Published: Nzinga, K.L.K., & Medin, D.L. (2018). The Moral Priorities of Rap Listeners. Journal of Cognition and Culture, 312-342.
http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/content/journals/10.1163/15685373-12340033

The Moral Priorities of Rap Listeners

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A cross-cultural approach to moral psychology starts from researchers withholding judgments about universal right and wrong and instead exploring community members' values and what they subjectively perceive to be moral or immoral in their local context. This study seeks to identify the moral concerns that are most relevant to listeners of hip-hop music. We use validated psychological surveys including the Moral Foundations Questionnaire (Graham, Haidt, & Nosek 2009) to assess which moral concerns are most central to hip-hop listeners. Results show that hip-hop listeners prioritize concerns of justice and authenticity more than non-listeners and deprioritize concerns about respecting authority. These results show that the concept of the "good person" within the hip-hop subculture is fundamentally a person that is oriented towards social justice, rebellion against the status quo, and a deep devotion to *keeping it real*. Results are followed by a discussion of the role that youth subcultures have in socializing young people to prioritize certain virtues over others as they develop their moral identity.

1. Introduction

Many American rappers including Kendrick Lamar (2010), Snoop Dogg (2015), and Busta Rhymes (2006) have delivered the following catch phrase in their lyrics: "You can take me out the hood, but you can't take the hood out of me." They proclaim that there are certain aspects of the "hood" lifestyle and value system that, once they are part of you, direct how you perceive the world and behave in it.

In some ways, this proverb is also a characterization of rap itself, which has migrated outside of the American inner city, been disseminated worldwide, but it still often acts like it's from the hood. In the late 1970s a group of Black and Latinx youth from the South Bronx started an arts movement to express their perspective and positionality as ghetto poets (Rose 1994, Chang 2005). Today rap has expanded well beyond its South Bronx origins, diffusing into American suburbs and rural areas, as well as overseas. It is a

dominant music genre and cultural reference point for young people of various races, ethnicities, religions, and creeds. A Kaiser study (2005) suggested that 65% of American children listen to hip-hop music on any given day. Hip-hop is a product of its environment but it has also become an environment in itself. There is a hip-hop scene in every major city and most minor cities in countries as diverse as Finland (Westinen 2014) and Brazil (Pardue 2004).

Being a part of the hip-hop scene (i.e., going to rap shows, frequenting hip-hop themed websites, discussing music with friends) means engaging with a community of people that have certain styles of being in the world and styles of self-presentation. Young people who are part of these cultural scenes are influenced by the hip-hop cultural innovators that preceded them and learn to present themselves in similar ways, wearing edgy clothing styles, embodying the body language and swagger of rappers, and adopting their lingo. Additionally, this scene contains common values about what is cool or "lit," what is authentic or "real," what is socially conscious or "woke," and what is wrong or "shady." These ways of being in the world are displayed and encouraged in the lyrics of the music and in the various spaces where rap culture lives as the authentic way to be.

Now that rap music and rap scenes have propagated across the globe a student of popular culture might ask: Which parts of hip-hop culture have had lasting effects on how its practitioners think and act? Some have referred to the cultural dispersal of hip-hop as "The Tanning of America," (Stoute 2011) citing the ways that rap has spread black culture across ethnic boundaries. The present study explores a particular subset of values

that have been disseminated through hip-hop media and become a part of the everyday ethics of young people across the globe.

The community of study in this research includes young college students in Chicago that spend a great deal of time listening to rap lyrics, scouring digital spaces for songs that appeal to their refined tastes, attending events where other rap listeners convene and rap music is played, and sharing/discussing rap music with peers. The themes and vernacular from rap music have become a part of their everyday speech. Some write and perform rap lyrics themselves, using the art form as a mode of artistic expression. Rap music acts as a significant component of the sociocultural context in which these adolescents are developing an understanding of their moral obligations. In particular, this study explores how rap listeners appropriate from lyrics ways of conceptualizing notions of social justice, authenticity, and rebellion.

In the following sections, we review the psychology literature in which researchers have investigated rap's influence on moral attitudes and behavior. We then respond to that literature and explain the ways that studies of rap and morality could benefit from a sociocultural perspective, one that is attentive to the ways in which hip-hop has the characteristics of a culture, and socializes its listeners to prioritize certain values. Next, we illuminate three key values that researchers of rap culture have identified as central to the genre (social justice, rebellion, and authenticity). Finally, we present data from an experiment. In this experiment, we test the hypothesis that the key values that are prominent in hip-hop media become lasting and meaningful values that orient the ethical perspectives of rap listeners.

2. Psychologists Search for A Link Between Hip-Hop and Moral Deficiency

Since its beginnings, the role that hip-hop plays in the moral lives of children has been contested. After the rise of rap music during the early 1980s there were lively debates in the popular media about the harmful effects of the genre. Organizations like the Parents Music Resource Center claimed that rap music and other offensive genres (i.e., heavy metal) had a detrimental impact on the moods, attitudes, and behaviors of young people, influencing them to engage in high-risk or deviant activities such as illegal drug use, gang violence, and premarital sex (Ballard & Coates 1995).

Miller (2013) uses the term "moral panic" to describe the response of several mainstream institutions and public figures to the threat of rap music. She suggests that several factors (including racism and classism) led to a paranoid perception that the messages in rap music were degrading the moral fiber of young people. A review of psychological studies of hip-hop and morality during the 1990s suggests that researchers may have been influenced by this moral panic as well. Out of the dozens of psychological studies of hip-hop music, the majority explored connections between rap music and "moral deviance"; also referred to as socially disapproved behavior (Took & Weiss 1994), antisocial behavior (Selfhout et al. 2008), maladjusted behavior, externalizing problem behavior (Selfhout et al. 2008), psychosocial turmoil (Took & Weiss 1994), and even health risk behaviors (Wingood et al. 2003).

Although an initial study by Took & Weiss (1994) seemed to invalidate any causal link between rap listening and problem behavior, it was followed by numerous studies by other researchers finding correlations between rap listening and deviant behavior,

including violent or aggressive attitudes/behaviors (Miranda & Claes 2004, Chen et al., 2006, Johnson et al., 1995a, Tanner et al., 2009, Selfhout et al., 2008), decreased academic aspirations/engagement (Johnson et al., 1995b), drug use (Miranda & Claes 2004, Chen et al., 2006), theft (Miranda & Claes 2004, Tanner et al., 2009), gang membership (Miranda & Claes 2004), risky sexual activity (Took & Weiss 1994) and violence against women (Barongan & Hall 1995, Johnson et al., 1995b). These conclusions seemed to fall in line with claims made by the public figures and institutions that crusaded against rap: that exposure to hip-hop lyrics leads to moral deviance.

