

# An insider' s guide to the street dance subculture in Singapore

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**SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL  
SCIENCES**



**An Insider's Guide to the  
Street Dance Subculture in  
Singapore**

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## ♦ Abstract ♦

This paper examines the vibrant subculture of street dance (dance styles that have evolved outside the studio) in Singapore. It conceptualises the social space of street dance, through processes of construction, consumption and contestation. This paper pays homage to the social order that dancers respect; an order they have established and continued to shape. It examines the methods dancers use to establish territories within physical and aural space. It also traces the flows between the local-global street dance landscape; a platform where channels of ideology, knowledge and talent are created and produced. Most of the research is situated at \*SCAPE, a spanking-new shopping mall in Singapore, and the latest home to local street dance subculture.

Key words: street dance, Singapore, space, youth, teenagers, subculture, sound

(10,009 words)

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And to the one who grants me internal joy and peace.

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## Glossary

**B-boying** or **Breaking** is a dance style that gained popularity in the 1970s when dancers would dance to the “breaks” in the music, which are percussive drum solos or loops found in “funk” or “breakbeat” music. The **B-boys** and **B-girls** would emphasise the breaks in a song by displaying dance techniques such as “Toprock”, “Footwork”, “Style”, “Musicality”, “Power” and “Freezes”. Popular moves are “6-step”, “Flare”, “Chair”. Popular crews of that time include the Rock Steady Crew and the New York City Breakers.

**Hip-hop** as a subculture stems from New York City, USA, in the late 1970s and early 1980s. There are four major elements that form the cornerstone of Hip-hop. They are Breaking, Graffiti, MCing and DJing (Campbell 2004:499). The social dance aspect of the culture consists of Old School, Middle School and New School Hip-hop. Essential to the dance is the “groove”. Some popular dance moves include “Running Man” and “Cabbage Patch”. Famous **Hip-hop dancers** include members of the MOP TOP Family such as Emilio “Buddha Stretch” Austin Jr. and Bobby Mileage.

**House** is a dance style that has its roots in the club dance scene in New York, USA. It became increasingly popular in 1980s and 1990s. Dancers emphasise the unique riffs and rhythms of a House track. The main components are “Jacking” (circular chest rotations), “Footwork” (feet movement) and “Lifting” (ground moves). Some popular moves are “Farmer” and “Loose Legs”. Some famous **House dancers** include Brian “Footwork” Green, Marjory Smarth and Caleaf Sellers.

**Locking** is a dance style that was created in 1960s to 1970s, by Don Campbell. It often involves the slightly-theatrical personification of a specific type of character, often a jolly, colourful character. The dance form revolves around the “Twirl”, (a wrist roll), the “Point” (exaggerated pointing with the index finger), and the “Lock” (where the arms are bent at the elbows and locked in that position). The “locking” effect refers to the sudden halt of that motion. Locking is danced to Funk, Soul and Disco music. Popular Locking moves include the “Whichaway” and “Scooby Doo”. One popular group of **Lockers** is The Lockers, featured on the hit television series *Soul Train*.

**Popping** is a dance style that was popular in 1960s to 1970s. This funk-style comes from San Francisco, California, USA. It is centred on “hitting”, the quick alternation of contracting and relaxing of muscles that creates a sudden jerking motion. Two popular styles of “Popping” and “Animation” (moving like an animated character in stop-motion) and “Boogaloo” (which focuses on lines, angles and rolls). Certain popular moves in popping are the “Fresno” and “Backslide” (better known as Michael Jackson’s “Moonwalk”). One popular group of **Poppers** is the Electric Boogaloos, featured on the hit television series *Soul Train*.

**Waacking** is a dance style that emerged from underground gay disco clubs in Los Angeles, USA in the early 1970s. It was later popularised by the hit television series *Soul Train*. It is danced to disco music. Waacking is known for its dynamic and powerful fast overhead arm movements, its poses, and its dramatic expression of music, with particular emphasis on percussive patterns of a song. Famous **Waackers** are the Outrageous Waack Dancers such as Jody Watley and Tyrone “The Bone” Proctor.

# ◆1◆

## An Insider's View

You can dance, you can jive, having the time of your life

-- ABBA, *Dancing Queen*

Acrobatic flipping, inverted spinning, synchronised freezing; young vagrants with too much time on their hands. They congregate in half-circles, staking their claim on open spaces, their loud music assaulting your senses as you hurry pass. But behind the seeming homogeneity, a social order exists; an interplay of interactions that begs to be explored. In my paper, I enter this subculture and analyse it from a sociological standpoint. I will shed light on the inner workings of the social hierarchy amongst street dancers, the negotiation of territory between dance groups through bodily and auditory means, and the unique Singaporean style that complements the pre-existing global street dance culture.

Locally, sociological study on dance as a youth subculture is very thin. This paper provides the first academic study of Singapore's street dance culture from an emic viewpoint, unravelling the cultural genesis and social interactions between members of this subculture. Apart from Mattar's analysis of Hip-hop music consumption in Singapore (2003), and Roy's paper on Bhangra<sup>1</sup> performance spaces in Singapore (2009), street dance in Singapore has not received much attention from sociologists. The spread of street dance culture has accelerated during the Information Age<sup>2</sup> as technology widens and creates greater access to the selection of subcultural goods. Despite the great rise in active consumption of such subcultural goods in Singapore, such as MTV<sup>3</sup>, Hollywood films such as "You Got Served", "Honey" and "Step

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<sup>1</sup>Bhangra music refers to "British Asian music produced by the hybridization of Punjabi dhol beats with western rhythms of pop, reggae, hip hop, and rap" (Roy 2009:237).

<sup>2</sup> In 2011, the World Economic Forum placed Singapore 2<sup>nd</sup> in the world in its Network Readiness Index, an index that details and ranks the growth of information technology.

<sup>3</sup>Music Television (MTV) is a cable television channel that features music videos amongst other shows.



Up 3D”<sup>4</sup> and lastly, the Xbox 360’s popular movement-based game called “Dance Central”<sup>5</sup>, sociological literature has not focused on street dance culture in Singapore.

Street dance has gained in popularity, from school dance clubs for co-curricular activities (CCAs), to local universities that regularly host large dance concerts. Local street dancers have also been featured in the media for instance, in the opening video for the 2010 Youth Olympic Games. They have starred in advertisements for brands such as MacDonald’s and Snickers. While these are snippets of street dance in Singapore, there is a need to locate these dancers and sociologically examine the organisation of this underground subculture.

Both locally and globally, street dance is a growing phenomenon. What started as a fad has now become a dance mainstay for over ten years. Street dance is a subculture dominated mainly by youths forming both a site of consumption (Kjeldgaard and Askegaard 2006: 237) and a site of production. I base my research at a prominent street dance location which has recently grown popular.

