Glocalization Trends: The Case of Hiplife
Music in Contemporary Ghana

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Central Africans in suits, Indonesian soap operas, and South Asian brands are no longer inauthentic copies by people who have lost their culture after being swamped by things that only North Americans and Europeans "should" possess. Rather there is the equality of genuine relativism that makes none of us a model of real consumption and all of us creative variants of social processes based around the possession and use of commodities.

~ Daniel Miller, 1995, p. 144. Consumption and Commodities

This paper responds to Kraidy's (1999) proposal to communication scholars, specifically international and intercultural communication researchers, to utilize the "glocalization" concept to investigate global-local communication. This plea resonates with the views of certain international communication scholars (Straubhaar, 1991; Harindranath, 2003), who, despite acknowledging the limitations in the media imperialism thesis to analyze contemporary complex global-local communication, argues for a modification of the thesis. I deem the "glocalization" idea as such a corrective in that it allows for a holistic approach in investigating the nuanced juncture of contemporary global-local interactions. I utilize the glocalization concept to examine hiplife music, a Ghanaian reappropriation of U.S. rap music. Specifically, I investigate two Ghanaian-based discourses (verbal indirection and naming practices) that artists combine with this global music phenomenon in creating a distinct local music genre. The overall aim of this paper is to fill the research lacuna on hiplife music, as well as an attempt to demonstrate the utility of the glocalization concept.[1]

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Glocalization has received much theoretical and empirical attention in sociology and other social science disciplines. Within international communication scholarship, Kraidy has demonstrated the concept's utility to effectively analyze the subtleties inherent in "localized" global communication practices (1999, 2001, 2003). Yet, grounded explication of the concept is lacking in the discipline. Utilizing an understudied Ghanaian popular music termed *hiplife*, I provide an empirical understanding of glocalization. Specifically, I investigate the resources that artists utilize in creating a distinct local music genre. In using the theory to explicate this Ghanaian phenomenon, not only do I contribute to the scant literature on hiplife and the sociopolitical environment within which the music evolved but I also show the concept's value as "social scientific explanations of globalization" (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2007, p. 133) over the cultural imperialism and globalization theses. Furthermore, I contribute to filling the gap that currently exists within international communication scholarship on glocalization.

On Hiplife Research

The popularity of U.S. rap music has spread beyond its original borders. This status has prompted scholars to investigate such "outside" appropriations of the genre in Canada (Chamberland, 2001), Japan (Condry, 2001), Bulgaria (Levy, 2001), and the United Kingdom (Hesmondhalgh & Melville, 2001), as well as reappropriations of this music in such contexts as in Zimbabwe (Mitchell, 2001) and Nigeria (Omoniyi, 2006).

In contemporary Ghana, the music genre labeled as hiplife is very fashionable among the Ghanaian youth. The term is a blend of the U.S music variety *hip hop* and *highlife*, a Ghanaian popular music genre that blends distinct African rhythms with that of Euro-American and African diaspora. It thus refers to how the music simultaneously incorporates musical elements in both genres. Based on ethnographic experience as a participant observer of hiplife culture, I argue that the term hiplife also encompasses artists' adoption of the mannerisms and the dress of their American rap counterparts in the performance of their music. Furthermore, the term extends to how hiplife artists utilize these adopted mannerisms and attire to represent themselves in the media.

Despite the popularity of this music, scholars interested in rap music "within different social, cultural and ethnic contexts" (Mitchell, 2001, p. 10) have given scant research attention to this Ghanaian music genre. Hiplife should demand communication scholars' attention — not because it is an understudied genre but rather the music provides a particularly clear and analytically relevant example of glocalization.

With this aim in mind, I begin with an explication of the theoretical approach that underpins this paper and with an expanded discussion of how other scholars have utilized the glocalization concept in

their research. Then, I briefly discuss the origins of both highlife and of American rap and argue that one of the lessons these histories teach is that it would be simplistically naïve to assume that the African traditions from which these genres evolved are not dynamic. Immediately following this discussion, I examine the socioeconomic and political milieu within which both highlife and hiplife emerged. To highlight the glocalized features in hiplife, I clearly identify and discuss the similarities and differences among the three music genres. The concluding section reflects on recent trends within the hiplife music scene and its implication for analyzing global-local interactions, among other issues. This discussion's importance lies in how it overtly points out the danger of assuming that dominated cultures passively consume all aspects of the dominant one in cultural interactions.