Many of these studies employed a similar design. A particular community of adolescents was selected as the study population. Samples usually consisted of the students at a single high school, a single community college, or a collection of high schools in the same municipality. Then the population was segmented into hip-hop listeners and non-listeners. Hip-hop listeners were identified through self-report surveys that asked them whether they liked hip-hop music, whether they listened to it often, or whether they identified with the rap music scene. Once the hip-hop listeners had been segmented from the non-listeners, researchers analyzed group differences in the incidence of various morally deviant attitudes and behaviors. Although these studies produced correlational evidence for negative effects of rap, they did not factor in confounding variables that may increase the tendency to listen to rap music and to engage in problem behavior (i.e., coming from economically disadvantaged, disaffected communities).

There were significant nuances to these studies that undermine a simple causal

relationship between rap listening and deviant behavior. First, the correlations between rap listening and moral deviance depended a great deal on the backgrounds (racial, socioeconomic, and otherwise) of the students listening. The effects were different and sometimes opposite on black kids than they were on white kids, with one study for example showing that correlations between rap listening and criminal behavior only held for white adolescents (Tanner et al., 2009). Second, there were notable differences in the influence of rap depending on specific subgenres. For example, the relationship between rap and moral deviance seemed to disappear if students were listening to more politically conscious genres as opposed to gangsta rap (Miranda & Claes 2004). Studies investigating rap's influence tended to overlook the wide variety of content, tone, and ideology within rap music. Finally, it is worth remembering that any causal relationship may involve values and behaviors affecting listening and not necessarily the reverse.

Overall, much of the prior work on hip-hop and morality has embodied a deficit approach that prejudged hip-hop lyrics and the associated hip-hop culture. A cross-cultural approach to moral psychology should withhold such assumptions and consider the possibility that the differences in values and behavior between rap listeners and non-listeners could in fact represent cultural differences in the priorities of values. In this study, we take a sociocultural perspective, treating hip-hop as a set of lifeways and cultural adaptations developed by youth of color to adapt to urban environments. Participating in these lifeways includes the development of sophisticated moral sense-making strategies where certain ethics are encouraged and certain values are prioritized over others. Our goal is to identify the moral concerns that are most relevant to listeners

of hip-hop music. Based on analyses of hip-hop culture by artists, art critics, and scholars (Rose 1994, Dyson 1996, Chang 2007) we hypothesize that heavy listeners of rap music will prioritize three different moral concerns as central to their moral identity: 1.) the moral imperative of social justice, 2.) rebellion against authority 3.) and authenticity. We predict that rap listeners, through their involvement in hip-hop culture, will tend to prioritize these values more than their non-listening peers.

To measure these values in a sample of hip-hop listeners, we use the Moral Foundations Questionnaire, a validated self-report measure that assesses to what extent various moral concerns are important to the respondent (care/harm, fairness/unfairness, loyalty/disloyalty, submission/subversion, or purity/impurity). Moral foundations theory (MFT) is a good starting point for thinking about the cultural models of morality present in rap culture, but we are alert to identify additional dimensions that might be relevant. For example, authenticity is not represented in moral foundations theory (Haidt 2009), but has been proposed as a key value of hip-hop culture (McLeod 1999), and therefore we include measures of it.

3. Hip-Hop as Culture: A Product of Its Environment

"Rap is a vernacular art, which is to say that it is born out of the creative combination of the inherited and the invented, the borrowed and the made." (Bradley 2009)

This study follows notable members of the rap community, as well as academic scholars of rap in defining hip-hop as a culture (Toop 1984, Tate 1992, Rose 1994, Neal 1999, Alim 2006, KRS-ONE 2009) in the sense of culture as collective adaptations to environmental conditions (Boyd & Richerson 2005, Saxe 2005, Lee, Spencer & Harpalani 2003). On this view, in order to understand hip-hop's aesthetic sensibilities, its common practices, and its cultural values it is necessary to understand the environment that hip-hop evolved in.

The hip-hop genre was founded in the late 1970s among Black and Latinx youth artists residing in the low-income neighborhood of the South Bronx (Rose 1994, Chang 2005). At this time, the South Bronx was one of the most economically disadvantaged neighborhoods in the United States. From this community that was simultaneously both economically under-resourced and culturally affluent, a cohort of youth assembled to create an artistic movement that included graffiti, breakdancing, DJing and lastly, the most foregrounded element of hip-hop – rap music. Surrounded by poverty, youth created complex music from limited materials. Early rap consisted of a poet delivering a vocal performance in conjunction with instrumental breakbeats played by a DJ or with beats made using the mouth (beat-boxing). As the genre came to life, one of the emerging conventions was for rappers (or emcees) to capture vividly and viscerally the realities of neighborhood life. Adjectives like *raw*, *hard,* and *dope* became descriptive of a common aesthetic objective, where emcees sought to create edgy (and sometimes hyperreal) depictions of life in the concrete jungle.

In the 1980s, rap spread to communities similar to the Bronx, including other large

American metropolises and predominantly African American communities. In other words, hip-hop spread throughout *the hood*. Forman (2002) described the hood as a "geocultural construct" or a cultural understanding of space. The term *hood* is used ubiquitously in rap lyrics (and Black vernacular more widely) to describe low-income neighborhoods where many black and brown folks live across the country (and globe). When a person claims to be "from" the hood, not only are they referring to their specific neighborhood, they are claiming to be a product of an environment that extends beyond their own local manifestation of it. Although *the hood* does not share contiguous borders, it is imagined as a collective terrain, spanning from Watts to Bankhead to Detroit. Rappers Big K.R.I.T. and Mick Jenkins both refer to themselves as from "the hood" even though one is from Meridian Mississippi and the other from the South Side of Chicago.

Rap music spread so rapidly throughout the hood in part because it articulated the shared experiences and challenges of hood life during the Reagan era, including dilapidated public housing, defunded schools, neighborhood violence, police brutality and the consequences of drug trade and addiction.

Again, we argue that the ethical concepts of hip-hop culture must be understood as adaptations to the major moral challenges that define social life in that community. What are the major hurdles that the community faces when it comes to maintaining their social obligations to one another? For folks living in the hood in the 1970s those challenges included maintaining community solidarity in the face of discrimination. Young people faced decisions of whether or not to engage in the narcotics trade that infiltrated the community. Ethical concepts formed to create solutions to these various

challenges, and the lyrics of the most prominent form of poetry was a platform for cultural creators to record and design these concepts, such as an ethos of "making something out of nothing" and strong ethnic solidarity.