Singapore is known for its skyscrapers and multitude of shopping malls, many of which are situated within the internationally-acclaimed shopping district, Orchard Road. One newly-erected shopping mall along Orchard Road is \*SCAPE (since 2010). Planned by the government for youth activities<sup>6</sup>, this mall is equipped with various facilities such as a sizeable skate park and an area for weekly flea markets. \*SCAPE is also home to many street dance groups that are drawn to a section of the mall with smooth, expansive floors, reflective glass walls and free access to electricity. Whether intended or not by its planners, \*SCAPE has become a hub of street dance culture. \*SCAPE is a prime example of a cultured space that encourages the honing of creativity. Within Singapore, \*SCAPE represents a social space that caters to youths developing their own “creative potential”<sup>7</sup> (Csikszentmihalyi as cited by Manley and Wilson 1980).

Concurrently, this study reveals how groups of street dancers organise their activities and negotiate their turf through the manipulation of the shared space. This paper looks at the interaction between the local and global street dance communities within \*SCAPE, and studies how these interactions promote greater cultural appreciation. The international street

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<sup>4</sup>“You Got Served”, “Honey” and “Step Up 3D” are a few Hollywood films featuring street dance styles such as Hip-hop, Popping, Locking and Breaking.

<sup>5</sup> “Dance Central” is a game for Xbox 360 that requires the use of motion sensing technology.

<sup>6</sup> Singapore’s Ministry of Community Youth & Sports set aside 1.2ha of land for the building of \*SCAPE.

<sup>7</sup> “Creative potential” refers to people’s capability to transform their innovative thoughts and imagination into action (Manley and Wilson 1980:12).

dance community has become increasingly interconnected across time and space, resulting in a continuous two-way transmission of cultural production between the local and the global.

## ◆2◆

### Conceptual Grounds

There's a real freedom when you're dancing outside – no walls to confine you, no ceiling to hold you down.

- Kele Baker, Swain 2010:27

In this section, I discuss youth scenes in the sociological literature and explain why music is an important cultural resource that is intimately tied to dance as a form of expression. Next, I expound on the social order of subcultures, followed by how space and territories are conceptualised and maintained. Lastly, I engage in the sociological literature of globalisation of culture.

#### 2.1 Music and Dance in Youth Scenes

Youth spaces are complex and full of contradictions. Researchers seeking to understand youth spaces ought to “develop a framework that could focus and deepen... analysis of the forms of cultural production” in social spaces (Cytrynbaum 2010:4). One such framework is Ferreira’s concept of “youth scenes” (2009) or social spaces, in a Goffmanian sense, where youths construct and express their feelings collectively through the display of selective dramaturgical performances in specific stages and settings. Here, youth engage in the creative use of “specific corporal languages... alongside other resources of social and symbolic production and diffusion” which allow the embodying of certain social roles (Ferreira 2009:288). The most important resource that dancers at \*SCAPE perpetually rely on is music. Ferreira argues that

Music, for instance, one of the main symbolic resources for the identification of youth micro-cultures, is more valued today for the sensual experience and feeling it provides, than for its ideological content, its message. *Music is not lived just as an aesthetic and ethical experience*, something to consume in a passive, cognitive and contemplative way, *but mainly as a physical experience, to feel, to dance, as a means to... celebrate hedonism and pleasure*, inside tangible sociabilities such as festivals, concerts, clubs, and so on. (2009:288 italics mine)

Music is essential to the community of dancers at \*SCAPE and cannot be ignored. It provides the aural landscape upon which subcultural activities and identities of dancers are formed. More on music in street dance will be examined further on.

In the literature, dance is analysed as a creative process based on the core elements, namely improvisation and experimentation (Manley and Wilson 1980:18). This creative aspect is apparent in the street dance community. Simultaneously, dance is “intrinsically stimulating” (Csikszentmihalyi cited in Hutson 2000) and generates a “holistic sensation of total involvement” which Csikszentmihalyi labels “flow”. Dance is considered flow because it “merges the act with the awareness of the act, producing self-forgetfulness, a loss of self-consciousness, transcendence of individuality, and fusion with the world” (Hutson 2000:40). While Hutson’s work is based on the rave scene in San Francisco, there are similarities in how street dancers describe dancing as being “one with the music” from my research.

Evidence of youth exposure to the Hip-hop culture within Singapore has risen with the rise of MTV (Burpee 1997:56). A 1997 *Billboard* report focusing on Singapore and two other cities, said that in just three years of MTV Asia’s launch, subscription had grown to 55.7 million households. Although Hip-hop as a cultural product has been imported from USA and marketed in Singapore for almost two decades, academic literature on Hip-hop or other street dance subcultures in Singapore remains very sparse. The subculture of street dance is a growing trend amongst youth and is also an area where Singaporean youth have the platform to express their individuality, to enhance their understanding of their bodies and explore creativity. While the MTV generation is buying into the global Hip-hop culture (Foster 1995), there is a lack of sociological literature in Singapore which focuses on street dance.

## 2.2 Subculture

It is important to study the social order of a subculture. A subculture refers to a shared collective culture of a subsociety (Fine and Kleinman 1979:2) or a group of people with “stylistic expression (music, dress, speech, etc.)” (Eglash 1998:389). One such example is Willis’ Homology theory which aims to explain how subcultures emerge to subvert and oppose the mainstream culture. According to Willis, a subculture consists of four elements which are “dress, music, argot and ritual” (cited by Campbell 2004:499). Whilst Willis’ theory offers a compartmentalising framework to subcultural studies, it ignores the multiplicity and complexities in a subculture, failing to acknowledge the emotional dimension members’ experience. I argue that within the street dance subculture, social activities are

constructed by members, who constantly create and experience a sense of belonging. This subculture involves emotional agency, similar to Bennett's concept of "neo-tribes" (Laughey 2006:44) where the active construction of the street dance community is shaped by the dancers' interactions between themselves and between structural influences.

### 2.3 Social Space

Since this study is location-specific, it is crucial to discuss how social space shapes the local street dance culture. It is within this space that consumption, construction and contestation takes place. For the consumption of space, Tuan (Rodaway 2011:429) raises the point that people are "Beings-in-the-World", intricately connected to their environment materially, emotionally and spiritually. Identifying the significant interdependency between people and the space they inhabit uncovers certain trends that occur in such a space.

One extension to the consumption of space is the process of social space construction. Lefebvre argued in the well-acclaimed *The Production of Space* (1974) that

Social space contains a great diversity of objects, both natural and social, including the networks and pathways which facilitate the exchange of material things and information... Social labour transforms them, rearranging their positions within spatio-temporal configurations without necessarily affecting their materiality, their natural state. (1974:77)

Lefebvre argued that space is a product that is used and consumed, and also a "means of production". Space cannot be viewed separately from its productive forces and the division of labour that shapes and moulds it. There exists the human element in the construction of space, while simultaneously serves as a means of production through the network of flows and creation of cultural materials.

