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# RAP AND RACE

## It's Got a Nice Beat, But What About the Message?

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This article examines adolescents' attitudes toward rap music, specifically racial differences in Black and White adolescents' perceptions of rap. Rap critics have long touted the allegedly deleterious effects of rap, but few researchers have asked fans themselves how rap has affected them. This study uses a survey of 51 adolescents in a Midwestern city to examine racial differences in preferences for and interpretations of rap music. Survey results indicate that racial differences in the popularity of rap music are limited. However, further questions reveal that African American youth are more committed to rap music and are more likely to see rap music as life affirming. Although both groups appear to have favorable opinions of rap, their commitment to it and its significance in their lives varies by race.

**Keywords:** *hip-hop; rap music; race; Black/African American studies; White youth; music/media effects; Black youth*

### RACE AND RAP'S ROOTS

Rap music emerged in the mid-1970s in New York City. Since that period, it has grown from a New York phenomenon to a mainstay of popular music in the United States and around the world (McGregor, 1998). Most of the research on rap music explores its history and development as a social movement (Rose, 1991, 1994) and analyzes the content of lyrics (Henderson, 1996; Martinez, 1993, 1997; Pinn, 1999). Although these studies have contributed to our understanding of hip-hop, they are more focused on music artists and less on rap fans.<sup>1</sup> Thus, this article marks a departure

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from much of the research because it focuses mostly on rap's listeners and their interpretations of rap, specifically racial differences in adolescents' opinions of rap.

In its early years, rap's fans were primarily Black and Latino; however, the 1980s saw the popularity of rap music expand dramatically. Artists such as Run DMC, LL Cool J, Salt N' Pepa, and the Beastie Boys all gained popularity not only with urban African Americans and Latinos but also with White adolescents outside the inner city (Rose, 1994). By the late 1980s, rap was no longer viewed as a fad but as a distinctive musical form. In spite of the increasing numbers of White rap fans, many people still viewed rap consumers as African American.<sup>2</sup>

How these fans interpret and reinterpret rap music and how important rap music is in their lives have not been thoroughly explored. Furthermore, studies on the potential differences that racial/ethnic groups may have are often limited in much of the literature. Given the racialized political themes in rap (Martinez, 1997), it is possible that rap's White fans may see rap in a different light. They may also try to avoid listening to rap that involves a more explicit critique of racism.

During the 1980s, genres of rap became more noticeable, and many rappers turned to more overtly political themes.<sup>3</sup> They addressed gang violence, police brutality, and other politically charged issues, such as poverty and racism (Martinez, 1997). The more politically oriented rap became very popular in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Rose, 1991), a period that some refer to as the golden era of rap (Powell, 2000). The group Public Enemy was at the forefront of this movement with songs like "Fight the Power," "By the Time I Get to Arizona," and "911 is a Joke" (Drayton, Shocklee, & Sadler, 1990; Ridenhour, Shocklee, & Sadler, 1991; Shocklee, Sadler, & Ridenhour, 1989), all of which addressed the effects of White racism in the United States (Rose, 1991, 1994). Even "gansta rappers" injected political views into their music; for example, Ice Cube's (1991) "How to Survive in South Central" criticizes the Los Angeles Police Department's treatment of African Americans.<sup>4</sup>

Although more overtly political rap lost popularity in the mid-1990s, some critical discourse is still embedded in the lyrics of many recent rap songs. Nevertheless, rap's more critical voices have been marginalized in recent years. Some say that corporate control and marketing have deadened hip-hop's political edge (Powell, 2000). Rather than offering a critique of the postindustrial United States, which was more evident in early rap (Rose, 1994), rap's critical voice has faded into the background. Even though this may not be directly connected to rap's widening and "Whitening" audience, it is probably not coincidental.