These adaptations to hood life were not built from scratch. Cultural practices and concepts evolve from previous cultural forms through processes of sociogenesis (Saxe 2005) and they do so within previously established social networks of human interaction. Hip-hop is cultural because it appropriated cultural forms of rhetoric and ritual that were already present in Black communities and extended them (Kopano 2002). The original hip-hop poets were inspired by a number of cultural traditions that preceded them, for example, the tradition of African American musical expression that traces back to Negro Spirituals, Gospel, the Blues, Jazz, Rock & Roll, and R&B.

One consistent cultural element in Black music and rhetoric has been pursuing freedom from oppression. The grammar, syntax, vocabulary, and narratives of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) were crafted in a context in which African American people had consistent struggles like securing basic safety in the oppressive social systems of slavery and Jim Crow, finding innovative ways to resist this oppression, coming up with ways to dialogue with one another in coded language without detection (Smitherman 2006). This historical context was the crucible for the development of African American oral traditions and moral vernaculars.

Rappers grew up in hood spaces where this wisdom was encoded in the everyday speech of their family and community members, as they told stories and shared common proverbs. Rappers drew on this wisdom when they constructed their poetry. For

example, in Common's (1994) song "Book of Life" you can see him appropriating linguistic and literary contributions of African American wordsmiths from previous generations:

I funnel through the tunnel, disgruntled
Tryin' to find me some light
In the rim of darkness, I too sing
I may not be the darkest, brother
But I was always told to act my age, not my color
Not knowin' that my color, was out of the original
So now I sing the new Negro spiritual

Within this verse, Common makes reference to the famous Langston Hughes poem (1926) that begins "I, too, sing America. I am the darker brother." He quotes a common folk proverb in Black communities, "act your age, not your color" a saying that commands a person to act in a way that is mature, as opposed to behaving in ways consistent with stereotypes of Black people. He also declares that his poetry is in the tradition of the Negro spiritual, a set of religious songs sung by enslaved Africans, articulating their spiritual justifications for freedom. In this one stanza, Common recalls three ideas that were generated by previous generations of Black people, and uses those ideas as conceptual resources informing how he should act in the world.

In this study, we suggest that heavy rap listeners share certain concepts (narratives, discourses, styles, and attitudes) that were born from hood circumstances. This shared knowledge becomes a sociocultural lens for seeing the world. The idea that this hip-hop

culture is *learned* is critical to this investigation. Before rap listeners can "be" cool or woke, they have to *learn* what cool and woke mean, and how to enact them. Therefore, we locate hip-hop culture as the shared knowledge and discourses that members of the community have appropriated from their cultural surroundings.

By highlighting the shared knowledge between rap listeners, we do not wish to erase the heterogeneity within the culture. There are hip-hop scenes in certain geographic regions that differ in their understandings and practice from those in another region. Rap culture can be further segmented into subgenres with different norms, and hip-hop practitioners (rappers, DJs, producers, and promoters) often have internal debates over the values that define the culture. All the while, because these diverse individuals are connected through a network of interconnected practices, environments, and media, there are patterns of thought that distinguish hip-hop culture.

Members of rap culture obtain their shared knowledge from many places (i.e., conversations with their peers or observing how rap artists are covered in the media), but one of the foremost sources is the rap lyrics themselves. Being a participant in hip-hop culture means that you listen to rap lyrics, comprehend them, memorize them, and consequently learn to be fluent in rap vernacular. Rap, the most prominent and widespread manifestation of the hip-hop aesthetic form, is a form of spoken word poetry that is delivered in synch with drum-heavy backing beats. The early originators of the genre formed a school of poetry that innovated cadences, vernaculars, vocabulary, recurring metaphors, and other stylistic innovations that structured the way that discourse was transmitted within the genre. In a sense, these poets have created a "social

language" (Bakhtin 1981), a discourse that was unique to their social strata. The values and ways of being are encoded in these lyrics and rap listeners can learn the codes by listening to them when they are articulated, interpreting those lyrics, and appropriating the structure and vocabulary of the social language. This study is thus interested in exploring how individuals that engage with the social language of hip-hop heavily, over long periods of time, gain conceptual ways of differentiating right from wrong.

3.1 Key Values of Hip-Hop Culture

Many researchers of rap adopting a cultural perspective have tried to delineate the key values and ethics of hip-hop culture through discourse analysis of lyrics (McLeod 1999), ethnographic observations of rap listeners (Newman 2005), and historical analyses of black musical/discursive forms (Toop 1984, Rose 1994). These studies differ from the psychology studies mentioned earlier both in the methods employed and findings. Hip-hop scholars from anthropology, ethnomusicology, and cultural studies have brought a particular sociocultural lens to their work, either by being experts in African American history, by employing an emic approach to get the insider's perspective, or by being hip-hop listeners themselves. Using these theoretical approaches, sociocultural researchers of rap have pointed out various virtues embedded within hip-hop culture, three of which we explore in this paper: 1.) social justice 2.) rebellion and 3.) authenticity.

Sociocultural researchers of rap have pointed to discourses of **social justice** where emcees question injustices in their society (Dyson 1996). In many instances, hip-hop appropriates the narratives of the Civil Rights/Black Power movements and Black

Americans' centuries-long struggle for racial justice. Many rap songs are particularly perceptive of the unjust ways in which society is organized, seeing the poverty of the hood environment as a prime example of economic inequality. As rap has migrated outside of the American context it has often been appropriated by marginalized communities commenting on the unequal distribution of resources and power.

Critiques of injustice are accompanied by a pervasive ethic of **rebellion**. Rap has traditionally attempted to challenge the legitimacy of powerful institutions that have consistently oppressed communities of color and are responsible for the suffering of people at the bottom (Rose 1994). Songs make fun of traditional symbols of power like police officers, elected officials, and traditional media outlets. In songs like *If I Ruled the World* (Nas & Lauryn Hill 1996) and *Thugz Mansion* (2Pac 2002) these poets imagine worlds where the power structure is inverted; futures where people in the hood are wealthy and their values and practices are seen as beautiful. These futures are often pursued by any means necessary, and breaking the rules of powerful institutions are seen as necessary evils or even righteous acts of civil disobedience. This rebelliousness is not just presented as the cool way to be, but is often advanced as a moral imperative in order to gain freedom, economic independence, or to protect one's family and community.