Bauman (1993) in his work on *Postmodern Ethics* points out that modernity has given rise to new forms of social spacing. The first is "cognitive space" which is derived from

...modernity's desire to master space; to determine a place for everything and ensure that everything is in its place – so that surveillance might readily reveal whatever or whomever is 'out of place'. (Clarke and Doel 2011:50)

Whilst cognitive spaces are tightly controlled, there is another type of space that stems from a different origin, which Bauman calls "aesthetic space".

[T]he uneven distribution of interest, curiosity, capacity to arouse amusement and enjoyment... Only in the well-administered and policed space can the aesthetic enjoyment of the city take off. Only there can the spectators 'be in control' in the aesthetic sense of the word. (1993:169)

The concepts of “cognitive space” and “aesthetic space” provide a framework to understand how \*SCAPE, as an area allocated by the state where street dancers are allowed to congregate, consume and construct their own dance space.

## 2.4 Boundaries and Territories

With regards to the contestation of space, sociological literature features various discourses on territory and boundary-formation. In this unique subculture, staking a claim on territory is an ongoing process. Since multiple dance groups congregate at \*SCAPE, I now examine the literature on how groups negotiate space.

Leonard’s study on teens and territory in Northern Ireland displayed insight on how Protestant and Catholic children construct their social world. She developed the concept of “Internal Territory” referring to how children claim “ownership of space and place” (2006:231). Leonard observed how children establish “networks and... rules of engagement” (2006:232). Children used both solidly-marked places (like the park, demarcated specifically for play) and fluidly-marked spaces (such as moving around in groups on the streets) to establish their own sense of belonging in Belfast. Likewise, a multi-dimensional and multi-layered interpretation of space can be made using Leonard’s concepts on Territory, regarding the street dancers at \*SCAPE.

## 2.5 Soundscapes

The most prominent form that the street dancers use in boundary-formation and territory-claiming is that of music. In order to explain this phenomenon, I must carefully elucidate “Soundscapes” as a concept.

In *The Soundscape*, Schafer explains how the world is made up of a vast acoustic environment that has gone through countless changes over time. Schafer defines “soundscape” as “any acoustic field of study” (1977: 7). Fundamentally, he suggests that it is possible to isolate any acoustic environment and categorise the characteristics of that landscape.

A soundscape consists of events *heard* not objects *seen*. Beyond aural perception is the notation and photography of sound... (1977: 8, original italics)

While Schafer points out the necessity of studying sound in our environment, Kong (1995) posits another argument that music is a medium through which people

communicate and share their environmental experiences. Music contributes to an oft taken-for-granted environmental and social experience but also is a form through which we create a sense of place. Kong writes

In specific terms, *music from a specific area can convey images of the place.*  
As David Thomas... pointed out, 'Whatever you feel from the music is what it feels like to be there.' (1995: 3, italics mine)

Therefore music is both a resource and a vehicle through which social experiences are communicated.

Leyshon, Matless and Revill (1995) explain how music is closely tied to the rhythmic structure of a particular landscape and allows for varying interpretations of the everyday experience (1995: 426). Music offers a site for political and social resistance (see Kong 1995). At \*SCAPE, the soundscape is also another place in which music is used to create boundaries, as my paper will argue.

Schafer (1977:76) argues that "sacred noise" is the type of noise that invades daily life and resounds pervasively, such as the buzz of loud automobiles. Later in my paper, I introduce my concept of "auditory dominance", referring to the methods people use to claim aural territory through the volume of their music. Music and sound dominance is very evident in the street dance community.

## 2.6 Globalisation

Giddens (1991:22) posits the concept of local-global dialectic, highlighting the intensification of social relations spreading worldwide, connecting distant localities to the local sites, where both sides mutually affect their outcomes (Skalli 2006). Globalisation is the "compression of the world as a whole"(Robertson as cited by Nayak 2003:5) involving the ways people and place help shape global cultural change in the local-global nexus through global cultural "flows" within and through different "scapes"<sup>8</sup> (Appadurai 2006).

One insightful study by Mattar on consumption of Hip-hop music in Singapore (2003) effectively traces the roots of Hip-hop music and offers a localised view of how Singaporeans consume this global Hip-hop subculture. In this paper, I wish to push his concluding argument further. I argue that street dance subcultures, including Hip-hop,

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<sup>8</sup>Scapes refer to the landscapes of shifting people, media, technology, finance and ideologies.

not only transcend geographical borders to establish subcultural identities, but contribute to the flows across the global dancescape.



### ❖3❖

## Methodology

From August 2010 to March 2011, I conducted my research at levels 4 and 5 of \*SCAPE, the hub for street dance activity in Singapore. The number of visits varied from five times a week to once a week. Each visit varied in time spans (from half an hour to five hours). I interacted with over forty dancers and observed over a hundred in the span of seven months.

My fieldwork is partly based on findings derived from a first-hand experience of the street dance subculture as a dancer of five years. Moreover, since \*SCAPE is a new dance haunt, I actively collected data through participant observation. To gain closer resolution on the inner workings of the street dance subculture, I interviewed some of its key participants. These two methods were selected to obtain an in-depth study of the street dance subculture and community at \*SCAPE, although the method used was primarily participant observation.

Very evident in my work is the influence of grounded theory, a combination of positivism and interactionism originating from the work of Glaser and Strauss (Babbie 2008; 2005). It proved to be the most relevant research paradigm for my study; collecting the data in a naturalistic manner, while simultaneously comparing multiple viewpoints from both my participants and the available literature.

### 3.1 Participant Observation

The field site \*SCAPE is a shopping mall in the heart of Singapore's prime retail hub, Orchard Road, located behind the Cineleisure mall, a popular hang-out for teenagers. \*SCAPE is a considerably new building, erected in 2010 and is known for several subculture-specific activities such as skaters, flea markets and more recently, a place where dancers congregate to practice. The street dancers typically frequent the fourth and fifth levels of the building (Image.1).

As a regular student of O-dance School located on the fourth level of \*SCAPE, I observed that in February 2010, only a handful of dancers were using the place outside of O-dance School to practice. However, by June 2010, dancers had surged into \*SCAPE and made

it a shared place to hold dance practices and rehearsals. In late July, I began to join some groups for their dance sessions.

I chose to use a participatory, unobtrusive form of observation that Lan has termed “naturally occurring descriptions” (Lan 2006:251-252). I studied my participants in their most natural state. Initially they were slightly self-conscious, but soon they became used to my presence. Slipping myself into their environment allowed me to observe their activities and interactions.