Theoretical Orientation: Glocalization

The cultural imperialism thesis, developed in the 1970s and popular until the 1990s, underpinned mass communication analyses of the genesis of Western media communication technologies (Kraidy, 2001) and the apparent effects of such media on traditional or indigenous cultures (Salwen, 1991). Scholars like Boyd-Barrett (1977) and Schiller (1976) argued that such effects resulted from the inequalities of media resources and flows in international communication, as Western-imposed cultural products on non-Western countries (Hesmondhalgh, 2002). Other scholars associated with the cultural imperialism thesis (Mattelart, 1970, 1974; Ugboajah 1985) based their critique on the tendancy of Western culture to homogenize other cultures and destroy traditional cultures and beliefs (Hesmondhalgh, 2002). The decline in the 1990s of the thesis' acceptance as an ideological term (Salwen, 1991) and as an intellectual critical apparatus resulted from its inability to holistically examine "the multidirectional and multifaceted realities of contemporary global communications" (Kraidy, 2001, p. 28). In other words, the theory failed to acknowledge that "at least as rapidly as forces from the metropolises are brought into new societies they tend to become indigenized in one way or another" (Appadurai, 2003, p. 40). Other scholars have critiqued the theory as well. [2]

Though recognizing the limitations inherent in the cultural imperialism thesis, some scholars[3] have argued for a revisionist approach to the thesis rather than shelve it in the intellectual archives of international communication (Harindranath, 2003). In their various arguments, these scholars acknowledge the critical edge of this theory and have compellingly argued for its reconceptualization to better account for the "complex, overlapping disjunctive order" (Appadurai, 2003, p. 40) characteristic of contemporary global communication practices. In this regard, scholars in the discipline appropriated the theoretical concept of "globalization" from sociology and sociocultural theory (Robertson, 1992) to help explain the complex, dialectical "asymmetrical interdependence" (Straubhaar, 1991, p. 39) inherent in contemporary global media interactions.

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[2] See examples in Ogan (1988), Lee (1980), Liebes and Katz (1990), and Sinclair, Jacka, and Cunningham (1996).

[3] See Boyd-Barrett (1998), Harindranath (2003), Kumar (2003), Mattelart (1979, 1994), Straubhaar (1991), Stokes (2004), and Tinic (2003).

Despite its relative theoretical sophistication over the cultural imperialism thesis, the globalization concept has been criticized on several counts. First, scholars criticize the concept of excessive and imprecise definitions (Downing, 2003; Kraidy 2001). Robertson (1992) also notes the term's association with universal standardization of culture.

The above makes clear the ineffectiveness of the globalization theoretical scalpel to effectively dissect the dialectical complexity in center-periphery global media interactions. Specifically, the globalization concept "fails to take account of, and give due attention to, local factors in international relations" (Kraidy, 2001, pp. 33-34).

The failure of the globalization concept to effectively probe interstitial locations within global-local media interactions has prompted Robertson (1992) to proffer "glocalization" as a corrective to the globalization thesis. At a conference on globalization and indigenous culture, Robertson (1997) explained the concept as being able to capture "the simultaneity — the co-presence — of both universalizing and particularizing tendencies" (¶16, lines 3-4) in global interaction. Kraidy (1999, 2003) recognizes the utility of the glocalization concept in terms of how it helps to explore nuanced analyses of the simultaneous presence of global and the local features in global communicative practices. Within this recognition, Kraidy reformulates the glocalization concept, specifically from an international communication perspective.

In this paper, I use glocalization in the Kraidian sense of the global and the local, and not as binary opposites, as such a viewpoint "suppress[es] ambiguities or interstitial spaces" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2000, p. 23) existing within such interactions that mask the complexity embedded in local negotiations of global media phenomenon. In terms of how I appropriate the glocal concept to analyze hiplife, I focus on the sociocultural resources and elements that shape this Ghanaian localization of the "global musical idiom of rap" (Mitchell, 2001, p. 41).

The theoretical leverage of the glocal concept to analyze a syncretic product like hiplife lies first in how the theory compels the researcher to acknowledge that human social group interactions are not constrained by fixed geopolitical borders. In other words, the concept acknowledges "the local, national, regional, and global contexts of intercultural communicative process" (Kraidy, 1999, p. 472). Such an insight sensitizes the researcher to the reiterative character of global and local interactions, and how each of these is constituted by the other. From investigating such interactions, one comes to the awareness that what we might now consider as global is often the popularization of someone's local (often raised to the global level by various forms of power). Similarly, what we think of as a local phenomenon now is often the co-opted version of an earlier global trend. This realization makes one note that it is unsatisfactory to historically reflect on social group interactions as neatly bounded and differentiated phenomena.

To conclude this section, this article provides research that has utilized the glocalization concept. For example, Maynard and Yan (2004) examined the extent to which leading international brands, whose branches are in China, utilize local Chinese elements as well as global features on their Web sites. Utilizing the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) as a case study, Lee (2005) investigates how online news sites "blended global reporting with local reporting" (p. 255) to disseminate information on the SARS

epidemic. Moran (2006) examines the copresence of aspects of local realities with distinctly American features in a local Spanish television program *Barrio Sesamo/Barri Sesame*, a derivation of the U.S. television show *Sesame Street*. Wasserman and Rao (2008) investigate how, in both South Africa and India, "global and local epistemologies and practices" (p. 162) impact on the application of journalism ethics in these countries. From these examples, one can note the heuristic value of the glocalization concept to effectively explore issues that are at the juncture of the global-local nexus. In the next section, this article examines the historical milieu of highlife, hiplife, and American rap, as well as the major similarities and differences that exist among these genres.

