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### **Creativity and Greatness**

#### **Young musicians and their (trans)local relations in Accra, Ghana, and beyond (2013 – 2018) (working title)**

#### **Abstract**

Africa's youth, a growing and therefore increasingly important social group, has mainly been studied as marginalized. Researchers recently discussed youths as being in "waithood" (Honwana 2012), and frequently as a risk for societies' stability. Less attention has been paid to young people's fruitful cultural participation, for instance in the field of expressive culture. In Ghana's fast growing and globally intertwined capital Accra, youths play a particularly important role in music production of various genres (Collins 2002, 2012). Against this background, I conduct an ethnographic study of young instrumental musicians in several genres ([gospel]-highlife, afrofunk, [afro-]pop, brass, neo-traditional), accompanying their activities of creating music in public and hidden spaces. I am interested in diverse ways young musicians contribute to cultural production, and more specifically in the relations they maintain in these creative processes (with colleagues, teachers, students, mentors, patrons, idols, and audience). Considering the omnipresent factor of accelerated global mobility, particular focus is put on translocal relations.

Methodologically, the thesis is based on several field researches, amounting to nine months in Accra over a period of four years in total. I combine extensive participant observation with multiple instruments of documentation, such as audio and video recordings, ethnographic and biographic interviews, photographs, and extracts from social media. This material is interpreted with respect to theories on youth and cultural expression, trying to link an actor-centered perspective with a macro-perspective on structural and contextual factors.

Shedding light on linkages between music production and coming of age, the thesis aims to contribute to research interests of different disciplines: To the debate on youth and participation, to (ethno-)musicological case studies of music transmission and production in understudied informal settings and, by capturing interplays of local and translocal aspects in micro-processes of cultural creativity, to broader cultural studies' interests.