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Dissertation proposal

Jacob Berridge – 1702730 – Music Technology BA Honours

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Robert Jones

The growth of the Hip Hop and Rap industry has risen in the UK in recent time. Due to its rising popularity, the public experiences the prestigious lifestyle of successful UK Hip Hop and Rap artists. With the rise of popularity, there has been a social influence and a rise of following within the lifestyle of these Rap artists. Discuss what the surrounding aspects are for UK grime and Drill culture within the UK and what is the outcome of this social behaviour?

Introduction

In the recent decade, UK Grime and Drill music has spiralled up in popularity with the general public, with the younger generation such as 16-24-year olds engaging with the genre the most by 70% in the UK according to (IFPI's "Music Listening Report 2019"). Due to its rise in popularity the once known independent genre has been branching out commercially. Big labels signing UK artists, artists collaborating with clothing and music brands such as Nike, Puma, and Beats. Usually the bigger the Artist the more commercialised they will become. In recent years we've seen more drill artists appear in more commercials. In 2019 Nike released an advert that starred the Upcoming Drill artist 'Headie One'. This sparked a major influence in smaller Drill artists who were also trying to raise their popularity. With more aggro drawing towards Drill, there was more coverage on social media, news stations and online articles. Drill has become under heavy criticism from UK PM's because of its explicit lyrics within its genre and the message it portrays to the rest of the younger population. I then took an interest in it and to see why these drill artists were under such heavy fire from the higher power population within the UK. To also discuss why this genre of music shouldn't be banned and why it matters a lot to the fans and population who are actively involved within this style of music.

Section 1 – Grime and Drill politics

The population has seen a rise politics relation within the Grime scene. In the 2017 snap general elections called by Theresa May it was apparent that it was ill judged by many of the minorities. This sparked a raise of many UK Grime artists who are already influential trying to get involved within the political movement. Grime artists such as JME, Stormzy, Dave, Novelist and Dizze Rascal all spreading their message through social media and even their songs they've released. After fans were criticising Stormzy to stick to his music. He retaliated and released a single titled 'Hear Dis' where he said, "They said I can't tweet about the government, why can't I be free anymore?" And "I'll expose these racist clubs and feds who can't move me anymore." After this, he quickly became a face of the Grime and Labour collaboration. Another big grime artist who used his image as a way of expanding a following for the Grime and Labour scene would be 'JME'. He set up a campaign called '#Grime4Corbyn'. This got a lot of younger people voting for the general election. With 58% of grime fans voting for Labour, (according to the Ticketmaster report 2018.) The Labour's surge of popularity was easy to notice with the election turnout of 18-24-year olds were 72% according to the Ticketmaster report of 2018. This was because Labour's message was to serve for the "many" which would appeal to many of the younger population, which non-coincidentally is also the main age range of many grime and drill fans and enthusiasts.

While all this was happening. On June 14th the fire of Grenfell tower took place, where tragically 72 people died. After this there was many people left homeless and the justice that people wanted was not given. Stormzy went onto perform at the Brit Awards. He performed "Blinded by your grace Pt.2" live on television. During the performance he took a vocal attack on the conservative Prime Minister, Theresa May asking her. "Where's the money for Grenfell?" he also called her a "criminal". This was said on live Television and made news headlines. This caused an uprising to take anyone's side but the conservatives. People asking questions about the way the government's way of dealing with the tragedy that affected many people's lives. A lot of grime influencers joined the Labour movement including Akala and AJ Tracey. AJ Tracey was one of the first drill artists who went mainstream and commercial from their rise from drill music. However, AJ Tracey wasn't the first drill artist to take a political movement. The Drill artist, "Drillminister" has spread his message about political importance through his songs that he produces. With songs such as "No Deal Brexit" and "Peoples Vote". He regularly stands up for the drill scene in the UK. This comes after the constant battle with UK politicians and police that keep demeaning the importance of drill music. The government keep on demanding the ban and taking down of drill videos on YouTube. This comes after the government take them down after the use of explicit lyrics and dark meaning behind some of the songs within the genre. Drillminister released a track slating the hypocrisy of the PM's. Stating that they can't deride the drill scene when the politicians also use vulgar language themselves. Drillminister appeared on Good Morning TV in 2018 wearing a camouflaged balaclava. Saying that "It's a portrayal of keeping my identity to myself, so that my music has more power. This says to me that he obviously focuses more on the message he wants to portray than the fame he might gain from his messages through the music scene.

Drill is a way of life for many people because they have no option and they tend to take their anger out on rival gang members but... they all have a common enemy and that would be whoever is in power of the country at the time. They feel neglected and imprisoned within their own neighbourhood. It would be interesting how I could find a middle ground between keeping drill an important significance within the UK culture and UK music scene and how we, as a whole, can find the positives within its music and message that it portrays to let the government help the youthful population enjoy the music without contributing to gang violence.

Section 2 –Drill Aesthetics

A lot of principles make the drill scene within the UK there is a lot of artistic expression expressing their disadvantaged youth within their urban life. Portraying their struggles in life, also the loss of life adding more insult to injury. Discussing the message of drill, it's a unique art form. It's a message to the rest of the general public, citing the connection between poverty, violence, drugs and power.

London is the centre of its drill scene in the UK. which has surged its gang violence rate in recent years. Knife crime is the centre of attention when people think about gang violence, however there is additional factors that are involved to make the drill scene so negatively discussed by the media. The media tends to portray that the assumptions that drill music is to blame on the surge of knife crime in London. However, knife crime has always been an issue in London on drill is a hidden message being spread through the whole of the UK. it's just whether anyone can acknowledge the message and inflict it to the rest of the people who can solve issues within the community.