Ghanaian Highlife and American Rap

As previously noted, hiplife combines elements of American rap with traditional Ghanaian highlife music. I qualify highlife as *traditional*, because, as highlife music scholars have lucidly detailed (Collins, 1976a, 1976b), the music is *not* traditional in the sense of its being "tribal music" as understood in popular Western or U.S. discourse. Rather, it is distinct in terms of being a recognizable feature of Ghanaian culture, as well as of other African countries like Nigeria. The sense in which highlife music is not tribal music lies in how Ghanaian musicians blend distinct African music with that of European, American, and the African diasporas (Collins, 2004, 2006). Despite being a distinctly African (Ghanaian) product, highlife is not produced from exclusively African elements (Sprigge, 1961). The history behind the syncretic nature of highlife music originates from Ghanaian creative adaptation to crosscultural interactions (Nketia, 1964). Ghanaian highlife music is thus a fusion of diverse foreign music elements with Ghanaian rhythms and lyrics (Yankah, 2001). From the preceding discussion, it is evident that highlife music is part of an earlier form of glocalization in that it melded Western popular forms with Ghanaian aesthetics and sensibilities. It is thus clear that glocalization is not new; rather theorizing about it is.

The complex historical impact in the creation of highlife music is also evident in the history of rap. Rap music as rhythmic talk narrative "over a continuous backbeat" (Bennett, 1999, p. 3), has roots traceable from Africa to the U.S. (Szwed, 1999; Bennett, 1999). Scholarly investigation into "rap music and its African nexus" (Keyes, 1996) makes clear how the unique feature of rhythmic talk over music in rap is connected to the bardic African traditions.

This discussion on the complex origins of Ghanaian highlife and American rap is meant to highlight certain important points. First, it would be naive to assume that hiplife is just a blend of two completely different music genres. The assumption underlying such a simplistic argument ignores the continuous complex relationships that exist between Africans on the continent and those of the African Diaspora in the U.S. Second, hiplife music (and highlife music for that matter) is a testament to the dynamism of African cultural traditions that makes nonsense of the stereotypical view of "unchanging African traditions." Furthermore, the hiplife genre should be seen as a case of reappropriation, rather than a mere appropriation, in the Ghanaian context. Here, the concept of reappropriation importantly informs us about issues of power and circulation of ideas. Regarding the issue of power, reappropriation makes clear that it is not a fixed entity concentrated in the hands of the dominant. As will be evident in the case of hiplife, "dominated" cultures have ways of empowering themselves by reconfiguring aspects of the

dominant culture through their own cultural resources. Reappropriation also critically informs us about circulation of ideas. Here, what one learns is that no idea can be an original one for long, because human interactions makes it imperative to borrow ideas from fellow humans in order to survive and adapt.

Milieu of the Emergence of Highlife and Hiplife

This section examines the atmosphere within which hiplife surfaced. In view of the "genetic" connection of hiplife to high-life, I discuss the sociopolitical environment that existed when highlife emerged, flourished, and declined. Then, I discuss certain conditions that I witnessed in Ghana during the genesis of hiplife, namely the political climate and educational reforms. Both discussions serve two purposes. First, to familiarize the reader with the circumstances that prevailed at the time both genres emerged (but not to suggest a causal link between those conditions and how it impacted on the emergence of the genres). Second, to cue the reader to a discussion relating to some local factors evidenced in both music genres.

A cursory observation as to why a society's music undergoes change can lead one to concur with the view that the process could arise out of "a balance between stability and continuity . . . and disturbances brought about by outside [influences]" (Nettl, 1983, p. 184). Such a conclusion is plausible if one does not assume a direct link between a specific social phenomenon and musical change. The underlying logic of such a position is premised on the possibility of myriad causes as being responsible for such musical changes. Thus, it is better for one to lay out the context within which a new music genre evolved. That is the position from which I discuss the Ghanaian sociopolitical climate that existed around 1957 and the era beyond that nourished highlife. It is also the same position from which I examine the circumstances under which hiplife emerged.

Milieu of Highlife Genesis

Highlife music in Ghana experienced three successive waves of decline throughout the 20th century. The first wave occurred in 1966 after the government of Ghana's first president, Kwame Nkrumah, was toppled by the National Liberation Council (NLC). Nkrumah helped generate interest in, as well as support for highlife music, as is evident in how he utilized this non-ethnic-affiliated music for his political vision of uniting a multiethnic country like Ghana (Collins, 1976a). Following the overthrow of his government, the NLC persecuted highlife band leaders whom they viewed as supporters of Nkrumah's government (Collins, 1976a).

The late 1970s saw the second wave of decline of highlife music. During this era, general economic collapse and corruption within the government characterized the Ghanaian political landscape. The sociopolitical environment generated a drastic decrease in highlife record production to about 24% of that produced during Nkrumah's era (Collins, 2001). Whether one attributes this decline to the consequences of the NLC era or not, what is clear is that the situation resulted in the exodus of approximately one quarter of popular highlife musicians to Germany, Nigeria, and England (Collins, 2001). Those musicians who remained in the country aligned themselves with the then-emerging charismatic churches that had begun to incorporate "dance-music in [their] worship [as well as] for outreach purposes" (Collins, 2001, p. 4).