Researchers of rap have also showed that moral themes of **authenticity** pervade the genre, as rappers judge a person's realness by how genuine they are and how true they are to black culture or street identity (McLeod 1999). Rap artists often talk about the importance of "keeping it real". The construct of "realness" often means staying true to yourself, being genuine, and/or maintaining your integrity by not selling out or watering

down your persona to fit in to mainstream society. Being real for the largely Black and urban youth with whom rap originated also means staying true to where you came from (the streets and/or the black community), expressing your culture proudly, and representing community interests. Being real is also highly tied to themes of aggression and fortitude, which are perceived to be the natural inner state of human beings. If a person expresses these emotions honestly then they are real, and if they are suppressing them to be docile or , they are being fake.

The present research further investigates whether or not these cultural values of rap (social justice orientation, rebelliousness, and authenticity) are present in the attitudes and behaviors of rap listeners. While it is one thing for researchers to find these key virtues expressed in rap songs, rap videos, and rap scenes, it is another thing to ask whether these values are central tenets that orient the daily ethics of rap listeners.

4. Analytical Framework: Moral Priorities and Moral Foundations Theory

In order to account for the role of hip-hop in influencing moral development, we draw on theories that cultural psychologists have used to understand how human beings are morally socialized by the cultural contexts that they inhabit (Shweder & Much 1987, Haidt 2012, Tappan 1997, Sachdeva et al., 2011). These theories seek to understand how human beings, that have very similar mental machinery at birth, come to develop very different senses about what is right or wrong depending on the culture they develop in. These researchers have built these theories in order to understand why a child born to a family in the Odisha state of India is much more likely to think that it is morally wrong

for widows to remarry or eat fish than a child born in Chicago, Illinois (Shweder & Much, 1987). This research suggests that human beings have the potential to become moral about a wide variety of issues and tend to moralize the behavior that is moralized in their social context.

At the same time, researchers argue that these culturally attuned intuitions all have similar foundations in universal drives shaped by the evolutionary history of human nature (Haidt, 2012). Haidt uses evidence from neuroscience, evolutionary psychology, and the anthropological record to identify 5 moral intuitions that form the basis for moral sense making. These intuitions evolved in early humans because prosocial groups, made up of individuals with these moral inclinations, outcompeted groups without them. The five Moral Foundations are as follows:

1. **Care/Harm** - Human beings perceive physical and emotional harm and empathize for others' well-being. This may stem from the evolutionary imperative to protect and care for offspring and other close kin.
2. **Justice/Injustice** - Human beings perceive, form, and maintain relationships based on reciprocity and fairness. This may reflect the evolutionary advantage conferred upon human groups cooperating in mutually beneficial partnerships.
3. **Loyalty/Betrayal** - Human beings have the ability to form in-groups to which they have the responsibility to prioritize their well-being over out-groups. This may stem from the advantage conferred upon cohesive groups that are able to outcompete less cohesive groups.
4. **Submission/Subversion (to authorities)** - Human beings have the ability to

form hierarchical communities where members at the bottom of the hierarchy have the responsibility to submit to the will of members at the top. This may stem from the evolutionary advantage conferred upon groups with centralized leadership structures and obedient followers.

5. **Purity/Pollution** (Sacred/Profane) – Purity concerns may support perceiving contaminants and avoiding them. Purity has been extended to include triggers in the social world like sacred objects and can be seen in the propensity to keep the body (or soul) free of pollution from impure materials (like forbidden foods) or behaviors (like unapproved sexual behaviors).

Haidt (2012) proposes two mechanisms for how sociocultural context adjusts our moral foundations. The first is that culture can shrink or expand each of these cognitive modules making them more or less important to a particular cultural context. Haidt uses the following example: "In the past fifty years people in many Western societies have come to feel compassion [care/harm foundation] in response to many more kinds of animal suffering, and they've come to feel disgust [purity/pollution foundation] in response to many fewer kinds of sexual activity" (2012). Through the lens of moral socialization theory, cultural differences in moral perspective are a matter of cultures developing different moral priorities over a period of time with some of these moral foundations being emphasized more in a culture and others deemphasized.

The second way socialization comes into play is that cultural practices can help define which social scenarios trigger moral intuitions. For example, recent incidents of

police killings of unarmed Black people have uncovered very different patterns of moral intuitions between Black and White Americans. A Washington Post poll (2014) distributed to American voters suggests that 74% of Blacks perceived these killings to be indicative of broader injustices in the treatment of African Americans by police. Only 35% of White voters thought of these as evidence of injustice, instead viewing them as isolated incidents of excessive use of force. These large differences suggest that incidents of police brutality of unarmed Black men trigger intuitions about justice and harm within the minds of most African Americans, while in many White Americans they merely trigger the harm module.

These two mechanisms provide us with a theoretical framework for understanding the way that hip-hop culture exerts an influence on moral attitudes. In this study, we focus primarily on the first mechanism, exploring how that engagement with a set of community values tends to increase the priority of those values for community members, as opposed to non-community members. Based on the key values that are widely expressed within rap media, we expect rap listeners to have the following priorities:

Hypothesis 1: *Social Justice Orientation*. Rap listeners should prioritize matters of justice and injustice more than their non-listening counterparts.

Hypothesis 2: *Rebelliousness orientation***.** Rap listeners should place less priority on respecting authority than their non-listening counterparts and instead should prioritize challenging authority.

Hypothesis 3: *Authenticity Orientation.* Rap listeners will prioritize genuineness or authenticity as a moral imperative more than non-listeners. This is based on research

showing that notions of authenticity are strongly linked to morality (Gino et al. 2015)

In summary, we predict that hip-hop listeners will rate justice and authenticity concerns to be more important, and rate authority concerns to be less important than their non-listening peers. We did not anticipate differences between listeners and non-listeners on the remaining three dimensions (care/harm, loyalty/disloyalty and purity/impurity).

Researchers have noted a pervasive warrior spirit within the rap genre, pointing to the ways in which emcees value strength and often use metaphors and imagery rooted in warfare or battle. Because of this, one might assume that hip-hop listeners would see harming others as less of a moral violation than non-listeners. *However,* research into the psychology of various groups engaged in armed conflict (i.e., Palestinian supporters of Hamas), suggests that these groups see war as a moral imperative and that willingness to use violence against outgroup members reflects a commitment to protecting the ingroup and its values (Ginges et al., 2011). For that reason, violent actions in righteous wars are often psychologically construed as reducing overall harm by eliminating harmful others. Therefore, we predict that rap listeners will not show a marked difference in concern about harm.

We also did not anticipate large differences between rap listeners and non-listeners in their prioritization of loyalty as a moral value. If there were differences in loyalty they might show up in who one is expected to be loyal to, with hip-hop listeners less likely than others to conceive of their loyalty obligation based on constructs like the

nation-state and more likely to conceive of their loyalty as linked to ethnicity or community.