I usually interacted with dancers by joining them in their warm-ups and technique trainings. For some groups like House and Locking, I observed and spoke to several dancers. At the end of dance sessions, I took the opportunity to casually converse with dancers (e.g. during supper). Many of them were aware of my research, which was helpful in building personal relations in the dance community.

Lastly, I identified key figures in the various groups within the dance scene. These were the participants who were present almost every day. They were the ones whom I tried to build closer relationships with, in order for them to be more comfortable with me asking questions. They were key informants on the goings-on and their opinions helped to shed light on certain issues they faced at \*SCAPE.

### 3.2 Interview

Between December 2010 and February 2011, I conducted unstructured interviews with eight street dancers from various genres. My aim was to obtain in-depth interviews with the dancers in order to better understand their mindset. Each interview lasted more than an hour. I tried to maximise sample variation by interviewing dancers from different styles. Most of the street dancers specialise in one style, such as Popping or Hip-hop, but are not limited to that style and frequently join in sessions with dancers of other styles. The fluid nature of street dancers’ abilities to dance multiple genres meant that my interviews were rich with information regarding different dance styles. I gained comprehensive knowledge of specific dance styles from key dancers who specialised in certain styles but also offered a comparative insight into other genres. This allowed me to maximise the information offered from my detailed sample.

Under this section, I elaborate on the location of the interviews, the ways of reaching the interviewees and the problems I faced in carrying out interviews.

All the interviews were held within \*SCAPE itself. As my research is location-specific, it was easy for the interviewees to gesture and refer to areas or objects while recounting and describing past events in detail. Some sections of the interviews were done while walking around \*SCAPE, which helped to jolt their memory of certain examples that they might have forgotten to mention, had they not been physically present in the location. Therefore, the location of the interview was a way of pursuing a highly in-depth and detailed interview.

I reached my interviewees through multiple channels, some through snowball sampling, while others were contacted privately via the social networking site Facebook. The interviewees' ages ranged from 18 to 28 years old. This was representative of the dancers who utilised \*SCAPE, who were mostly in their late teens to late twenties.

Speaking to the interviewees allowed them to elaborate on and explain the logic behind some of the dance activities. However, some of the answers I received were relatively difficult to quantify. Mainly, the question "How do you feel about dance?" normally resulted in the interviewees giving an embellished answer. Six out of eight admitted that it was difficult for them to explain and gave short (occasionally clichéd) answers such as

Dance is like the air that I breathe. I eat dance, I breathe dance, I sleep dance! (Randy, aged 28)

Also when I asked questions such as "What happens if a group you're dancing next to blasts their music too loudly? What would you do?" Hypothetical answers were mostly given, in contrast to what I actually observed during the dance sessions. The data collected from interviews had a tendency to be less credible and accurate than just observing the participants in their natural surroundings. Finally, across the eight in-depth interviews, there was some repetition in the interviewees' answers. To counter this, I augmented my fieldwork by engaging in more participant observation.

## ◆4◆

### Discoveries

Street dancers are dancers who are not confined to dancing only within studios, but frequently dance in urban spaces that are not officially demarcated for dance. Street dance is contrasted with dance styles like Modern, Ballet, Contemporary, which are studio-based. My study focuses on street dancers who dance different styles such as Hip-hop, Popping, Locking, Breaking, House, Waacking (Glossary). These styles emerged and evolved out of the streets, as opposed to the dance studio.

#### 4.1 The Dance Floor(s)

Within five months of \*SCAPE's opening, many street dancers had migrated from their usual practice haunts such as Republic Polytechnic and Singapore Management University, to dance on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> floors of \*SCAPE (Image.1).

Dancers gave various reasons for this:

We can't see our reflections when we dance at the Esplanade, and it's hot down there. Many B-boys congregate there and their music is quite loud, so it's hard to concentrate. At Republic Polytechnic, it's one of the best places actually. But during the school holidays, they switch off the air-conditioning and the lights. It gets very stuffy and dark. Lastly there was the tuberculosis scare at Republic Polytechnic. I think that was the main thing that made us, or convinced us to all shift here. (Joe, aged 20)

I'm studying in Singapore Management University but they don't even let me dance there. It's just sad. But dancing here (at \*SCAPE) is better. Nobody will chase you away. (Merry, aged 21)

The major push factor was the "tuberculosis scare" in July 2010<sup>9</sup> at Republic Polytechnic. Alternatively, there were plenty of pull factors. \*SCAPE is centrally-located and conveniently situated next to a major train station. The management of \*SCAPE allows youths to utilise the area as long as no property is destroyed. There are plenty of glass walls, useful for dancers to check themselves while dancing (Image.2), and free access to electricity from multiple

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<sup>9</sup> A student was suspected of having tuberculosis and there was fear of it spreading.

sockets. Also, the floor is smooth and suitable for dance, and the open air area is well-ventilated. These features make \*SCAPE attractive to street dancers.

## 4.2 Respectin' the Order

Freestyle dance lies at the heart of street dance, and has its own social order. The main freestyle activity is called a “session”, which consists of two parts, “Technique Training Circle” and “cypher”. I will explain the social order within the “session”, and then discuss social capital in the street dance community.

### 4.2.1 Session

A dance session occurs when two or more dancers gather to dance. Sessions are typically organised through different communication channels, like Short Message Service (SMS), emails and messages through social networking sites such as Facebook. One example of such a message is “House Session Initiative: House Session this Thursday, 10/03/2011, 7.30p.m.! See you at SCAPE!”<sup>10</sup>

Different sessions are structured differently. Locking, Popping and Hip-hop sessions tend to be more structured, while the smaller House sessions are more flexible.<sup>11</sup>

A “session” typically begins with warm-up and stretches. After half an hour of stretching, some groups such as the Hip-hop dancers and Lockers will do technique training, after which they will do a cypher. Other groups, like the B-boys go straight into cyphering.

#### *Monkey See Monkey Do*

We will open this “Technique Training Circle”. One by one, each one will come up with a variation (of a dance step) to the song (that is being played). Everybody will quickly learn the variation and we will do the variation for 3 to 4 eights. And then we will switch to the next person. This gives everybody a chance to go out of the box and do whatever variation the person feels fits the music. (Jeffrey, aged 19)

In one Hip-hop “Technique Training Circle” that I took part in, Ahmad opted for a simple head isolation from right to left and made all of us repeat this move for 4 eights. Lilly then

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<sup>10</sup> Merry, a House dancer, sent via Facebook.

<sup>11</sup> There are usually more than ten dancers in a Locking session, five to seven for Popping and Hip-hop sessions, and around four for House sessions. Bigger groups tend to follow a stricter structure to accommodate all its members.

made us do a more vigorous move called the “Party Machine” which required the dancer to continuously jump and kick with alternate legs.<sup>12</sup> Moves done during technique training tend to vary in difficulty.