The third wave of the decline of highlife music occurred between 1972 and 1978 during the various military regimes of the National Redemption Council (NRC), Supreme Military Council I (SMC I) and Supreme Military Council II (SMC II). Highlife music also experienced a major setback when the People's National Defense Council (PNDC) ruled Ghana from 1981 to 1992. During this era, the military regime imposed heavy taxation in the form of import duties on musical instruments, as well as a curfew to restrict the movement of persons in the country (Collins, 2001). Consequently, many highlife artists emigrated abroad, and those remaining in the country joined the emerging charismatic churches (whose instruments were not taxed) to produce gospel music (Collins, 2001).

According to Collins (2001), the near absence of musical instruments, the departure of some popular highlife musicians, and the actions of those who remained contributed significantly to the transformation of the musical landscape. First, the activities of "commercial night-clubs, local pop, highlife and concert bands" in Accra were curtailed (Collins, 2001, p. 4). Second, the Ghanaian musicians who went to Germany in the 1980s helped introduce to the Ghanaian music scene a local techno-pop brand of highlife music (Burger highlife) that was produced in and sent from Germany. Third, there emerged in Ghana a young generation that did not have access to musical instruments with which to experiment. This generation did not experience the heydays of highlife, where the music was performed live. Rather, they became accustomed to a variety of imported music from the U.S., including genres such as country, light rock, and rap, which the national Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) primarily played on the national airwaves.

Milieu of Hiplife Genesis

The political change in 1992 from military rule to democratic governance guaranteed the freedom and independence of the media from government interference. Such guarantee enshrined in Chapter 12, Section 3 of the 1992 Constitution spurred the proliferation of FM radio stations in the various capitals of Ghana. Before this change, the only media house in the country was the government-owned GBC, with satellite stations in rural regions of Ghana. In 1995, the government issued an operating license to the first private radio station (Windborne, 1998), and today there are roughly more than 150 FM stations in Ghana. These stations, as well as print media houses, have been instrumental in promoting and disseminating hiplife music.

Like rap music in the U.S., hiplife music might have been "a contemporary response to conditions of joblessness [and] poverty" (ya Salaam, 1995, p. 6). During the emergence of hiplife in Ghana, the PNDC government implemented a new education reform, resulting in the Junior Secondary School (JSS) and Senior Secondary School (SSS) educational structure. The PNDC justified the new educational system on the grounds that (1) it would reduce the length of pre-tertiary education from 17 to 12 years, (2) it would increase access to education at all levels, particularly at basic and secondary prevocational training and at general skill training, and (3) it would enhance sector management and budgeting procedures (Ghana Education System Policy Document, 2007).

As the old educational system was slowly phased out, the new system was gradually implemented. The new system produced a number of qualified graduates that far exceeded the quota for

the existing tertiary institutions. Such graduates can be categorized into two groups: (1) those with basic arts and science academic training and (2) those graduates who were supposed to have had technical skills. These "surplus" high school graduates could neither be absorbed into the existing government workforce nor into the private sector. One reason these graduates were deemed ineligible for employment was that, according to complaints from employers, they did not have the necessary qualifications. The other reason is that those who attended technical institutions did not have the practical experience. This situation stemmed from what many Ghanaians perceived as the government's rushed implementation of the new educational system, which resulted in the lack of necessary infrastructure to help equip these students. Thus, considering the number of hiplife artists who are products of the new educational system, it is tempting to conclude that, perhaps as a result of witnessing the successful reception of hiplife, they perceived the music as a means to alleviate their unemployment plight.

Comparing the Music Genres

Similarities between Highlife and Hiplife Music

For analytical purposes, I identify and discuss the similarities and differences among the three music genres. The discussion helps to clarify the features of hiplife that are more representative of glocalization. In both the highlife and hiplife genres, artists use multiple languages simultaneously in their songs, which is representative of the linguistic plurality of their background. For example, within one song, artists concurrently use Standard English[4] and Ghanaian Pidgin English[5] in addition to any of the Ghanaian languages.[6] The utilization of different languages in both genres reflects "the larger trend toward assimilation of diverse cultural styles that appears to be the hallmark of music performances for urban youth audiences in Africa" (Adejunmobi, 2004, p. 167). Another similarity between genres is the artists' utilization of a Ghanaian communicative strategy known as *verbal indirection* in their songs. This verbal discourse involves participants being inexplicit in their speech during a communicative encounter by employing contextually appropriate verbal indirect strategies such as *kasakoa* (metaphor), *akutia* (innuendo), and *ɛbɛ* (proverb) as Yankah (1995) notes. An example of this strategy is found in Nana Kwame Ampadu's highlife song *Ebe Te Yie* (*Some are Well Seated*), where the artist uses animal imagery to point out certain inequalities that exist in seemingly democratic institutions. This strategy is also

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[4] In Tinny's hiplife song "*Wani Kyiki*," the following languages are used: Ga, Akan, and bits and pieces of Standard and Pidgin English http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LOol66JFh9w&feature=related
Senior Eddie Donkor's highlife songs "*Corner Fast*," "*Maye Hot*," and "*New King, New Law*" also feature more than one language used simultaneously in a song.