From the start, the public viewed hip-hop culture and rap music through a racist lens. Rappers and rap fans were often portrayed as menacing Black adolescents, and rap music was vilified as violent and misogynistic (Feagin, Vera, & Batur, 2001; Rose, 1994). As Rose (1994) noted, rap music has both overt and covert political dimensions: "Rap's poetic voice is deeply political in content and spirit, but its hidden struggle—that of access to public space and community resources and the interpretation of Black expression—constitutes rap's hidden politics" (p. 145). She also pointed out the "struggle between rappers' counter-dominant speech and the exercise of institutional and discursive power against them." Rose (1994) highlighted the role of institutional racism leveled against rappers, who were given poor record contracts and forced into recording divisions that had smaller budgets. Moreover, these same acts found it nearly impossible to put together concert tours because insurance companies refused to insure their concerts. These companies argued that rap acts were a great risk because of their allegedly violent fans (Rose, 1994). Thus, the struggle for rap artists and fans to gain respect has taken place in the context of pervasive, institutionalized White racism.

Of particular interest are the criticisms leveled by White politicians, almost all of whom viewed rap as producing potential victimizers. Vice President Dan Quayle attacked rapper Tupac Shakur for promoting violence. President George H. W. Bush also voiced his antirap (anti-Black) sentiments when he criticized Ice-T and Body Count's song "Cop Killer" (Rose, 1994). (Ironically, neither

politician had heard these albums; in fact, Dan Quayle did not even pronounce Tupac's name correctly, and Bush failed to realize that Body Count was in fact a heavy metal group.) President Bill Clinton also leveled similar charges at rapper Sista Souljah, arguing that she advocated killing Whites (Feagin et al., 2001). Other well-known political figures, such as Bob Dole and Supreme Court nominee Robert Bork, have also added their own critiques of rap music (Ogbar, 1999). All these criticisms of rappers were made by politicians in a highly racialized (racist) context. Even though many of their criticisms may have relayed legitimate concerns about violence, their discussions also appealed to fears that these rappers would somehow incite violence among Black youth; moreover, they appealed to Whites' fears of Black youth.

Rap music has long been the target of criticism from the popular media, White politicians, and even some older African Americans. Often, antirap sentiments are thinly veiled anti-Black comments. Moreover, these antirap comments are often framed differently from those attacking White musicians, as Binder's (1993) analysis of media accounts indicates. Her study indicated that White heavy metal fans were viewed as potential victims of the music, whereas predominantly Black rap fans were viewed by media outlets as potential victimizers.

A small number of African American leaders have also criticized rap on similar grounds. C. Deloris Tucker and Reverend Calvin Butts have both argued that rap music promotes violence and misogyny and have publicly criticized rap music on these grounds (Ogbar, 1999; Rose, 1994). White media outlets, possibly in search of African Americans to make criticisms, have quickly picked up Black leaders' criticisms.

In the new millennium, critics from within the hip-hop community have argued that many contemporary artists have abandoned antiracism messages and focused instead on money and sexual exploits (Powell, 2000). They go on to say that corporate control and the desire to reach a "wider and Whiter" audience has led rap away from overtly antiracist sentiments. Although hip-hop artists have always been diverse and self-critical (Ogbar, 1999), criticism from within hip-hop seems to have increased in recent years.

Although many leaders have argued about the effects of rap on its fans, studies exploring effects of rap are few. This is partly because the small body of research on hip-hop focuses more on artists, lyrical content, and the history of hip-hop. Moreover, any social differences (gender, age, race, social class, etc.) in fans that could be correlated with influence are generally overlooked.

### RACE AND RAP'S AUDIENCE

Debates regarding the effects of rap music are missing one very critical voice—that of fans. While politicians and other community leaders argue over “how corrupting” rap can be and researchers look at the themes and history of the music, few people speak directly to rap fans asking them what they feel about rap and how important it is in their lives.