Technique training also allows dancers to share their knowledge and expertise. I once watched a Locking session and observed one dancer teaching another to do a “double lock” (a move requiring strength and precision). The other Lockers immediately stopped whatever they were doing and paid attention to the demonstration, and tried to pick up the move.

### *Eyes On You*

Cytrynbaum (2010) writes about the improvisational rap ciphers students held in Franklin High’s Lyric Club. Similarly, in Singapore, the cypher is an open circle or area where people take turns to freestyle. I will explain what it means to freestyle and then describe how a cypher works.

Freestyle is expressive spontaneous movement to the expression of the song. (Brenda, aged 20)

Freestyle is very difficult. I panic when I have to freestyle. (Sharon, aged 18)

Traditionally, “freestyle” refers to one’s spur-of-the-moment response to the music. Simply put, it is “dancing whatever you feel”. Some people describe freestyle as having a liberating effect, an experience that “frees their minds”.

Dancers enter the cypher, solo, while the others watch.

A cypher is when everyone gathers around and takes turns to see each other dance, and enjoy the music at the same time. When it’s your turn, don’t be afraid to come up and express the music and let other people enjoy what you can do. I really like cyphering a lot because I can see people having fun. (Axe, aged 20)

However, not all dancers feel comfortable dancing within the cypher. One dancer laments:

I just don’t want people to watch me. I feel that if you’ve nothing to share, then why go in (to the cypher) and waste their time? Why make them watch *sh\*t*? (Merry, aged 21)

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<sup>12</sup> “Party Machine” is featured in “Hip-hop Middle School Dictionary”<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mpiv2ac2ZdA&feature=related> at 0:09 to 0:45.

### *Hardcore vs. Casual freestylers*

I discovered two groups of people who emerge from the cypher, the “hardcore freestylers” and the “casual freestylers”.

Hardcore freestylers are enthusiastic about freestyling and enjoy being in the cypher. They typically enter a cypher more than four times in one span of about an hour. Experienced freestylers often appear to let the music emanate through their bodies, where their movements are totally synchronised with the music. Hardcore freestylers regard freestyling as a major priority and spend a lot of time honing their skills. They regard freestyle as a liberating way to express their creativity.

In contrast, casual freestylers are dancers who do not feel as strongly for freestyling. Many of them enjoy watching others freestyle in a cypher but dread their turn. Some of them prefer not to take part in the cypher, or go to the middle of the cypher only once.

However, both groups agree that a cypher is an activity that brings people together. A cypher has been described as a “circle of fun” (Brenda, 20), a place where you can “*sabo*<sup>13</sup> (sabotage) people” (Sharon, 18) in the name of fun, and the whole activity is said to be “very social” (Jeffrey, 19). The cypher is the one of the highlights of a session.

#### 4.3 “I need my space!”

Street dance groups experience two types of space competition – “Physical Space” and “Aural Space” – in which they actively negotiate territory. In Singapore, the notion of “*chope*”<sup>14</sup> (a colloquialism referring to the reserving or securing of space), describes how territory is established in physical space.

##### 4.3.1 Physical Space: “*chope*”

Establishing boundaries within physical space is evident within the dance community at \*SCAPE. Some dancers arrive early to put their bags down and secure a place for them to dance at. They typically choose places near electrical sockets to plug in their speakers.

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<sup>13</sup>“*Sabo*” is colloquial term used in Singapore. It is the contraction of the English word “sabotage”.

<sup>14</sup>“*Chope*” is a colloquial term used in Singapore, referring to the securing or reserving something. For example, the act of reserving a seat in crowded fast food joint for a friend who is running late.

We try as best as we can, to dance on level 4, near a power plug. It's very important for us to have a power plug, for our speakers. But usually I try to come earlier, around 6.30 p.m. when there're less people? So I get to *chope* a place! (Joe, aged 20)

We'll come and normally try and *chope* our space. Because now, must compete with the B-boys. And we want space to practice on our own. (Harvey, aged 26)

The physical act of leaving their bags on the floor are, symbolically, marks of territory. Also, the dancers' physical presence in that space helps to establish their territory. Sometimes they do not manage to secure a space for themselves, especially during peak periods<sup>15</sup>.

There was once when \*SCAPE was really crowded. We just waited for one of groups who came earlier to leave, and then we quickly used that spot, even though the location wasn't that good... but you know what? *Just use it! It's better nothing.* (Randy, aged 29)

Thus there are many ways that dancers deal with the space constraints. With prime locations near electrical sockets and near reflective surfaces, groups use different means of obtaining their favourite locations.

#### 4.3.2 Aural Space: Auditory Dominance

One intriguing phenomenon is the use of sound, especially music, through which dancers stake their claim over their territory. Contestation of space is not just over physical space but also, over aural space.

It's impossible to dance at \*SCAPE! All the people just blasting their music, you can't even hear yourself, you can't hear your music. *Everyone trying to kill each other, competing between who has the loudest music!* (Yu, aged 27)

Music is a subcultural capital that provides dancers' sustenance. Dancers often stress the consumption of music for their dance.

Music is the inspiration. Music comes first, then dance. (Chel, aged 23)

Because of the centrality of music, audio speakers become a form of subcultural capital used to negotiate space. Many dancers stress the use of a superior set of portable speakers for their dance sessions. When music is aired clearly, it is easier for the whole group to dance together, spread over a bigger space. Joe, aged 20, explains the importance of speakers.

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<sup>15</sup>Peak periods refer to dance competition seasons, usually battles and showcase dance competitions, often held in January, February, March, July, September. Another peak period is during O-dance School's Recital, which is normally in November or December.



Interviewer: What happens when another group's music is too loud?

Joe: We ask them politely, 'Do you mind turning down the volume a bit?' Usually they do. *But, I've also invested in a better speaker.*

Interviewer: What do you mean better?

Joe: One that is louder. That's the main thing. It has to be louder. You get to *occupy more space* with that sound.

Harvey, aged 26 said,

One thing bad about this place is that it's open-air. Music is a little soft. And there're other groups around. In order to deal with that, I bring my giant big-ass speakers.

When asked if his speakers ever get too loud, he admitted that several groups have asked him to turn down the volume of his music, and he always obliged. Although Harvey emphasised a mutual understanding amongst dancers, to respect one another's dance space, other dancers have complained about Harvey's lack of concern for others dancing near him.

Other dancers adopt a "if you can't beat them, join them" attitude. Axe, aged 20, recounted,

Don and I were practicing for a Popping competition, and a House session was going on next to us. You've seen their speakers right? They're damn loud. So Don and I said, '*Heck it, let's just join them!*' So that day, we practiced Popping to House music. It really doesn't matter.

