Magic Mike—Orlando, FL
Skull Duggery—New Orleans	The D.O.C.—Dallas
Big Hawk—Houston	Mase—Jacksonville, FL
Big Pokey—Houston	Petey Pablo—Greenville, NC
Devin—Houston	X-Raided—Waco, TX
DJ Screw—Houston	A-Gee—San Antonio, TX
Ganksta N-I-P—Houston	Mr. Nitro—Oklahoma City
Lil' Keke—Houston	

Mob, OutKast, and Ghetto Mafia. Atlanta led all five Southern cores in the formation of groups with thirteen of thirty-seven total (35%). On the other hand, Atlanta's output of individual artists was eight of fifty-nine, or roughly 13 percent (tables 5-10 and 5-11). Most notable of the individual rappers was Jermaine Dupri who discovered Kriss Kross and launched his own recording label in Atlanta in 1989—So So Def Records. In addition to Kriss Kross, Dupri produced a platinum-selling rap group (Xscape) and an individual rapper (Da Brat), as well as recording as a solo artist. Atlanta boasted three other independent rap labels—LaFace, Po Broke, and \$hort, but no major rap venues (tables 5-5 and 5-7).

New Orleans became the commercial core of the Southern region with Master P. developing the highly successful No Limit record label. Although Atlanta may have been the creative node for the Southern rap region, New Orleans' No Limit label produced rap groups and artists in an assembly-line fashion and was a continual presence on the national album charts during the late 1990s. Master P., Silkk tha Shocker, and C-Murder formed Tru, a trio that followed the Los Angeles "gangsta rap" tradition. Silkk and C-Murder, younger brothers of Master P., eventually pursued solo careers in the "gangsta" idiom. Additional "gangsta" rappers recorded by Master P. were Fiend, Soulja Slim, Young Bleed, Mr. Serv-On, Mystikal, Steady Mobb'n, Skull Duggery, and Mia X, No Limits' first female artist. A second record label based in New Orleans was Mannie Fresh's Cash Money. Reworking the Miami bass sound, Cash Money rivaled No Limit during the late 1990s with its discovery of The Hot Boys, a "gangsta" group, Big Tymers, a provocative, street-smart duo, and Juvenile (aka Terus Gray), whose *Solja Rags* and *400 Degreez* became national hits. New Orleans' production of rap groups in the South was only four of thirty-seven (11%), but its output of individual rappers was nine of fifty-nine (15%) (tables 5-10 and 5-11).

Houston classifies as one of the Southern regional cores because it ranks third to Atlanta in terms of rap group formation with five (13.5%) of the total number and ranks second with ten in production of individual artists (17%) (tables 5-10 and 5-11). One of the most controversial rap groups in the early 1990s was The Geto Boys formed in Houston in 1986. Their "gangsta rap" style reached national prominence with the self-titled album in 1990. Geffen Records halted distribution of the album because of its confrontational and thuggish lyrics. However, producer Rick Rubin eventually released it on his own Def American label. Their *We Can't Be Stopped* (1991) reached platinum sales, but by 1993, the trio began to fracture. Members Scarface, Bushwick Bill, and Willie D. each pursued solo careers, though the Geto Boys reunited in 1996 for *The Resurrection*, one of their most popular albums. Of the three, Scarface achieved the most success as a solo artist with his 1998 *My Homies* going platinum. Following in the footsteps of The Geto Boys, the 5th Ward Boyz recorded for the Houston-based label Rap-A-Lot. Their *Ghetto Dope* and *Gangsta Funk* reflected the harsh, street-smart lyrics typical of "gangsta rap." Additional "gangsta" groups formed in Houston included Herschelwood Hardheadz, named in honor of their Houston neighborhood, and Screwed Up Click. Individual rappers originating in Houston who carried on the "gangsta" style were Ganksta N-I-P, Raheem, Crime Boss, Yungstar, Big Hawk, Big Pokey, and Lil' Keke. Rap-A-Lot Records, founded in 1986, was the major label; however, Underground Records was also based in Houston. Two major rap hot spots emerged in Houston—Rhinstone and Spud's (tables 5-5 and 5-7).