In spite of the criticism, the popularity of rap continues to grow. *Billboard's* top 100 albums of April 11, 1998, included 13 rap albums, whereas *Billboard's* top 100 albums of January 20, 2001, included 21 rap acts.<sup>5</sup> Given the tremendous increase in rap's popularity, it is evident that rap's White audience has grown dramatically. In the early 1990s, Public Enemy's Chuck D estimated that 60% of his audience was White (Rose, 1994). However, it is very difficult to make any precise estimates of the racial makeup of the rap audience because no specific information has been collected.

Even though many people have made claims about rap music and its effect on its listeners, research on music effects generally focuses on young Whites and their attitudes about rock and roll, punk, or heavy metal (Arnett, 1992, 1993, 1995; Fox, 1987; Gold, 1987; Rosenbaum & Prinsky, 1991; Roe, 1995; Snow, 1987; Stack, Gundlach, & Reeves, 1994). Jonathon Epstein's (1994) collection of essays, *Adolescents and Their Music: If It's Too Loud, You're Too Old*, does include 1 essay on rap music, but this is surrounded by 13 other essays all dealing with rock and heavy metal.

Many of the studies analyzing rap have been more qualitative and theoretical, focusing on the role of rap music in popular culture (Fenster, 1995; Martinez, 1997) and its use as a form of resistance

(Berry, 1994; Martinez, 1993; Pinn, 1996; Rose, 1991). However, these studies did not examine multiracial samples and did not ask specific questions focusing on the attitudes of rap's audience.

One study by Epstein, Pratto, and Skipper (1990) analyzed the relationship between behavior problems and preference for rap and heavy metal music. This study indicates that preference for heavy metal and rap was highly correlated with race: 96% of those who preferred heavy metal were White, and 98% of those who preferred rap were Black. In addition, they found that preference for both forms of music was not associated with behavior problems.

Three studies have focused on young people's opinions of rap. One study written by Berry (1994) concluded that rap helps low income African American youth develop empowering beliefs that help them connect with their culture and develop positive identities. However, the weakness of this study is that it does not give a detailed analysis of students' responses or the questions students were asked, so it is difficult to gain a thorough understanding of the students' attitudes. Moreover, the sample only included low-income African Americans in an Upward Bound program.

The second study from *American Demographics* magazine reported on a survey conducted by Teenage Research Unlimited (Spiegler, 1996). This study revealed that 58% of those younger than 18 years and 59% of those 18 to 20 years *liked* or *strongly liked* rap. This study also found that several fashions associated with hip-hop were considered "in" by 12- to 19-year-olds. Seventy-eight percent of adolescents said that baggy clothes were in, 76% said pro sports apparel was in, and 69% said hooded sweatshirts were in. The author argued that rap has expanded the market for White designers such as Tommy Hilfiger and DKNY; moreover, style of dress has become a way for Whites to connect with Blacks without actually having any face-to-face contact. Although this indicates that there are racial differences, those differences were not the focus of the survey.

Finally, the most detailed study of rap's effect on adolescents was conducted by Kuwahara (1992). This study found that 13.3% of Black college students listened to rap all the time, and 29.7% listened to rap often. Kuwahara also found that Black men had a stron-

ger preference for rap than Black women. The analysis of White college students revealed that 51.6% of White men and 68.9% of White women *seldom* or *never* listened to rap. When the two groups were compared, White students demonstrated less knowledge of rap acts regardless of their preference for rap music. However, Whites and Blacks did not differ much in their reasons for listening to rap. Both groups preferred the beat most and the message second. Drawing on qualitative responses from Black students, Kuwahara argued that rap music and the styles of dance associated with it serve as forms of resistance to the dominant culture. However, findings from this study may be dated. Rap's popularity has increased significantly since 1992, and the White audience for rap has increased (*The Source*, 1998).

Because of the rapid change in rap's popularity, it is necessary to reevaluate youth's attitudes toward rap. More literature on rap is also needed because the current writings are few and many theoretical claims have not been substantiated through empirical work.