Auditory dominance creates a vicious cycle between dance groups. One group would request for another group to turn down the volume. Once that happens, the requester's music usually overpowers the requestee's music. This often leads to the requestee turning the volume back up again, and the cycle continues. Such see-sawing of auditory dominance, to negotiate one's aural space, is a typical tactic. Therefore, there are various methods that dancers use to cope with the competing sound levels.

Speakers are such an important means of negotiating space, that the lack of speakers can change the dynamics of a group instantaneously. Below is a conversation with Jeffrey who describes what happens when there are no speakers during a session.

If nobody brought speakers, we'll try and find speakers, or we'll just listen to our own MP3s and go solo. And if another group has speakers, then we'll join them!

And when asked about dancing alone, he said

Because dancing alone and dancing with other people is very different. When I'm listening to my own MP3, I feel very bored dancing alone. I want to dance with people, to cypher with people. I want to dance to the *same music* as people, *to be connected through the music, not just connected to myself*. If I wanted to dance by myself, I wouldn't need to come here! I can just do that in my own room at home.

Many other dancers share the same sentiments. Such sessions normally end quite early, around 10 p.m. as opposed to the typical 11.30 p.m. because dancers are bored.

#### 4.4 Go With The Flow(s)

I found that Singaporean street dancers interact with the international street dance community in various ways.

##### 4.4.1 "Closed Car Workshop"

There have been a lot of overseas dancers coming down to Singapore over the past year. And *we get to learn their ideas and their culture. We get to see how they train and what the international community of dancers focus on*. If not, Singapore will be like a "closed car workshop". *Only trying to fix our own car, and not getting ideas from elsewhere*. (Joe, aged 20, italics mine)

Within the past seven months, dancers from parts of USA, Germany, France, Finland, Australia, Japan, South Korea, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Thailand, Philippines, Brunei, Indonesia, and Malaysia have visited \*SCAPE on one or more occasions. The youngest was an 8-year old Japanese girl Popper and the oldest I met was a 45-year old Japanese B-boy. The international dancers mentioned below are dancers who have visited \*SCAPE more than twice.

Zen (Bali, Indonesia): I heard that there's a House community in Singapore so I came to \*SCAPE to check it out. They're really good, for a young dance community.

Sam (Melbourne, Australia): Popping in Singapore is really active. And I'm glad to see so many girls freestyling with the boys. In Australia it's quite rare to see female Poppers gettin' down in a cypher.

Ray (Seoul, South Korea): I think \*SCAPE is good place for street dance to grow. You know, space to dance is so rare. It's nice to see so many dancers, dancing together in the same place.

The local and international dancers exchange memorable opinions on dance. Axe quoted an unforgettable line from a well-renown and influential dancer from USA, called Day.

We asked Day what dance is to him. Day said, '*Basically, I am the music's b\*tch!*'

Axe explained what Day meant was the dance is derived from music, therefore, when dancers freestyle, they should allow music to inspire them, to take over their body and become "one with the music". Axe added that the phrase had become so popular in Singapore that a local street dancer had designed a t-shirt with the phrase on the front (Image.3).

Street dancers in Singapore are highly receptive to interacting with international street dancers. During international dance battles<sup>16</sup> hosted in Singapore, it is common for international dancers to come down to compete. Most of these are two-on-two battles, requiring dancers to compete in pairs. Some international dancers find it easier to contact a local dancer, through social networking sites like MSN or Facebook, to form a team. For example, in an international dance held in February 2011, under the House battle category alone, there were "Singaporean-Finnish", "Singaporean-American" and "Singaporean-Australian" teams. These pairs practise together at \*SCAPE, experiencing an interchange of dance expertise, a collaborative effort to understand and work with one another.

Conversely, dancing in front of international dancers also means that the dancers are symbolically representing the Singapore dance scene. Merry, aged 21, commented

You are under a lot of pressure because you're representing Singapore's scene! But it's also nice to dance with [international dancers], because they open your eyes to new interpretations of the song. When you watch them in person, it's mind-blowing!

Thus international dance battles, held frequently in Singapore, provide opportunities for both international and local dancers to be exposed to each other's techniques and ideas on the various dance styles.

#### 4.1.2 Local to Global

The cultural exchange between the Singapore and international street dance scene is a two-way process. Singaporean dancers influence the international scene through various means. International dancers purchase local dance fashion designers' clothes, such as brands

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<sup>16</sup>Dance battles include *Floor the Love* (a four-time international dance battle hosted in Singapore), *Juste Debout Singapore* (Singaporean pre-selections where the champions are ceded into an annual international dance battle hosted in France) and *R16* (Singaporean pre-selections where the champions are ceded into an annual international dance battle hosted in Korea).

like “ADED”, “Massive Outfit”, “RVG” and “The Soul Factory” that cater to various street dance styles.

Another way Singaporean dancers transmit cultural products is through music. Some local dancers are savvy at producing or remixing music. International dancers learn of their music online, and when they visit \*SCAPE, they network with the Singaporean DJs and obtain their music tracks.

Lastly, several local dancers at\*SCAPE were spotted for their expertise in dance and were asked to coach to some international dancers privately.

I saw Harvey dance and he’s like nothing I’ve seen in Australia! I just had to hire him to coach me privately! (Jason from Sydney)

Occasionally, some local street dancers have been spotted at \*SCAPE and invited overseas to hold workshops in Malaysia, Indonesia and Vietnam.

Sara (Jakarta, Indonesia): My crew and I met Pye at a competition held at \*SCAPE in March 2010, and her Waacking is so good! So we invited her to teach in Jakarta.

## ◆5◆

### Discussion

This paper explores three components of the street dance culture in \*SCAPE. They will be reviewed in the following order: the social order of street dance in \*SCAPE, \*SCAPE as a social space (paying attention to aural territory), and \*SCAPE as a platform for international culture exchange.

#### 5.1 Four Elements of Subculture

An examination of the entire street dance community at \*SCAPE reveals various processes through which the social order is negotiated. Applying Willis' Homology Theory to the street dance in Singapore, it is possible to identify the four elements of subculture at \*SCAPE.

*Music:* Certain musical genres are preferred over others, depending on the dance style. E.g. Hip-hop music for Hip-hop dancers, Funk music for Poppers and Lockers etc...

*Fashion:* Most dancers wear sneakers, sweatpants, basketball shorts and t-shirts varying in colour and bagginess. Most of the time, Hip-hop dancers wear the baggiest clothes while Poppers wear tighter fitting t-shirts. Dancers often wear clothes that help them in their dance.