The gangs within London were already formed before drill made its breakthrough into the UK Rap scene. According to an interview with (Krept (Casyo Johnson) in 2019) stated that clamping down on drill music and banning the expanding genre is not the answer to knife crime. He said "Gangs and their culture exist first. This then informs the music. Banning drill would be a naive and impotent response to addressing the real issues behind gang culture." Discussing this, there have been proven ways that drill music can lead to a way out of crime and to leave many problems behind. Examples such as Headie One who is a drill artist and still is but according to 'Rapper.Money' his net worth in 2018 was £662,000 and in 2019 he managed to increase his net worth by almost 4 times reaching in between 1-3 million pounds. This shows how big drill can be and he's become a role model in the drill scene. Inspiring young people to escape poverty and to venture themselves to a richer lifestyle. Many drill artists follow in the footsteps such as M Huncho and as of this year 2020, there are still young drill prospects coming through onto to the scene in hopes to escape the lifestyle they so much want to leave behind them.

London being the central of gang violence. There are different gangs related on their post code. As of 2018 Sky news reported that the Metropolitan police reported that there were an estimated 3280 gang members within the capital city of London, with 198 active gangs identified alone. In an interview in 2018 by Sky news, they met up with one of the most feared gangs in London, going by the names of the 'Woolwich boys' they control most of the drug supply in south east London. 'K1' said in the interview "I chose this lifestyle for the money." He also stated that it was hard for him and his fellow gang members to obtain a good opportunity in life to be someone good and successful. He also said, "that they're still young and still got time to grab an opportunity, but it's about the opportunity being there for us."

410 is also a very notorious gang within London, based in Brixton. 410 has gang members that are highly popular within the drill scene. 'Skengdo' and 'AM' are highly known for their drill success but still manage to stay close to their roots, because they're are very much active in the gang, they feel like it is hard to leave the gang lifestyle behind.

Section 3 – Grime and Drill Media

The Drill scene has been growing and comes with that comes more media coverage. That also means a lot more attention form drill enthusiasts, fans and gang members. More UK rap showcasing companies such as 'GRM Daily', 'Mixtape Madness' and 'Link Up TV' have taken more intertest to Drill, helping the music genre attract more attention from rap enthusiasts and to keep them inform on the latest news and information about what drill artist is accomplishing, trying to stay away from the violent background that is occurring behind the scenes of the music.

YouTube is a way of people keeping up to date with the news that is happening in London with the drill scene. A lot of smaller showcasing channels like 'UK Drill Media' and 'BAM Productions' cover more in depth stories. Showcasing the behind the scenes of drill music and drill gangs.

The media within the drill gangs have a different side to it. More personal. Often gang rivalries escalate from social media where one gang would intimidate a rival gang. Threats are usually exchanged between gang conflicts over social media. Threats can be towards youths affiliated to their gangs, or their family who are linked to the members of the gangs. The threats usually show no remorse and don't value life of other gang rivals and anyone who gets in their way of making the money from drug trafficking and sales from their music streams. In the drill music industry, the more explicit and vulgar the lyrics the more attention the artist gets from the drill fan base. This boosts the revenue coming in from streams from the song.

On April 1st, 2020 A well-known Drill artist called 'OFB Bandoky' and 'Abra Cadabra' released a song called "let man know" the lyrics in the first 4 bars on the song were already vulgar, in the song it said;

"Ask Lerkz how I lined up like ten man with the wap
Tryna do it like Chiraq (Bow, bow)
Or we got that yute on the opp block
Didn't wanna state his gang so I diced man."

The first 2 lines are saying how he racked up ten people and killed them with a gun, trying to replicate like the scenes in the gun violence within the drill scene in Chicago. According to 'Urban Dictionary' and 'dictionary.com', the word 'Chiraq' is a combination of Chicago and Iraq, referring that the drill scene in Chicago is a warzone with the gun violence. Drill rappers would often brag about their participations on taking their rival gangs' life. Trying to flaunt their power within their postcode or area that they are situated. The last 2 lines are also vulgar and now a more direct message behind the lyrics. He tells us how he captured a member from a rival gang member on a block opposite his. He then proceeds to inform the listener how he didn't want the rival gang member to go snitching on his actions. So, he cut up the victim, so nobody knows what happened to him. These constant vocal conflict between rival gangs on social media tend to intensify, the violence becomes more physical and this is when gang conflict continues to take another gang member, another youth related to gang affiliation dead because of the escalation of gang conflict. OFB Bandoky is part of the OFB Gang, they are situated in Tottenham, North London.

The Daily mail published by Bhvishya Patel, 2020, reported that in June 2019 a nineteen-year-old boy who went by the name of 'Enroy Ruddock' hunted down and stabbed a rival gang member and a father of one, 'Emmanuel Lukenga' who later died from his stab wound. Enroy also rapped pretentious lyrics on his personal snapchat account, bragging how he stabbed Emmanule, a rival gang member, this empowers the evidence that the value of life for some of these gang affiliated youths are non-existent. It was also CCTV recorded as he was walking away from the scene with his phone out videoing himself.

Proposed Question for Independent Inquiry

Reviewing what I am proposing. Its apparent that there is a vast amount of issues that we need to improve, for the better of these youths affiliated within the gang activity. Upon researching the relation of drill music and the social behaviour, also how it affects the political movement in the UK, deciding on how to better the lifestyle of these youths. Each once of these key words associate with how drill music has influenced the social behaviour of the youthful population but also the population surrounding these drill inflicted locations. It has also given an insight on the background and uprising of the drill scene in the UK. Dissecting this topic into 3 different aspects has given me a transitional phase on how the drill scene has affected the social behaviour in its surrounding bearings and what can be done to improve the perspective it portrays.

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