## METHOD AND HYPOTHESES

To explore the relationship between racial identity and preference for rap music, I conducted surveys in a small Midwestern city. I approached teenagers on a Saturday afternoon in a local mall and asked them to fill out a brief survey about the music they listened to. In creating this survey, I developed four major hypotheses related to racial differences in adolescents' reactions to and interpretations of rap music.

First, I predicted that Black adolescents would have stronger preferences for rap music than White adolescents. Given the high percentage of African American rappers and rap's history of articulating concerns of Black youth, I expected that young African Americans would like rap music more than Whites. Moreover, at least two prior studies found this (Epstein et al., 1990; Kuwahara, 1992).

For the second hypothesis, I expected that Black respondents would be more likely to agree with the statements, "Rap is a truthful



reflection of society,” “I find myself wearing clothes similar to rappers,” and “I find myself using words or phrases similar to rappers.” If Kuwahara’s 1992 study is still accurate and Black students like rap music more than their White counterparts, then I expect that Black adolescents will incorporate rap music and rap acts into their everyday life to a greater extent than White adolescents.

Next, I hypothesized that Black adolescents would listen to a wider variety of rap acts. In spite of rap’s increasing popularity with Whites, I expected that Black adolescents will still be more knowledgeable about rap acts (Kuwahara, 1992).

Finally, I expected that Whites (who are rap fans) would be most likely to say that rap has affected their opinions about racism. If rap does act as an interracial socializer, then it may very well be that White fans learn about the effects of racism and discrimination through rap music. White adolescents may also be more affected because African American adolescents are more likely to have many more sources, such as parents, religious leaders, or peers, through whom they learn about racism. On the other hand, White adolescents are probably less likely to hear about racism through peers and family members; therefore, they may be most affected by rap. Although the study was generally guided by hypotheses, I also put an open-ended question at the end of the survey, asking rap fans why they listened to rap, which was designed to give the respondents an opportunity to express their feelings outside of the narrow categories that I previously provided.

## FINDINGS

The response rate was very high: Only 3 adolescents refused to participate in the study. There were a total of 51 respondents—21 Blacks, 17 Whites, 7 Latinos, and 6 who marked other categories. Nineteen of the respondents were girls and 32 were boys, and the mean age of respondents was 16 years old. The questionnaire included 13 questions. Participants were asked their age, gender, and race as basic demographic questions. Then they were asked how much they liked rap on a scale ranging from 10 (*It’s my favor-*

ite music) to 1 (*I don't like it at all*). Participants were also asked how many hours they listened to rap and which three rap artists they listen to most. The next 4 questions asked how rap had influenced them, and the final, open-ended question asked those who listened to rap why they listened.

Rap music appeared to be very popular within the sample. Overall, students rated rap 7.98 on the 10-point scale. The mean rating was 8.57 for Blacks, 7.18 for Whites, and 8.29 for Latinos.<sup>6</sup> However, the difference between racial groups was not statistically significant.<sup>7</sup> What was most surprising was that 22 of the respondents gave rap a 10, saying that it was their favorite music. Within this group, racial differences were more evident: 13 of these respondents were Black, 3 were Latino, 4 were White, and 2 marked multiple racial categories or no category.<sup>8</sup> This does provide some evidence that rap is more popular with African Americans; however, the difference did not appear to be significant in this sample.

Overall, respondents registered slight agreement with the statement, "Rap is a truthful reflection of society." Moreover, there were not strong racial differences. African Americans had a mean of 3.3, and Whites had a mean 3.1 (on a 5-point scale where 5 represented *strongly agree*). So the hypothesis that Blacks would be more likely to agree with this statement was not confirmed. However, another finding did come out of this particular question. Those who were rap fans were much more likely to agree that rap is a truthful reflection of society.<sup>9</sup>

The hypotheses that African Americans were more likely to agree with the statements, "I find myself wearing clothes similar to rappers" and "I find myself using words or phrases similar to rappers" were supported. Black adolescents were much more likely to report wearing clothes similar to rappers, and they were somewhat more likely to say that they used words similar to rappers. Only 1 White respondent agreed that he wore clothes similar to rappers; however, 8 Whites reported that they used words or phrases similar to rappers.