For Popping, tighter-fit clothes make my moves more defined. (Axe)

Lockers like to wear bright clothes with stripes and funky headgear, like a fedora or a bowler. This adds to the happy nature of the dance. We wear clothes that help us get into character. (Brenda)

*Argot:* These include “Ebonics and hand signs” (Mattar 2003:292), which in the Singaporean street dance context, refers to colloquial terminologies and hand gestures that dancers frequently use. Popular colloquial terms are words such as “Dope!”<sup>17</sup> and “Word!”<sup>18</sup> One prevalent hand sign is to thump one’s closed fist against one’s chest to signify “Respect”, when addressing someone else. Another is a flagging gesture used to cheer another person on, particularly when an impressive move is executed.

*Rituals:* “Technique Training Circles” and “cyphers” are the main rituals in \*SCAPE. The “Technique Training Circle” encourages creativity and musicality for the individual. Technique training allows dancers to practice foundational moves and learn new variations from others. The moves vary tremendously in terms of difficulty and intricacy. This expands dancers’ knowledge and dance vocabulary. Technique training also allows members of a group to showcase their knowledge and expertise. Cyphering is a central activity in street dance. The cypher celebrates individuality, creativity and encourages group solidarity. Cyphers perform a key role in creating group solidarity, and will be further analysed in the following section.

#### 5.1.1 Subcultural Capital

Street dancers use subcultural capital, based on a hierarchy of prestige to organise themselves (Thornton 1995; Hutson 2000). Dancers higher up in the hierarchy are accorded more respect and deference from less experienced dancers.

Apparent forms of subcultural capital in street dance range from amount of dance knowledge, level of technicality, level of musicality, years of dance experience and number of competitions won. Other forms of subcultural capital are fashion, ownership of music, creation of music and the power of one’s audio speakers. Access into dance groups also varies. Some groups, like the Hip-hop Kids, are highly-exclusive and require an invitation, while the L-City Lockers are open to almost anybody.

Within the community, there are key figures that less experienced dancers often turn to. For example, in Popping sessions, the main go-to persons to ask for dance advice are Harvey, age 26 and Chel, aged 23.

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<sup>17</sup>“Dope” is used to describe something extremely impressive. For example if a dancer does a very complicated move, other dancers may say, “Hey! That’s dope!”

<sup>18</sup>“Word” is an expression used to convey a sense of shared sentiment. For example, A says to B, “This movie’s boring!” and B replies, “Word.”

Most people go to dancers who have a name in the community like Harvey and Chel who have *won many competitions and travelled overseas*. So people will normally ask them for advice, *because they are experienced and they know stuff*. (Joe, aged 20, italics mine)

#### 5.1.2 Activities of Inclusivity

However, compartmentalising a subculture into this conceptual framework ignores other cultural constituents. Here I would like to highlight the emotional dimension that members experience. There are two layers of emotionality, the first is group solidarity achieved through “activities of inclusivity” and the second is a sense of belonging tied to the location: \*SCAPE.

Activities of inclusivity refer to activities that generate a sense of solidarity within a group. One example is the “session”. Commenting on Locking sessions, Faizal said, “We dance together, we laugh together, we do everything together!” Some dancers have described sessions as having a fun atmosphere, where they feel comfortable enough around their friends to make a fool of themselves. Others take a more serious tone, describing a session as a place to practice and drill technical moves. Especially during a cypher, two distinct groups emerge, the hardcore freestylers and casual freestylers. While the former thoroughly enjoy freestyling and dancing in a cypher, the latter group normally forms the appreciative audience, standing around in a circle. The cypher brings these two groups of dancers together. Thus, camaraderie and group solidarity are a result of dancers being present at and participating in such activities of inclusivity.

The second emotional dimension that street dancers experience is a sense of belonging to the larger community of dancers at \*SCAPE. This includes the choreography-based dancers and the lone-rangers who practise by themselves. Most dancers describe positive emotions towards \*SCAPE.

\*SCAPE is one of the first few places where many styles are dancing together... It gives of a ‘family vibe’. Like we all belong. (Harvey)

We’re all one family. International or local, we come here because we love dance. (Joe)

These comments indicate a certain emotional attachment and a sense of belonging created within \*SCAPE. Dancers not only use \*SCAPE’s facilities, but have formed a community there.

## 5.2 Space for Free

Mentioned in the literature review are two types of spaces by Bauman (1993:168) – “cognitive space” and “aesthetic space”, both of which are present in \*SCAPE. Singapore’s government plays an active role in shaping the urban landscape and \*SCAPE is a prime example. It is the product of a controlled, well-planned “cognitive space”, targeted at youths. Meanwhile, “aesthetic space” is the creative use of space for one’s own amusement or pleasure. Although \*SCAPE was not specifically catered to dancers, youths have consciously consumed this “aesthetic space”, using it in imaginative and transformative ways. The street dance community has essentially “colonised” \*SCAPE, drawn by its centrality, access to electrical sockets, and openness to the public. As Axe mentioned, “I feel that this is a designated place for street dancers to dance here without constraints.” The identity of \*SCAPE is as such, that dancers have claimed it as their own.

### 5.2.1 “I ♥ Music”

The negotiation of space within \*SCAPE, by dancers, takes place through music and sound. Music as a resource deserves greater research analysis within Singapore’s sociological field.

Music can be used to analyse sound structures and by extension, social structures (Feld 1984). At \*SCAPE, music is a shared resource consumed by the dancers. Paradoxically, dancers also capitalise on music to negotiate dance territories.

Applying Schafer’s proposal that “Noise Equals Power” (1977:74), I posit that in \*SCAPE, noise, sound and music equals power. I will use the term *auditory dominance* to refer to the methods dancers use to control aural territories and stake their claim on aural space.

Music serves as boundary formation between groups at \*SCAPE. Occasionally, music played by other groups becomes too loud, encroaching on the aural territory that another group had previously claimed. This is where *auditory dominance* occurs. One method is to use a superior set of speakers to play one’s music. Raising the volume of one’s music translates to having a larger dance space. Alternatively, some dancers who do not have access to good speakers adopt a “if you can’t beat them, join them” attitude. Another way is for dancers to listen to their MP3 players privately to block out all other noise. However, this is only common amongst street dancers who are going solo. It is rare to see a group of dancers



listening to their own MP3 players when there are speakers available. Thus, the soundscape is where dancers engage in auditory dominance to delineate boundaries between the different dance groups.

Music serves as social glue, joining members of street dance groups together. Music played through audible speakers is very important for bonding between dancers. It creates emotional fervour as dancers dance in a group. My research shows that music is an important resource to be examined. It serves as a connection<sup>19</sup> between the dancer and his dance, as well as between the dancer and his fellow dancers.

### 5.3 Bees to a Hive

\*SCAPE has grown increasingly popular amongst the local street dance scene, and international dancers have subsequently been drawn there. Although street dance styles did not originate in Singapore, there is the transmission of elements from the global street dance culture to the local Singaporean street dance culture and vice versa. \*SCAPE serves as a platform where a mutual exchange of music, fashion, ideas, knowledge and culture takes place.