It also isn't clear whether the purity/impurity construct as conceptualized by Graham, et al. (2009) corresponds to a unitary concept within hip-hop culture. Purity collapses across notions not necessarily correlated with one another in hip-hop culture: 1.) Is there a natural order from which deviation is seen as immoral? 2.) Is there a substantial class of behaviors that you find disgusting or morally repulsive? and 3.) When it comes to sexual activity do you moralize chastity, self-restraint, or traditional social mores? Based on an analysis of hip-hop culture we might expect that rap listeners might be very attracted to the first notion, moderately supportive of the second, but averse to the third. Therefore, the composite purity measures may conceal differences between rap listeners and non-listeners at a finer level of analysis.

5. Methods:

5.1 Participants

The participants in this study (N=112, 58.2% males) were selected from introductory Psychology courses at Northwestern University. Demographic data for the participants in the study is shown in Table 1. Students were preselected as Hip-Hop Listeners if they were high scorers on a Hip-Hop Practice Index (HHPI). The survey (available in Appendix 1) asked respondents to make a self -assessment of their participation in the hip-hop community using a 1-7 Likert scale. The scale was constructed to gauge to what extent students 1.) engaged in hip-hop related practices, 2.) held hip-hop culture to be a

significant part of their identity, and 3.) were immersed in social circles where hip-hop listening was commonplace. Students that scored 4 or higher on the HHPI (7% of the total subject pool) were part of the Hip-Hop Listener sample group. Therefore, the Hip-Hop Listener sample was a group of students (N=47) for whom hip-hop listening had played a significant role in their lives in the past few years.

Students coded as being in the rap listener group rated themselves as rather knowledgeable about hip-hop (M = 5.45 on a scale from 1 to 7). The overwhelming majority of them (80.5%) listened to rap music at least 1-2 hours per day and a majority of them (53.7%) visited websites where hip-hop music was featured or discussed at least several times a week. They also recognized hip-hop as a central part of their identity. An overwhelming majority (90.2%) of rap listeners agreed that rap had been an important part of their life over the past 3 years. Most (82.9%) thought it was important to know and understand the words to rap music and 56.1% indicated that hip-hop music contained words of wisdom they lived by.

At the same time, only 27% of rap listeners felt that the subjects of rap music were things that that they experienced in their everyday lives. This may reflect the fact that most of the students came from upper-middle class backgrounds. Therefore, this group of students represented a large subset of American hip-hop listeners, many of which are not from the hood, but nonetheless find the music as a key part of their identity and containing powerful content that is meaningful for their lives.

The comparison group (N=65) consisted of undergraduates from the same Psychology classes randomly selected from the 929 students who filled out the hip-hop

interest scale, once the most avid hip-hop listeners were removed. Their scores on the HHPI indicated that they had relatively low interest in, exposure to, and knowledge about hip-hop. A majority (76%) indicated that they were not knowledgeable about hip-hop, 81% indicated that it was not important to know the words to rap music and 89% did not think that rap music contained words of wisdom that they lived by.

5.2 The Instrument: Moral Foundations Questionnaire (MFQ)

We used the MFQ (Graham et al., 2009) to assess differences in the prioritization of the moral foundations between hip-hop listeners and non-listeners. Students were asked to rate how relevant various concerns were when making moral judgments. The first set of questions asked students *"When you decide whether something is right or wrong, to what extent are the following considerations relevant to your thinking?"* They then rated a number of concerns related to each of the 5 moral foundations. For example, a question that indexed the loyalty intuition asked them to rate *"whether or not someone did something to betray his or her group"* on a scale from 0 (not at all relevant) to 5 (extremely relevant).

The second set of questions asked students to rate their endorsement of a number of attitudes that are representative of each of the 5 moral intuitions. For example, a question measuring the importance of the submission to authority intuition asks subjects to rate on a 0-5 scale how much they agree with the following statement: "Respect for authority is something all children need to learn."

In addition to the 5 moral intuitions assessed in the MFQ we also evaluated their

prioritization of authenticity as a moral value. The MFQ was amended to include 9 new questions concerning authenticity. For example, in one question subjects were asked to rate on a scale of 0-5 how much they agreed with the following statement: *One of the worst things someone can do is portray themselves as something that they are not (*full scale available in Appendix 2.0*)*.

5.3 Analytic Procedure

Composite scores for each moral dimension (care/harm, justice/injustice, loyalty/disloyalty, submission/subversion, purity/impurity, authenticity/inauthenticity), were calculated for each participant. The composite score between 0 and 5 corresponds to their average response when rating the questions associated with that particular moral concern. Therefore, each participant ended up with 6 composite scores measuring how much they prioritized each of the 6 virtues when making moral judgement (0 = not at all relevant, 5 = extremely relevant). Figure 1 shows the average composite scores for hip-hop listeners vs. non-listeners.

Univariate regression was conducted using Stata data analysis software (StataCorp 2001). Regressions were run for each of the 6 moral dimensions, regressing the composite scores for the moral dimension on hip-hop listening status. These regressions allowed us to test our hypotheses of whether or not there were statistically significant differences between rap listeners and non-listeners on their composite scores for each dimension.

5. 4 Influences of Ethnicity, Social Class and Political Affiliation

The previous analytic procedures investigate differences between rap listeners and non-listeners in their prioritization of certain moral values. But this may give the impression that hip-hop listeners are part of a homogenous culture where they all participate in the same cultural practices, make the same interpretations, and follow the same moral codes. Since rap's prevalence, practice, and interpretation vary based on sociocultural context, an important question is: how does one's cultural membership (ethnic, SES, or political) mediate the relationship between hip-hop and moral socialization? Are there different effects for Black/Latinx listeners and non-Black/Latinx listeners? Are there different effects for wealthy listeners vs. those with less socioeconomic resources or liberal listeners vs. conservatives? We investigate these patterns using multivariate regression, a method that looks at the relationship between predictor variables and outcome variables expecting that they are interrelated. We use these regression tools to analyze the dataset (47 rap listeners and 65 non-listeners) exploring how demographic factors mediate the relationship between rap listening and moral attitudes.