As a fifth core in the Southern region, Memphis produced one of the pioneer groups in Southern rap—Eightball & MJG. In the early 1990s, the duo formed their own Suave House label and recorded *Comin' Out Hard*, their influential debut album in 1993. By 1999, the twosome had inked a deal with Universal Records that gave them national distribution and attention for their pimp-obsessed, sleazy lyrical content. Both went on to pursue solo careers. Such groups as Prophet Posse and Thugs from Da Southside exemplified the hardcore, underground nature of Memphis rap. Individual rappers carried on the hardcore, "gangsta" tradition in Memphis with hostile, harsh, and aggressive lyrical content. Among these were Eightball, one of the pioneers of Southern rap, whose 1997 album, *Lost*, went double platinum; Indo G, one of the most talented of the Southern rap MCs; and DJ Paul, a co-founder of Three 6 Mafia. Memphis produced only four of the thirty-seven Southern groups (11%), whereas it was the leading node in individual rap artists with fifteen of fifty-nine (25%) (tables 5-10 and 5-11). Other outposts of Southern rap include Jacksonville (69 Boyz), Raleigh (Lords of the Underground), and Dallas (Nemesis).

In summarizing the data for the three regions, a total of 149 locations were documented as formation bases for rap groups, while 262 artist birthplaces were verified. In addition, fifty-seven independent rap recording studios and forty performance venues were validated. Of the 149 formation bases, 82 were located in East Coast region (55%), while the South accounted for 37 (25%), and the West Coast contributed 30 (20%). The East Coast region was birthplace for 149 rap artists (57%) followed by the South with 59 (23%) and the West Coast with 54 (21%). As to recording studios, the East Coast was location for 36 of the 57 total (63%), while the West Coast total of 12 and the South with 9 were 21% and 16% of the total, respectively. Finally, the East Coast region was the location for 35 of the 40 documented performance venues (87.5%).

Conclusion

After more than thirty years, rap remains primarily an African American urban-based regional-oriented music. No longer just a bicoastal phenomenon, rap has gradually shifted to the South and the emerging Midwest. On the other hand, the Great Plains, Mountain, Desert Southwest, and Pacific Northwest regions have contributed little or nothing to the national rap regional mosaic. The East and West Coasts, however, retain a strong presence on the national rap scene.

The new millennium has witnessed resurgence in the East Coast region, albeit the subgenre emphasis has changed with a more "gangsta" focus than

in the past. Although it remains as the core of the East Coast region because of its hearth status and origin of innovative techniques, the Bronx has given way to the East Coast region *domain* in terms of productivity. Brooklyn, Long Island, Queens, and Harlem are the most prolific in generating the recent stars, such as Nas, DMX, Lil' Kim, Redman, Ja Rule, and Jay-Z. DMX and Jay-Z were 2001 Grammy Award nominees for Best Rap performances, while Redman was featured on De La Soul's 2001 Grammy nomination for Best Rap Group. On the other hand, many of the groups and artists of the 1980s and 1990s have assumed a prominent role in the East Coast revitalization. Among these are De La Soul, Beastie Boys, and Puff Daddy; all of whom were nominated for Grammy Awards in recent years. Finally, Run-D.M.C., after a long studio hiatus, released *Crown Royal*, a 1999 album.

Despite Dr. Dre's statement that the "gangsta" substyle, developed in the Compton core, was dead in 1996 when he left Death Row Records, the West Coast region has endured as a significant source for rap groups and artists. Leading the way in the West Coast revitalization is Dr. Dre, Eazy-E (two original members of N.W.A.), and Snoop Dogg. Dre's production capabilities have enabled him to launch several new stars, such as Eminem. His "Forgot About Dre" featuring Eminem was nominated for the 2001 Best Rap Performance by Duo, and Eminem's "The Real Slim Shady," produced by Dre, won the 2001 Grammy Award for Best Rap Solo. Moreover, he has reenergized his own career by reuniting with Snoop Dogg on several collaborations, including *The Chronic 2001* album, a sequel to his 1992 production of the same title, and "The Next Episode" single. The latter garnered a 2001 Grammy nomination for Best Rap Performance by Duo.

Snoop Dogg has been instrumental in the formation of several new West Coast groups, such as Doggy's Angels and Tha Eastsidaz, both of whom recorded for his own label, Doghouse Records. Thus, the Los Angeles core and *domain* of the West Coast region remains a powerful influence at the national level. Among the Bay Area core groups and artists that have contributed to the rejuvenation of the West Coast region are E-40 and T.W.D.Y. E-40 continues to extend his creative reach with the release of two recent albums and the T.W.D.Y. project led by Oakland's Ant Banks has also released two albums.