[5] For a highlife example, listen to the E. T. Mensah song "*Ghana, Guinea, Mali*" http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MLBO-4FDiyg.
For a hiplife example, listen to the Reggie Rockstone song "*Walk Like an African*." http://www.myspace.com/reggierockstone

[6] For a highlife example, listen to E. T. Mensah's song "*All For You*." http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uR9-CQPedhg&feature=PlayList&p=04B420F9D5D6CC2D&playnext=1&playnext_from=PL&index=38
For a hiplife example, listen to Native Funk Lord's hiplife "*Vote For Me, Make I Chop President.*"

evident in hiplife music, particularly in the innuendo songs of Ex-Doe's *Maba* (*I Have Arrived*), Chicago's *Wobe ko* (*You'll Return*) as well as Obrafour's *Kasiebo* (*News*). An additional parallel between highlife and hiplife music is the didactic nature of some of the music in both genres.[7] Highlife and hiplife music also tackle political issues. However, while highlife music indirectly addresses this issue through animal imagery, hiplife directly confronts political issues. This style is evidenced in both Native Funk Lords' *Vote for Me, Make I Chop President*; and in A-Plus' songs *Mesuro Mpo Na Merekeka Yi O* (*Although I am afraid, I Will Still Say It*), and *Letter to Parliament*.[8] Yet another similarity between highlife and hiplife is in how both developed out of "a fusion of local African and imported Western and African-American performance elements in the coastal cities of Ghana" (Collins, 2006, p. 171). One conclusion that a person may draw from these shared similarities is that both genres arose out of a transnational music style targeting a home audience (Adenjunmobi, 2004, p. 168).

Highlife and Hiplife Differences

Despite parallels between highlife and hiplife music, there are also differences. First, from their very onset, highlife bands consisted of musicians who recorded and performed their songs live. Although in the 1980s, burger highlife incorporated electronic drumbeat (Collins, 2006), there were still highlife musicians like Senior Eddie Donkor (a.k.a "King of Rhythm Power"), who produced unique highlife rhythm compositions with his band. However, live performances within the studio, as well as for an audience, are totally absent in hiplife. Most hiplife singers consist of one person or a group of artists with no supporting band. Their lyrics are backed by electronic instrumentation.

Another divergence is that while older highlife music's thematic concerns centered on issues of death, poverty, indirect sociopolitical critiques, marital issues, and witchcraft (Bame, 1974), many hiplife songs center on "romantic love [relationships] and sexual innuendo" (Collins, 2002, p. 71).

Features of Hiplife and American Rap Music

In examining hiplife and American rap music, one notes both similarities and differences. One similarity between the two genres is the dominant presence of male artists (Figures 1 & 2)[9] . Hiplife does feature female artists like MzBel, Abrewa Nana (Figure 3), and Triple M. In American rap, one also notes the presence of female rappers like Missy Elliot, Lil' Kim, Queen Latifah, and Lauryn Hill. Nevertheless, in both genres, male artists dominate.

A striking feature that hiplife culture shares with U.S. rap relates to how hiplife artists dance and even walk, as well as the outward commodity fetishization of expensive cars, jewelry, and fashionable

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[7] For an example of this feature, listen to both Nana Kwame Ampadu's highlife song "*Ebi Te Yie*" (see analysis in Yankah, 1995) and Obrafour's hiplife song "*Twe Wo Ho.*" http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qByNyuu6WcA

[8] Listen to these songs respectively at http://museke.com/node/416 and http://museke.com/node/1115

[9] These images are from www.ghanabase.com

attire.[10]   There is also an emerging trend in some hiplife music videos that is similar to those in U.S rap music videos where scantily clad women are featured in the videos.[11]

Figure 1. 4 x 4.

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[10] Watch Okra Dawidi's video for the song "*Kosoaa*" (*Just Continue*):
   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8cKECpgzLQ
[11] See previous footnote 9.

Figure 2. Vision in Progress (VIP).

Figure 3. Abrewa Nana.

In hiplife music and culture, just as in American hip hop culture, artists and fans use the music as a symbol of generational identity. Within such an identity, the music is used to differentiate itself from the highlife music of the older generation that was performed with instruments. The live performance of highlife music of the 1950s, 1960s, and the early 1970s contrasts with the "live" performances of hiplife music, where artists merely mime their songs in public performance. The use of hiplife as a symbol of generational identity is evidenced when its fans occasionally refer to the youth who sometimes prefer traditional highlife music as *colo*, meaning *moribund* or *old-fashioned* in Ghanaian English. Another similarity of hiplife and American rap is exhibited in the reference to sexual acts. However, an important

difference exists between these two genres in how sex is explicated. In hiplife, artists express sexual references and sexual acts euphemistically, whereas in certain American rap songs (for example, those of the banned Two Live Crew) such sexual references are very explicit.