White fans were more likely to say that rap had affected their opinion about racism than Black fans. However, what was even more interesting was that the overall agreement for Whites, regard-

less of whether they were fans, was higher than that of African Americans. Even though there were racial differences in agreement with this statement, overall the respondents moderately disagreed; they did not believe rap has had much of an effect on their opinions about racism.

The two open-ended questions in the survey provided the most interesting answers. They were used to address the third hypothesis that Black adolescents would be more knowledgeable about rap. I asked the respondents to name their three favorite rap acts, and provided them with three blanks. African Americans did name a wider variety of rap acts; they named a total of 27 different acts, and only 3 answers were left blank. In contrast, White adolescents named only 15 different acts, and left 14 blanks. Racial differences in whom adolescents named as their favorite rap acts were small.<sup>10</sup>

Although I formulated no hypotheses about racial differences in reasons for listening to rap music, some differences were evident. Whites, particularly young women, were much more likely to say that they listened to rap because it had a "nice beat." Black adolescents gave more diverse responses, and the most common response was variations of "I like it." However, a significant number of African American adolescents gave responses that indicated that rap was an affirmation of their experiences. The following five responses were indicative of these responses:

Teach me things or tell me things about life. (Black male, 17)

Because it hits home, when I listen to it it's something I can relate to. (Black male, 18)

Because it tells the truth about how us Black people live being raised in the ghetto. (Black female, 15)

Because I like the way it sounds and some rapper just tell the truth and the way things really are. (Black female, 17)

Mostly because of the way they talk and state about people's real life. (Black female, 13)

Only one White respondent had a similar response:

Because some of the things the rappers rap about is the same type of shit that happens in everyday life to somebody [*sic*] from the hood.  
(White male, 18)

Even the response by this 18-year-old White male is written in third person, indicating some distance between this young man and “somebody [*sic*] from the hood.”

These statements indicate that there are some racial differences in why African Americans and Whites listen to rap and how knowledgeable they are about rap. Unfortunately, the methodology limited the ability to probe on many of these questions, which could have provided more detailed answers and revealed more specific racial differences.

Overall, this survey indicates that the racial gap in adolescents’ desirability ratings for rap is closing. Nevertheless, racial differences in adolescents’ perceptions of rap still exist. However, this survey is primarily exploratory. It does not include a random sample and does not allow us to further explore how Whites and Blacks are affected by and committed to rap.<sup>11</sup>

### RAP’S RACIAL IMPLICATIONS

The most striking finding from this study is that the racial gap in preference for rap music is closing. Unlike the previous research (Epstein et al., 1990), this study shows that preference for rap was not significantly different for Blacks and Whites; however, this may be misleading. Black adolescents named more rap artists and were more likely to say that they wore clothes like rappers and used words or phrases similar to rappers. Moreover, African Americans were more likely to say that they listened to rap because it was truthful and taught them about life. Although White adolescents say they like rap, many of the White respondents in this survey had difficulty naming three rap artists, which indicated that they did not have a high level of commitment to the music. Rap may only be a fad and a phase, as indicated by this statement given when a respondent was asked why he listened to rap:

I used to but now I don't anymore. (White male, 16)

The responses to the open-ended questions on the survey support the idea that African Americans have higher commitment to rap. The wider variety of rap acts Black adolescents listed provides evidence that they have a broader knowledge of rap. Some of the White respondents' answers to the question, "Why do you listen to rap?" indicated that Whites were listening to rap because it has a "good beat," so the message of the music was not as important as the sound. This leads me to believe that although Black and White adolescents are saying that they like rap, they may be getting two different messages from the same music. Many young African Americans appear to be looking at rap for its messages about life and its aesthetically pleasing sound, yet Whites seem to be listening almost exclusively because of the aesthetically pleasing sound. In many ways, these findings support Berry's (1994) and Martinez's (1997) arguments that rap is a form of resistance. Although young African American rap fans are not arguing that rap leads them into social protest, they seem to be indicating that it offers a counter-dominant message that they use as an affirmation of their experiences.