The South, once the third wheel from a regional perspective, remains a viable force on the national scene. New Orleans' Master P., one of the major producers of Southern rap, continues on the "gangsta" style course with his No Limits label, despite Dre's dire prediction in 1996. He has actively recruited a stable of young rappers (many are relatives), including Mia X, Young Bleed, and Kane and Abel. Mystikal, one of P.'s former rappers from New Orleans who later signed with the Jive label, was nominated for the 2001

Grammy for Best Rap Single Performance. The Geto Boys, a seminal group in Houston in the 1980s, reunited in the late 1990s for two albums. Another well-known Houston group from the 1980s, the 5th Ward Boyz, released their fifth album in 2000. The Houston area continues to produce young protégés of The Geto Boys, such as Ganksta N-I-P, who was reared in the same neighborhood as The Geto Boys and 5th Ward Boyz; Lil' Keke, one of hottest young rappers from the South; and Yungstar, whose latest albums were released on the Epic label.

Three 6 Mafia, one of Memphis' most significant groups in the mid-1990s, released their highly acclaimed album, *When the Smoke Clears*, in 2000. Several spin-off groups from Three 6 Mafia were formed in the late 1990s, including Tear Da Club Up Thugs and Hypnotize Camp Posse, all of whom released successful albums. Atlanta's Jermaine Dupri was one of the featured performers on MTV's "Hip Hopera" (a rap version of *Carmen*) telecast in 2001. As a producer, he has also signed several rising stars, such as Lil' Bow Wow. Luther Campbell continues to locate young talent in Miami, including JT Money and Trick Daddy. Finally, several new centers of Southern rap have emerged in the new millennium, including Oklahoma City (Mr. Nitro and his crew), Montgomery (Mister G'Stacka and Big Pimp), and Austin (Sam Houston Boyz).

The Midwest region seems poised to enter the national rap picture as a fourth major region of rap. Long considered a wasteland for the genre, the region is slowly emerging as a regional base, although no particular substyles have emerged there. Cleveland, Detroit, St. Louis, and Chicago have recently produced a substantial number of rap groups and artists. Perhaps the most notable of the Midwestern groups is Cleveland's Bone Thugs n' Harmony, who exploded on the national rap scene in the mid-1990s with their first album, *E 1999 Eternal*. Debuting at number one, it reached multiplatinum status. Missouri's two major contributions are Eminem, born in St. Joseph as Marshall Mathers, and Nelly, who hails from St. Louis. Eminem's *The Marshall Mathers LP*, a 2000 Grammy winner for Best Rap Album, sold close to two million copies in its first week of release, making it the fastest-selling album of all time. Eminem's success was followed in the 2001 Grammy Awards with "The Real Slim Shady," voted Best Rap Solo Performance. His third album, *The Eminem Show* was released in 2002.

Nelly's prominence rose in 2001 with "Country Grammar (Hot . . .)," nominated for the 2001 Grammy Award for Best Rap Single. Hailing from Detroit, Natas has trailblazed a path through uncharted territory. Their anarchic disposition, angst-ridden lyrics, and horrific themes have captured their hometown's ghetto lifestyle. They have self-titled their style as "acid rap." Two Chicago-based rappers, Da Brat and Common, have made recent

rap headlines: Da Brat appeared on MTV's "Hip Hopera" in 2001, and Common was nominated for the 2001 Grammy for Best Rap Solo.

Thus, a relatively unknown form of American music that was born in the Bronx borough of New York City in the 1970s and evolved as a bicoastal regional phenomenon in the 1980s appears to be headed toward becoming a national music with the emergence of the Southern and Midwestern rap regions. Despite its naysayers in the 1980s and its self-destructive tendencies in the 1990s, rap music has survived into the new millennium as the top-selling genre in American music.

Notes

1. Donald W. Meinig, "The Mormon Culture Region: Strategies and Patterns in the Geography of the American West, 1847–1964," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 55 (June 1965), 191–220.

2. Steven Stancell, *Rap Whoz Who: The World of Rap Music* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1996); Nelson George, *Hip Hop America* (New York: Viking, 1998); Alan Light, ed., *The Vibe History of Hip Hop* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1999); David Toop, *Rap Attack 3: African Rap to Global Hip Hop* (London, U.K.: Serpent's Tail Press, 2000); Alex Ogg with David Upshal, *The Hip Hop Years: A History of Rap* (New York: Fromm International, 2001); and Holly George-Warren and Patricia Romanowski, *The Rolling Stone Encyclopedia of Rock & Roll: Revised and Updated for the 21st Century*, 3rd ed. (New York: Fireside, 2001).