A common feature evident in both hiplife and American rap music is a communicative strategy labeled as verbal indirection. In this type of communication, discourse participants are not verbally explicit in their speech and a singer "strategically deploys [requisite linguistic choices] in contextually appropriate discourse situation to avert [potential] crisis" (Yankah, 1991, p. 52; Tarr, 1979; Mitchell-Kernan, 1972). In American rap, verbal indirection is manifested under the communicative practice referred to as "dissin." In this type of communication, the message is meant to deride and disrespect a particular person or group of people. As a form of the larger communicative practice known as "signifying" (Mitchell-Kernan, 1972), messages are indirectly encoded, where the appropriate semantic interpretation (Mitchell-Kernan, 1972) is achieved through a subliminal reference frame (Yankah, 1995). Elaborating on this interpretative characteristic, Mitchell-Kernan offers this perceptive insight on this speech act:

> [Here] [m]eaning conveyed is not apparent meaning. Apparent meaning serves as a key which directs hearers to have some shared knowledge, attitude and values or signals that reference must be processed metaphorically. The words spoken may actually refer to this shared knowledge . . . . The indirection, then, depends for its decoding upon shared assumptions of the participants. . . . (p. 326)

In interpreting Mitchell-Kernan's observation, the use of innuendo and metaphor are characteristic of signifying communication. Thus, in the Ant Banks song *West Riden*, which also features Spice 1 and King Tee, the artist intimates

1. I was a made man at 15 years/
2. Cuz momma didn't raise no faggotty queer

In this fragment, the artist, in expressing how he achieved success ("a made man") at a very young age (line one), attributes this achievement to a heterosexual upbringing by his mother (line two). The persona expresses this thought by dissin gays through the use of a derogatory adjective ("faggotty") to qualify a negative noun referent (queer). Although one could argue that perhaps the persona might be gay, the unstated suggestion is that his *gayness* is of a different category. The implication then is that if one is raised as a faggotty gay, not only can one not be a "made man" at a young age but perhaps one may never achieve that status. The artist is thus, through his lyrics, implicitly stating that being authentic gay amounts to not being able to achieve anything worthwhile in life. The analysis points to the artist's use of innuendo and metaphoric allusions about gays to inform the audience about how he achieved success at an early age. The use of innuendos and metaphors is not unique to American rap music as this communicative feature is evident as well in most hiplife music. Thus, in hiplife songs such as Sidney's *Scent No* (*This Scent*) and Enkoyie (*It Is Not Going Well*) as well as Obrafour's *Kasiebo* (*News*) copious examples of this communicative phenomenon are evident. As much as artists in both genres utilize

aspects of verbal indirection (innuendos and metaphors), there is feature of verbal indirection that is unique to hiplife music: the use of proverbs.

The use of proverbs in communication is an important and acknowledged component within Ghanaian society. Thus, for example, among the Akan people of Ghana who highly value "the skillful control of words" (Yankah, 1995, p. 45), a speech act within the public domain is regarded as deficient if it lacks such tropes as proverbs. Such an absence is perceived to rob a communicative act of its memorable and appealing import (Yankah, 1989). It is therefore not surprising to witness the skillful use of proverbs in the hiplife songs of Obrafour, an influential and popular artist.[12] To illustrate Obrafour's expert use of proverbs, I briefly examine aspects of his song *Twe wo ho* (*Disengage Yourself/Don't Be Involved*). The song is primarily about negative experiences — deceit, physical abuse, and unrequited love — in a love relationship. The song's moral is that in the event of such experiences, one should take the bold stance of ending such relationships. The song contains three verses. In the first verse, Obrafour recounts the experiences of a male lover deceived by his girlfriend. The second verse describes a female lover who is influential in the success of her male lover, but whose loving actions are unappreciated and who is physically abused by this male. In the final verse, the artist becomes an omniscient commentator who bares the inequities inherent in both relationships in the first two verses. These observations prompt Obrafour to advocate that both the deceived male lover and the unappreciated and abused female lover should end their respective relationships. Below is the first verse extract:

1. *Tie, nokwarɛ yɛ ya, nanso ɛwɔ sɛ meka*
    Listen, the truth hurts, but I have to say it

2. *Na me dɔfo paa, ɛne Rita*
    My true love, was Rita

3. *Neɛ ɔpɛ, mɛyɛ: ahodeɛ ne sika*
    Whatever she wanted, I provided: personal possessions and cash

4. *Mahwɛ n'abusua, ama ɛbi aka ne nana*
    I have provided for her family, covering even her grandparents

5. *Menam bɔsuo mu rebrɛ na woada*
    When I was toiling in the early morning dew she was asleep

Here, Obrafour, speaking as the male lover, painfully recounts how he graciously lavished his lover, "Rita," as well as her grandparents, with all forms of material wealth (lines 3 and 4). He further pampered this woman by not making her work (line 5). In driving home the theme of betrayal and deceit, Obrafour employs certain powerful Akan proverbs to achieve this effect. For example, he uses an Akan proverb (line 4) to emphasize his limitless generosity. The extent of this generosity is evidenced by the knowledge that