Not only are rap music and hip-hop culture a potential form of resistance, they may also have broad-reaching implications for identity development and maintenance. Although many may see music as a passing phase, it is often a source of information about one's group (or other groups), and it can also be a (re)affirmation of one's identity. This could be particularly true for young African Americans, who are less likely to have their experiences reflected in the dominant culture.

Therefore, future research needs to examine not just how much adolescents report they like to rap but their knowledge and commitment to the music. Furthermore, the extent to which Black and White adolescents are getting different messages from the same rap songs must be clarified.

Because so many young Whites listen to rap, future research should also focus on rap as an interracial socializer. Whites in this study (who were fans) indicated that rap had affected their opinions

about racism. The survey did not measure how rap had affected their opinions of racism or how it has affected their opinions of African Americans more generally. However, rap as an interracial socializer may be detrimental for many reasons. First, many Whites who listen to rap may be motivated by curiosity. Rap may allow White adolescents to satisfy their curiosities without ever having face-to-face contact or interpersonal relationships with any African Americans, so rap can be a way for Whites to vicariously learn about African Americans. They may be able to satisfy curiosities about African Americans and even mimic what they may see as African American life without having an understanding or appreciation of African American experiences. Second, rap music does not reflect the diversity of African Americans. Rap often operates from the perspectives of young, urban, Black men. White adolescents may get a picture of African American life that is not inclusive of those who are older, from rural areas, or female (or other important social characteristics). The third reason this could be detrimental is because it may perpetuate prejudices, particularly the view that African Americans are materialistic and hedonistic, which could inadvertently promote stereotypes more than it dismantles them. Although rappers themselves are not fully accountable for how their music is interpreted, many fans may not be accessing alternative sources of information about African Americans. In addition, many rap songs are fictional and do not even represent the artists' true beliefs or those beliefs of African Americans in general. Rap, like any other cultural product, is also subjected to corporate control, which could potentially limit antiracist messages because those messages may not be as economically profitable.

I am not making the case that rap sends only negative messages to White adolescents. Many artists do have images that are less stereotypical (Ogbar, 1999); however, those voices are often less commercially successful. Rap would probably be best when combined with other forms of interracial socialization, particularly in a society that has been built on racism, sexism, and capitalism. Daily interactions or interactions that are not from media could be beneficial.

One of the more interesting findings in this study is the overall agreement with the statement that rap is a truthful reflection of society.<sup>12</sup> Future research has many questions to answer in this respect. If adolescents agree that rap is a truthful reflection of society, do they value rappers' opinions about political and social issues? Moreover, it is important to understand what aspects of rap adolescents think are truthful. Do young people believe what rappers say about topics such as gender, sexuality, racism, police brutality, wealth, and poverty? This may be very difficult to ascertain, given the ambivalence and the great diversity found within rap. This also has practical applications for political organizers who want to mobilize the hip-hop generation.

Rap music research has a very promising future. There is little work in this field, so virtually any aspect of rap music is open to research. Moreover, rap music and hip-hop culture are the products of the first generation to be raised in the postindustrial era (Rose, 1994). Research on racial formations and their effects on the post-baby-boomer generations need to be pursued further given the unique technological and social changes experienced by the hip-hop generation.<sup>13</sup>