3. *Rap: Looking for the Perfect Beat*, RM Arts-Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 2000 (FFH 10526).

4. *Rap: Looking for the Perfect Beat*.

5. George, *Hip Hop America*, 133.

6. George, *Hip Hop America*, 135.

7. *Rap: Looking for the Perfect Beat*.

8. George, *Hip Hop America*, 143.

Appendix—Rap Terminology

alternative rap. groups that refuse to conform to any of the traditional stereotypes of rap, such as "gangsta," and "pop-rap," by blurring genres, drawing from rock, jazz, soul, funk, and reggae sources

backspinning/breakspinning. alternately spinning two records backward under the needle of each turntable to repeat a drum pattern or instrumental phrase

b-boying. term coined by pioneer DJ Kool Herc to describe the people who danced to his break-beat music sets; synonymous with break dancing

break dancing. acrobatic, twisting dance moves consisting of splits, leg sweeps, and "lockin' and poppin," terms applied to dancers who use their arms, legs, and torsos in isolated, semirobotic moves; associated with the "old school" substyle of rap in the East Coast region in the 1970s

breaks/break beat. a particular instrumental phrase and/or drum pattern on a record; break beat is extended by alternately repeating the phrase or pattern on both turntables, using two copies of the same record; pioneered by Kool DJ Herc in the 1970s

cutting. spinning of one record backward under the needle of one turntable so as to repeat a drum pattern or instrumental phrase, and to cut these patterns into smaller pieces and play them out in a rhythmic fashion

def. a hip hop superlative meaning especially good, but is now somewhat dated

DJs [deejaying]. one who plays the record; for rap, he or she is the musician

freestyle. improvised rapping that is often without music

gangsta. subgenre of rap that contains rhymes that focus on criminal life and themes associated with crime; more militant and brutal terms depicting such crimes as street killing and drug dealing; antecedents in New York, but most often identified with the West Coast region in the 1990s, especially with groups like N.W.A.

groove. rhythm or beat underlying a recording; in rap it was the bass and drum parts played throughout the selection

hardcore. substyle of rap that contains rhymes with a political or social message depicting life in the ghetto; stronger beats with drum patterns; emerged in the 1980s in the East Coast rap region with Run-D.M.C.

hip hop. term that applies to the entire culture complex including graffiti art, break dancing, fashion, and lingo, as well as music; often used interchangeably with the word "rap" to describe the music

homeboy/homey. a neighborhood friend

hood. abbreviation for neighborhood

MC. master of ceremonies or "mike controller" is the person who uses the microphone in between or during the music and vocalizes certain phrases or recites complete verses of rhymes—it was the original term for "rapper" and often used interchangeably

Miami bass. substyle of rap played by synthesizers and drum machines practiced in Miami, one of the centers in the Southern rap region. It consists of faster tempos, usually 150 beats per minute, and high decibels of bass

mixer/mixing. an electronic device used to "mix" or balance different inputs, e.g., two turntables might be run through a mixer into an amplifier, so the volume of each recording could be controlled before it is transmitted

through the speakers; it allowed DJs to shift the sound fluidly from one turntable to another so that the music continued in a seamless flow of sound

old school. classic rap of the 1970s that originated in New York City (e.g., Sugar Hill Gang) with nonviolent, light-hearted rhyming and danceable beats

phasing/punch phrasing. playing a quick burst from a record on one turntable while it continues on the other

phat/phattest. superlative indicating good or excellent

pop-rap. subgenre of rap that emerged in the East Coast (e.g., Jazzy Jeff and Fresh Prince) and later the West Coast (e.g., MC Hammer) that emphasized dance beats with strong melodic hooks and nonaggressive party-type lyrics

posse. a rap group, or more than one rapper

rhymes. verses, or lyrics, composed by MCs

sampling/samplers/sample machines. an audio duplication by a digital recorder of a break beat; also electronically copying a short riff from a previously released record; sample machines, or samplers, were digital recording devices that enabled a musician to store, manipulate, and play back any sound stored in it. In other words, one could record break beats digitally and play them over and over with the push of a button

scratching. turntable skill that involves spinning a record clockwise and counterclockwise underneath the needle to create a scratchy percussive sound

sounds/sound systems. DJ equipment including two turntables, an amplifier, one audio mixer, speakers, and sometimes a microphone

turntablism. term applied to a DJ's adeptness with the techniques of "mixing" and "scratching"

wheels of steel. turntables