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[12] For example, in his *Asem Beba Dabi* (*There'll Be Trouble Someday*), a song that lasts 4 minutes and 26 seconds, Obrafour skillfully uses over forty proverbs to underscore the song's theme: the need for caution and patience in life. Listen to the song at: http://museke.com/en/node/4344

among the Akans, although one is encouraged to provide gifts to one's in-laws, such acts are not obligatory. Thus, for the male lover to provide for the material needs of his in-laws to the extent that it included his girlfriend's grandparents shows his generous nature. In the latter part of this verse (not cited), Obrafour uses a flashback technique in which he recounts the sorry state "Rita" was in when he met her, yet still decided to enter into a relationship with her. In the course of the narration, there is a small voice that cautions Obrafour not to reveal all these details in the open. Obrafour justifies spilling his guts through the use of the proverb *nsuo taa apɔnkyerɛni a, ɔgye wɔɔ* (*when the frog chokes on water, it croaks*). It conveys that he feels forced to make public such intimate issues. Through the use of proverbs, the artist portrays the circumstances that he believed forced him to publicize his private affairs. The above analyses of proverb usage show the presence of local elements within Ghanaian artists' reappropriation of global rap. Here again, one notes that that rap, as reappropriated in Ghana, is not a blind imitation of this global genre.

Another similarity in both hiplife and American rap cultures lies in the naming practices of artists in both genres. A critical examination of the underlying logic of why artists rename themselves to reflect their career identity seems to be that such names give certain artistic legitimacy, as well as instill a sense of social responsibility to their audience (Agyekum, 2006; Obeng, 2001; Yankah, 1995). It is perhaps this same dual logic of carving out artistic musical legitimacy or identity for themselves, as well as feeling the social commitment and responsibility toward the cause of creating music for their respective audiences that underlies the renaming practices of artists in both genres. In American rap culture, one comes across names as 2Pac (Tupac Amaru Shakur), Dr. Dre (Andre Young), Eminem (Marshall Mathers III), Ja Rule (Jeffrey Atkins) and Puff Daddy/P. Diddy/Diddy (Sean Combs). So, also in hiplife music, one finds artists as Tic Tac (Nana Kwaku Duah), Nkasei, consisting of Shy (Kwame Godlove Yeboah Prah) and Naa-K (Isaac Mensah), Obour (Bice Osei Kuffour), Borax (Kojo Folson), and Tinny (Nii Addo Quaynor). Despite such similarity in naming practices, there is an important difference. Unlike many American rap artists, the naming practices of certain hiplife artists resonate with aspects of Ghanaian culture. The names of artists like *Okra* (soul) *Obrafour* (an executioner), *Okyeame* (spokesperson) Quophi, *Okomfo* (traditional priest) Kwaadee, *Omanhene* (paramount chief) Pozo, *Kontihene* (town chief), *Nana* (a royal) Wusu are drawn from key Akan (Ghanaian) traditional religious and political positions. Thus, in view of how the naming practices of hiplife artists are rooted within Ghanaian sociocultural mores, one can argue that the reappropriation of American rap culture in Ghana certainly embodies global aspects of the genre, as well as distinct local elements in the country's music culture.

In further examining hiplife and American rap music, there are obvious differences between these genres. With respect to hiplife artists, perhaps, these differences stem from their cognizance of their Ghanaian sociocultural mores, which prompts them to weave specific Ghanaian norms into the music and/or not to incorporate features characteristic of globalized rap. In hiplife music then, there is a marked absence of gangster lyrics that tout (gun) violence, misogyny, and homophobia, all of which are present in American rap music. Another prominent difference between the two genres relates to the language that is used to describe women. In certain American rap songs, denigrative language for women like "bitches," and "hoes" (whores), and "skeezers" (gold diggers) is very common (Swedenburg, 2004, p. 587). However, in hiplife music, such explicit derogatory portrayals and attitudes toward women is absent. Another unique feature that sometimes characterizes hiplife music is the use of *slanging* (a Ghanaian term

for one who speaks either English or any of the Ghanaian languages with a manufactured British or American accent) or *LAFA* (a Ghanaian acronym for one who speaks with a recognizable Locally Acquired Foreign Accent). An example of a song in which the artists are identified as speaking with LAFA or slanging is the Lifeline Family's *Wosisi Ye Wo Wa* (*Your Waist is in Pain*).

Another unique attribute of hiplife music relates to *code switching*, stemming from an artist/artists ability to speak two or more languages. For example, in the chorus of Tic Tac's song's *Mmaa Formula* (*Women's Formula*), one finds code switching, from Akan (in bold) to Standard English, in the chorus:

1. **Mmaa nyinaa ara** believe **me** style, style
    All women believe in my style, style

2. **Ɛbinom se me deɛ mehye** dough, dough
    Some of them say I have lots of dough, dough

3. **Ɛbinom se me deɛ meyɛ** tough, tough
    Some of them say I am very tough, tough

4. **Sɛ na ɛyɛ mmaa** formula, **ɛyɛ mmaa** formula
    Not knowing it is women's formula, it is women's formula

One also finds fragments of three languages — two Ghanaian and English — in the chorus of Reggie Rockstone's *Tsooboi*:

1. *Tsooboi, yei* (repeat thrice)
2. Check it out
3. *Tsooboi, yei* (repeat thrice)
4. *Baako, mmienu, mic*
5. Check it out (repeat twice)

Rockstone uses both Ga (lines 1 and 3: "*Tsooboi, yei*") and Akan (line 4: *"Baako, mmienu"*), as well as English (lines 2, 4, and 5: "Check it out" and *"mic"*).