Table 1. about here

	Non-Listener		Hip-Hop Listener	
	N	frequency	N	frequency
Ethnic Background:				
Black/Latinx	12	0.24	20	0.43
non-Black/Latinx (White and Asian)	38	0.76	26	0.57
Political Affiliation:				
Very Liberal	8	0.15	7	0.15
Liberal	10	0.19	21	0.46
Moderate	25	0.48	14	0.30
Conservative	9	0.17	4	0.09
Social Class (Parents' Yearly Income)				
Low SES (<$40K)	6	0.13	4	0.09
Lower Middle SES ($40-90K)	15	0.33	11	0.26
Upper Middle SES ($90-150K)	5	0.11	9	0.21
Upper SES (>150K)	20	0.43	19	0.44

*The Black/Latinx category contained 7 mixed race participants with at least a portion of their ethnic background rooted in Black or Latino communities.

**Several students neglected to submit their demographic information, especially on questions pertaining to parents' income and ethnicity. 23 out of the 112 participants were missing responses for at least one of the demographic factors. Thus, the analyses of demographic factors have smaller sample sizes than the analysis of main effects, equivalent to the number of participants that had sufficient data to run the test.

5.4.1 Ethnic Background

The participants in the study were of diverse ethnic backgrounds: Asian/Pacific Islander 19.8%, Black 12.5%, Latino 12.5%, White 46.8%, and Mixed Race 8.33%. For the purpose of regression analysis these students were categorized as Black/Latinx (Black, Latinx, and Mixed Race participants) or non-Black/Latinx (Asian and White participants) a distinction drawn for three reasons: 1.) the historical origins of the music in B/L communities 2.) the prevalence of B/L ethnic traditions, themes, and artists in the genre, and 3.) the historical marginalization of B/L communities within American inner cities

due to racism. We expected that ethnic background would mediate the influence that rap listening has on moral priorities. Model 2 therefore factors in ethnic background status as a predictor variable.

5.4.2 Socioeconomic Status

The participants in the study also came from various social class backgrounds. SES was determined by parents' income (<$40K = lower SES, 40-90K = lower middle SES, 90-150K = upper middle SES, and >150K = upper SES). Hip-hop culture arose in low-income communities and therefore students from lower SES backgrounds are more likely to be hip-hop listeners. The regression model factored in the subjects' social class, acknowledging that moral priorities and hip-hop practice may be also influenced by SES. In Model 3 we factored in both underrepresented ethnicity status and socio-economic status as predictor variables.

5.4.3 Political Affiliation

Participants' self-reported political affiliations fell within the categories of conservative, moderate, liberal, or very liberal. Previous research has shown that prioritization of the 5 moral intuitions are intimately tied with political orientation (Graham et al. 2009). In Model 4 we factored in underrepresented ethnicity status, SES, and political affiliation.

5.4.4 Analytic Procedure

For this analysis, we focus on the three moral concerns for which there were significant differences between rap listeners and non-listeners (justice, authority, and authenticity). For each of these moral concerns where we observed a main effect, we assessed the relative contribution of the four predictor variables in predicting value prioritization. How much do each of these four predictor variables explain the variation in students' prioritization of the moral concern? See Figure 3 for a visualization of the relationship between predictor variables and outcome variables.

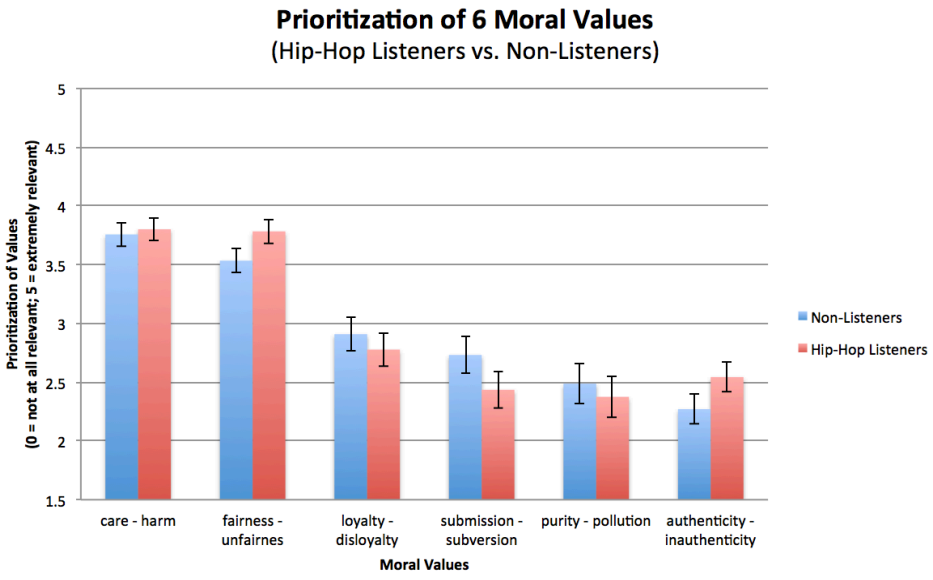
6. Results:

6.1 Main Effect of Rap Listening on Moral Priorities

We predicted differences between rap listeners and non-listeners on justice/injustice, submission/subversion, and authenticity/inauthenticity measures and found that the data confirmed these hypotheses. Justice was a higher priority for hip-hop listeners (M = 3.78) than for non-listeners (M = 3.53). This difference was modest but statistically reliable $t(111) = 2.45$, $p = 0.016$. Rap-listeners (M =2.44) and non-listeners (M = 2.73) differed in prioritizing submitting to authorities. Although these differences were not statistically significant they were reliable with a 1-tailed test, $t(110) = 1.91$, $p = 0.077$. As will be shown later (Section 6.2.3), this difference became significant when the effects of related variables of race, SES, and political affiliation were considered. Lastly, hip-hop listeners prioritized authenticity as a moral value (M = 2.54) to a significantly higher degree than non-listeners (M = 2.27), $t(110) = 2.20$, $p = 0.030$. They thought staying true to oneself was more of a moral concern than their non-listening counterparts did.

We did not expect differences between rap listeners and non-listeners on the dimensions of care/harm, loyalty/disloyalty, and purity/impurity and found no statistically significant differences. There was no reliable difference in the prioritization of care/harm between listeners (M = 3.80) and non-listeners (M = 3.76), $t(110) = 0.45$, p = 0.657. Both listeners and non-listeners rated scenarios where someone was physically or emotionally harmed as a strong moral violation, and rated caring for others' physical and emotional well-being as a high priority. There was no reliable difference between hip-hop listeners (M = 2.78) and non-listeners (M = 2.91), $t(110) = 0.93$, p = 0.355, on the virtue of loyalty/disloyalty. Thus, the importance of in-group solidarity was similar in both groups. With respect to the concern of purity/impurity, there were also no statistically reliable differences between hip-hop listeners and non-listeners (M = 2.49 and 2.39 respectively), $t(109) = 0.64$, p = 0.523.