Although this article focuses primarily on racial differences, future studies can focus on several other areas. Factors such as gender, class, age, and urbanicity affect the production and consumption of rap and preferences for rap. The area of racial differences also needs to be explored further. Many of the responses to this survey need elaboration. Precisely why and how there are racial differences in consumption of rap can be identified through in-depth interviews. In addition, rap's effects on Latinos also need to be analyzed. Latino rappers, such as Mellow Man Ace, Kid Frost, Fat Joe, Cuban Link, and Cypress Hill (who have Black and Hispanic members), have made strong contributions to hip-hop, and much research, including this, does not explore Latino opinions. The role of rap as a form of interracial socialization should also be analyzed because such a large number of White adolescents are listening to rap, even those who are not fans cannot help being exposed to at least some rap. Adolescents' interpretations of rap songs must also

be examined so researchers can better understand what they are listening to and why they think it is important or unimportant. Finally, more research must be done because rap is constantly changing.

Even though rap music is a relatively new phenomenon, it continues to expand. The current market for rap and hip-hop products is a lucrative business. What started out in the Bronx has spread nationwide. Although rap music is reaching a multiracial audience, this research indicates that Black and White adolescents are influenced by rap in different ways. These differences need to be further examined and interpreted.

## NOTES

1. It is important here to explain the difference between the term *rap* and *hip-hop*. In the movie *Rhyme and Reason* (Block, Spiner, & Sollinger, 1997), rapper KRS-One defines hip-hop as the cultural phenomenon that appeared in the mid- to late 1970s. Hip-hop culture is primarily organized around the experiences of urban, minority youth, and the primary expressions of hip-hop culture include rapping, break dancing, and graffiti art (Rose, 1994). Some also include DJing as the fourth pillar of hip-hop. So, rap music is a form of expression used by people within the hip-hop community or culture.

2. It is interesting to note that the Puerto Rican members of the early hip-hop culture were ignored and forgotten by the popular media and many later rap fans.

3. It is very difficult to make clear distinctions between the genres of rap. Some divide rap into East Coast and West Coast. East Coast rap generally comes from New York, and West Coast rap comes from Los Angeles and its surrounding cities. Dividing rap by coast has some merit because most rappers come from these cities, but it fails to address differences in rap beyond geographic subcultures. Moreover, the division also ignores the recent ascendance of rappers from the South. Others have used the terms *old school* and *new school*—old school rap would be anything before the late 1980s, and new school anything after that point. Rap has also been classified as gansta rap, political rap, dance rap, fast rap (*The Source*, 1998), and gospel rap. We would also argue that materialistic rap and bravado rap should also be added to the list of rap genres.

4. Ice Cube and other rappers have long been critical of the Los Angeles Police Department, which seems quite appropriate given the recent revelations about police brutality and misconduct in that department.

5. Artists such as Snoop Doggy Dogg, Tupac, Notorious B.I.G., Eminem, and others have produced multiplatinum records.

6. Because there were only 7 Latinos in the study, it is difficult to make any accurate generalizations.

7. All tests of statistical significance were conducted using chi-square. Results are significant if they have a  $p$  value of .05 or less.



8. Only 2 of the Black respondents giving rap a 10 were Black young women. In fact, only 3 of the 22 were females.

9. Those who rated rap 6 or higher were considered to be fans.

10. Black adolescents chose Master P as their favorite rap act followed by Tupac, Puff Daddy, Notorious B.I.G., and Ice Cube. The most popular rap artists, according to White adolescents, were Master P followed by Mase, Tupac, Puff Daddy, and Bone Thugs In Harmony.

11. Commitment in this study is operationalized as: the ability to name rap artists, wearing clothes similar to rappers, using words or phrases similar to rappers, belief that rap is a truthful reflection of society, and listening to rap because it is truthful or teaches about life.

12. This question was included in the survey because it is one main argument used to justify explicit and violent lyrics in rap.

13. I intentionally avoid using the term *Generation X*; we find this term to be racially loaded. I argue that this term has been used almost exclusively to refer to young, middle-class, White men and their experiences. Personally, I prefer the *hip-hop generation*. Although many may think this is also racially loaded, hip-hop has always been a multiracial movement, which makes the term more inclusive.

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