Unlike their U.S. counterparts, in hiplife music and culture, references to sexual organs and sexual acts are absolutely in euphemistic terms. Thus, Daddy Lumba and Borax's song "*Asee Ho*" *(Down There)*, which has a chorus just like the song title, is widely interpreted in Ghana as referring to sexual organs. Also, the chorus of Lucky Star and Obour's song *Ohye wo Dan Mu (When He/She Is In Your Room)*, which is reproduced here, is interpreted as insinuating a sexual act:

1. *Ohye wo dan mu a* (repeated three times)
    When he/she is in your room
2. *Na eye wo dea*
    That's when it is yours
3. *Ohye wo dan mu a* (repeated two times)

When he/she is in your room
4.   *Oda wo mpa so no, na eye wo dea*
      When he/she is on your bed that is when it is actually yours
5.   *Eno nti, opue abonten a, amansankyefa, enye wo dea biom*
      Because when he/she is outdoors, he/she belongs to everyone, and thus never truly yours
6.   *Eno nti se wo nsa aka no a, menfa ye akwadworo*
      Thus, when you lay your hands on him/her, you shouldn't be lazy with it

Another local element that is evident in hiplife is the use of "Ghanaian English." This label not only refers to "a variety whose features have been more or less fully recognized and described, but broadly to the English used by Ghanaians who have had at least some formal education and are able to use English in some registers" (Dako, 2002, p. 48). This version of English includes English words that have distinct Ghanaian meanings. For example, *chop* can mean "to eat" or "to be sexually intimate."

From the ongoing discussion, it is clear that, despite similarities between hiplife and American rap music, there are facets of hiplife artists and elements of their music that are distinctly Ghanaian. Here, what becomes evident is the creative adaptation of American rap music into the Ghanaian music landscape.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have attempted to provide a grounded explication of glocalization through the music genre called hiplife by demonstrating how artists reappropriate American rap music by incorporating Ghanaian sociocultural aesthetics and sensibilities. In doing so, I show the heuristic value of the glocalization framework as capable of allowing one to explore the subtleties underlying the processes involved in creating a glocal phenomenon like hiplife music. This Ghanaian "cultural reconversion" (Garcia Canclini, 1992) of American rap music attests to the creative adaptation involved when local populations encounter and consume global products. Here, glocalization is experienced when a global phenomenon is reappropriated into a local context and then undergoes a transformation through specific sociocultural practices; yet the transformed phenomenon simultaneously retains the features of both the global and the local. Here, what is clear is that globalization processes are not the "cultural nemesis" (Kraidy & Murphy, 2008, p. 339) of local cultures. Furthermore, as made clear in the epigraph quoted from Miller (1995), local manifestation of such global products does not devalue the authenticity of such products. From this perspective, no culture can truly claim to be "a model of real consumption [since all] of us [are] creative variants of social processes based around the possession and use of commodities" (Miller, 1995, p. 144)

To conclude, I point out some current trends in hiplife music and what such developments reveal about glocalization. My observation in Ghana on a recent fieldwork revealed that there are two schools of hiplife music. Paradoxically, the new school artists utilize old-type highlife "jama" rhythms[13] (which now

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[13] Listen to Lucky Star and Obour's *ɔhye Wo Den Mu* at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C10-LNSaZF4
   or to *Oldman Boogey* by FBS at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5cEcA5QimDM&feature=related;
   or to Mzbel's *16 years* at *http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wOftM0P0yAs*

have found a positive reception among hiplife fans), and the old school sticks to new forms of foreign instrumentations of popular American rap artists like Lil' Wayne, T. Pain, and Young Jeezy.[14] In explaining the rationale for the schism, some interviewed participants revealed that the old school hiplife music for a time became very "one-way" (a Ghanaian English term meaning *redundant*), and people began not to patronize the music. Here, I surmise that the potentially gloomy situation propelled some hiplife musicians to tap into indigenous Ghanaian rhythms to revive the genre, as well as their careers. In view of the historical trajectory of hiplife, as well as that of highlife, one notes that the ongoing changes on the Ghanaian music landscape point to a crucial feature of glocalization processes. Such processes are neatly summed up in the Akan proverb about creative adaptation that says, "*ɛmere dane a, na woadane wo ho bi*," — When time changes, you change with it.

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[14] Listen to Kwaw Kese's *Wose Mmaa Pe Wo* at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ht3A-q2w_nw
or to Ayigbe Edem's *You Dey Craze* at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y9AjR-nk-a4

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