Figure 1. about here



6.2 Ethnicity, Social Class and Political Affiliation as Mediating Factors

Table 2 presents the Pearson product-moment correlations among the variables in the study (the moral intuitions and the demographic factors). Tables 3, 4, and 5 present the hierarchical regressions for predicting justice/injustice, authenticity/inauthenticity, and submission/subversion respectively. The demographic factors of ethnicity, social class and political affiliation had varied associations with moral priorities. Before exploring these regressions in detail, it is important to note that there were main effects of these demographic factors on moral intuitions. There were significant ethnic differences on two moral dimensions; purity and authenticity. B/L students were more concerned with purity and authenticity than non-B/L students. Social class was a factor for authority, purity, and authenticity. The lower their socioeconomic status, the more the participants tended to prioritize these dimensions as a moral concern. Conservative political affiliation was positively correlated with the dimensions of loyalty, authority, and purity. These latter

results mirror previous studies that have found these dimensions to be more important to conservatives than they are to liberals (Graham et al. 2009).

Table 2 about here

Table 2. Intercorrelation matrix of variables

	Variable	1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8		9		10
1	Care/Harm	--																		
2	Fairness/Unfairness	0.54	***	--																
3	Loyalty/Disloyalty	0.23	**	0.20	**	--														
4	Submission/Subversion	0.19	**	-0.03		0.55	***	--												
5	Purity/Impurity	0.31	***	0.32	***	0.50	***	0.50	***	--										
6	Authenticity/Inauthenticity	0.31	***	0.51	***	0.40	***	0.12		0.43	***	--								
7	Listener Status	0.04		0.23	**	-0.18		-0.18	*	0.06		0.21	**	--						
8	Ethnicity	-0.05		0.11		-0.05		0.09		0.19	**	0.25	**	0.21	**	--				
9	Socioeconomic Status	-0.08		-0.10		-0.06		-0.29	***	-0.33	***	-0.23	**	0.07		-0.42	***	--		
10	Political Affiliation	0.02		0.15		-0.33	***	-0.21	**	-0.31	***	-0.09		0.18	*	-0.02		0.09		--

* p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

Positive correlations for the ethnicity variable mean that being Black/Latino was correlated with that variable. Positive correlations for the Political Affiliation variable mean that liberal political affiliation was correlated with that characteristic.

6.2.1 Fairness

In all four models rap listening predicted prioritization of fairness as a moral value (Table 3). When factoring in demographic factors (ethnicity, SES, and political affiliation) rap listening was the only statistically significant predictor of justice concerns across the

four models. This suggests that the heightened attention that rap listeners pay to justice is not explained by being B/L or low-income. B/L hip-hop listeners (M = 3.84) are more justice oriented than B/L non-listeners (M = 3.54) and the same is true for non-B/L hip-hop listeners (M = 3.71) when compared to non-listeners (M = 3.53).

6.2.2 Authenticity

Rap listening reliably predicted prioritizing authenticity in all four models (Table 4). Ethnicity and SES also were associated with endorsement of authenticity. Even though hip-hop listeners of all races prioritized authenticity more than their non-listening counterparts, B/L hip-hop listeners prioritized authenticity (M = 2.72) more than non-B/L hip-hop listeners (M = 2.42), and low-SES rap listeners prioritized authenticity more than high-SES listeners (means: lower SES = 2.73, lower middle SES = 2.55, upper middle SES = 2.34, and upper SES = 2.28). Black/Brown ethnic background, low socioeconomic status, and hip-hop listening seemed to have separable effects on the importance of authenticity. Political affiliation on the other hand, was not associated with the value of authenticity.

6.2.3 Authority

In Models 2, 3, and 4, rap listening reliably ($p < .05$) predicted prioritizing respecting authority figures (Table 5). Respect for authority was associated with not listening to hip-hop, low SES, and conservative political affiliation. Low-SES students valued respecting authority more than high-SES students (means: low SES = 3.05, lower middle SES = 2.74, upper middle SES = 2.64, upper SES = 2.34) and conservative students valued respecting

authority more than liberal students (means: conservative = 3.03, moderate = 2.71, liberal = 2.43, very liberal = 2.33).

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Table 3. Summary of hierarchical regression analysis for variables predicting **concern for justice/injustice.**

Variable	B	SE	p-value		Adjusted R^2	R^2
Model 1						
Rap Listening	0.249	0.102	0.016	**	0.043	0.052
Model 2						
Rap Listening	0.218	0.113	0.057	*	0.03	0.05
Ethnicity	0.081	0.12	0.5			
Model 3						
Rap Listening	0.289	0.122	0.019	**	0.037	0.07
Ethnicity	-0.028	0.143	0.845			
Socioeconomic Status	-0.051	0.061	0.402			
Model 4						
Rap Listening	0.258	0.123	0.039	**	0.051	0.095
Ethnicity	-0.028	0.143	0.848			
Socioeconomic Status	-0.059	0.061	0.333			
Political Affiliation	0.035	0.023	0.122			

Table 4. Summary of hierarchical regression analysis for variables predicting **concern for authenticity/inauthenticity.**

Variable	B	SE	p-value		Adjusted R^2	R^2
Model 1						
Rap Listening	0.273	0.124	0.03	**	0.034	0.042
Model 2						
Rap Listening	0.187	0.135	0.169		0.062	0.082
Ethnicity	0.316	0.144	0.031	**		
Model 3						
Rap Listening	0.314	0.144	0.032	**	0.089	0.121
Ethnicity	0.067	0.169	0.694			
Socioeconomic Status	-0.154	0.072	0.035	**		
Model 4						
Rap Listening	0.303	0.146	0.04	**	0.087	0.13
Ethnicity	0.083	0.169	0.624			
Socioeconomic Status	-0.156	0.072	0.033	**		
Political Affiliation	-0.018	0.027	0.5			

Table 5. Summary of hierarchical regression analysis for variables predicting **concern for respecting authority**

Variable	B	SE	p-value		Adjusted R^2	R^2
Model 1						
Rap Listening	-0.296	0.155	0.058	*	0.024	0.033
Model 2						
Rap Listening	-0.359	0.169	0.037	**	0.034	0.054
Ethnicity	0.229	0.18	0.208			
Model 3						
Rap Listening	-0.396	0.176	0.027	**	0.104	0.135
Ethnicity	0.195	0.207	0.349			
Socioeconomic Status	-0.163	0.088	0.066	*		
Model 4						
Rap Listening	-0.378	0.175	0.034	**	0.142	0.182
Ethnicity	0.215	0.204	0.294			
Socioeconomic Status	-0.157	0.087	0.073	*		
Political Affiliation	-0.062	0.032	0.06	*		

Discussion:

Contrary to earlier studies of hip-hop's effects on moral behavior, most of which relied on assessing the prevalence of behaviors that mainstream society has deemed to be antisocial or morally deviant (i.e., engagement in risky sexual activity, drug use, or property crime), our approach used self-report measures to assess rap listeners' subjective evaluations of various moral values (caring, fairness, loyalty, submission, purity, and authenticity). We assessed how important each of these values is to their moral decision making.