Dancers from various parts of the world<sup>20</sup> are drawn to \*SCAPE because it is a home of vibrant street dance culture. With an international community of dancers mixing with the locals, local dancers have become more receptive to new ideas and opinions regarding dance. The analogy of the closed car workshop is apt in describing the open-mindedness of Singapore's street dance community. The subculture at \*SCAPE reflects the globalised nature of both the international dance scene, as well as the globalised nature of Singapore.

In my paper's section on findings, I argued that fashion, music, and talent flows from the local to the global. Fashion is one of the cultural exports of Singapore's street dance community. International dancers often view local dancewear with intrigue due to the unique designs and wide range of colours. They purchase products such as t-shirts, caps and sweatpants designed by local dancers. International dancers also have the opportunity to meet local DJs at \*SCAPE and purchase their music. Through such exchanges, local dancers transmit their own ideas, knowledge and practices back to the international dance community, hence completing the cycle of international dance culture circulation. International dancers serve as agents to transmit Singaporean culture to their own local communities by training

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<sup>19</sup> Refer to conversation with Jeffrey on pp. 24.

<sup>20</sup> As mentioned on pp. 24.

with and learning from Singaporean dancers at \*SCAPE. They also invite Singaporean dancers to teach abroad.

Drawing inspiration from Appadurai's idea of "scapes" (2006), \*SCAPE can be seen as a dancescape wherein bodies, ideas, knowledge and expertise flow, in constant transition. The street dance community in \*SCAPE does not simply absorb the practices and knowledge from international dancers but participates in the two-way flow from local to global.

## ◆6◆

### Conclusion

This paper pursues the understudied area of street dance in Singapore and historically documents the consumption of space at \*SCAPE as a youth-oriented space. It analyses the social order of the subculture and the activities that generate group solidarity. It also elaborates on the different aspects of subcultural capital, and conceptualises space, territory and boundaries through physical and aural dimensions. Lastly, it uncovers the cultural flows from the local to the global street dance scenes.

This paper has its limitations. The information presented is solely based on the groups that freestyle, but not on those that consume the space for choreography practice (largely because freestyle sessions are held consistently, whereas choreography practices are seasonal and conditioned upon dance competitions). Also, since \*SCAPE is a new building, the dynamics of the space and the people who consume it will change over time. Therefore I note that it is possible that street dancers frequenting \*SCAPE may be a passing trend.

However, this paper has its strengths. It recognises street dance as a cultural mainstay in Singapore and locates a prime base that was formed spontaneously by youth to explore aesthetics and express their creativity. This paper also covers a wider scope of street dance styles, where earlier studies by Campbell (2004), Mitchell (2003) and Mattar (2003) have been focused on Hip-hop. This is because street dance is an umbrella term for many dance styles that are rarely recognised by scholarly literature. This paper also seeks to address the lack of analysis on soundscapes as a part of social structure in local sociological literature.

While my paper has analysed key aspects of street dance culture, more aspects deserve further research. Areas that could be explored include street dance as a form of deviance, and the intersection between race, socio-economic class and street dance. For example, I observed that Malays and Chinese were more highly represented at \*SCAPE than were Indian dancers, which suggests a geographical clustering of street dancers according to race. Other potential areas are the influence of public perception on street dance community's

migration, and to what extent street dancers represent Singaporean youth culture. Lastly, it would be interesting to discover the negotiation of gender identities according to different dance styles.

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## Appendix A

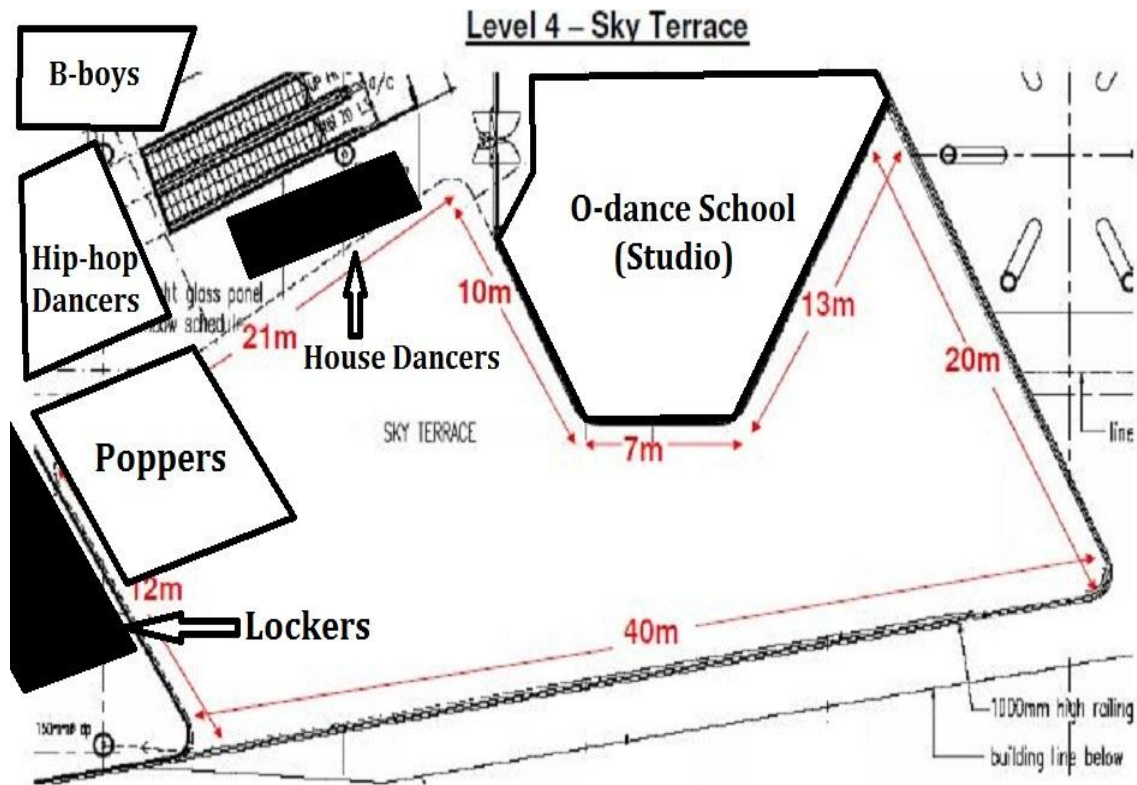


Image 1: A typical scenario of dance groups congregating at different areas on \*SCAPE level 4.





Image.2: Photograph of dancers on the Level 4 using the reflective glass.



Image.3: "I am the Music's B\*tch!" T-shirt designed by local dancer