The present research suggests that rap listeners, when compared to non-listeners, found some of these values to be more important and others to be less important. Rap listening was correlated with an increased prioritization of justice and authenticity concerns, and a deprioritization of authority concerns. Results also suggest that these differences between hip-hop listeners and non-listeners were not merely artifacts of demographic variables that are correlated with hip-hop listening (Black/Latino ethnicity,

low SES, or liberal political affiliation). The effects of rap listening on these three moral values persisted even when accounting for the demographic variables.

In fact, rap-listening was more predictive of subjects' moral priorities than these other demographic factors, showing greater effect sizes and greater reliability. These results support the idea that hip-hop culture is a cultural influence that warrants study as a shaper of youth/young adult moral identity, in addition to race and social class. Although hip-hop culture is certainly related to ethnic, socio-economic, and political identities, it has elements that cannot be understood simply by understanding ethnic or social class identity alone. We argue for an understanding of youth moral socialization that takes into consideration the media that they engage with. Social groups and subcultures built around consumption of media genres exert impactful influences on the values of young people, and those impacts are mediated by their participation in other practices and cultural communities.

The high prioritization of fairness among rap listeners supports our hypothesis about rap being oriented towards social justice. These results also concur with those from a previous study (Tanner et al., 2009) showing that rap listeners in Canada were more likely to perceive the criminal justice system, educational system, and Canadian society in general to be unfair. Our results add to this narrative suggesting that rap listeners not only perceive the society to be less fair, but they are also subjectively aware that fairness is a high priority in their worldview. Hip-hop artists have often rallied around the cause of social justice, and these results suggest that the listeners of the genre seem to be more attuned to the value of fairness, and prioritize it as a central value in

their moral decision making.

The results of this study also support our hypothesis about the rebellious orientation in rap music and suggest that one of the values of hip-hop culture that is often taken up by its listeners is the inclination to challenge authority rather than submit to it. One way to interpret hip-hop listeners' low authority scores is that hip-hop listening leads to a value deficit (less respect for authority). However, another way to interpret them is that rap listening leads to a value gain (more self-reliance and autonomy). With the value gain interpretation, hip-hoppers' low authority scores are simply a side effect of their prioritization of competing values like independence. They are simply more vested in other virtues like courage and autonomy that express themselves in behaviors like challenging illegitimate authorities, critiquing systems of oppression, and expressing their viewpoints even when they clash with the norms of authority figures or the traditions of society. Whether rap is morally enriching or depleting depends on the behaviors and dispositions that we desire in our children. These desires vary quite a bit between different parents, communities, and societies.

The tendency to value submitting to authority was actually most correlated with low socioeconomic status. Participants from lower social class strata were more likely to strongly value respecting authority. At first glance, it seems unintuitive that low SES is indicative of submissive attitudes about authority, while rap listening is correlated with subversive attitudes, given that hip-hop was born in low-SES communities. The rebellious hip-hop subculture stands in contrast to the norm for low-income communities. In many ways, hip-hop listeners' views on authority seem to more closely match the views of the

wealthiest participants in the study. Both seem to value autonomy and independence from authority.

However, within the psychology literature anti-authoritarian viewpoints are represented in very different ways when they are found in hip-hop listeners than when they are found in upper middle-class children. When attributed to high SES white youth (especially boys), these viewpoints are often depicted as agentic; a character asset (Baumrind 1971). They are seen as the precursors of self-efficacy and the characteristics of future entrepreneurs and creative thinkers. When attributed to hip-hop culture they are depicted as undisciplined and disobedient; the dispositions of lawbreakers. This bias in the literature mirrors stereotypes in the broader society that perceive black agency to be dangerous. These results highlight the importance of employing an emic perspective, one that tries to understand the behavior of a community from their own perspective instead of from that of a cultural lens that has been traditionally hostile to B/L artforms and cultural lifeways. If rap-listeners are referring to their own behavior as independent or autonomous, and researchers are interpreting their behavior as disrespectful, then those researchers may be using their own external moral frameworks to judge rap culture.

This often leads to biases in the types of research questions that psychologists explore. There have been no studies of rap listeners using established measures of autonomy that explore whether rap music can be used to foster feelings of independence and autonomy in young people. This dearth of research stands in contrast to the many accounts of young people who say that they use the music for motivational purposes, to pump themselves up to fight through the daily challenges that stand in their way, and to

feel more self-efficacious. Rap music has also consistently popularized *the hustler*, an entrepreneurial archetype that is able to make something out of nothing, through hard work and "grinding." Ties between rap music and entrepreneurial virtues such as risk taking, are absent in the psychology literature. Meanwhile, there have been multiple studies exploring connections between rap music and law breaking, assuming that rebelliousness in inner city youth is most tied with disciplinary problems.

The results also suggest that hip-hop listeners are socialized into an orientation of authenticity. The concept of realness in hip-hop culture includes the obligation to maintain congruency between who you are essentially (culturally, personality-wise, on the inside) and how you portray yourself to be. Therefore, realness also seems to be related to notions of honesty and integrity. These concerns were significantly more important to the hip-hop listeners than they were to the non-listeners.

The effect of rap-listening on authenticity was also mediated by race and social class. It was the rap enthusiasts from the social groups that founded hip-hop culture (low-income Black and Latino youth) that were the most committed to the value of authenticity. This value was less important to rap listeners the more distant they were from this identity (i.e., upper-class, non-B/L youth). Authenticity and realness in hip-hop is often about staying true to the Black community and Black culture. Rappers also use phrases like "keep it real" and "stay true" in their lyrics to advocate for staying loyal to the streets, to the hood, to the low-income neighborhoods that they represent.

McLeod (1999) argues that these claims of authenticity are a reaction to being a part of cultures (ethnic and socioeconomic) that are threatened with assimilation, systemic

oppression, or discrimination. It is those of us whose ways of life are under attack for whom the value of authenticity becomes the most important. Being firmly and genuinely oneself is associated with the inner strength necessary to resist the pull of the mainstream. It is conceivable that non-B/L youth are not as receptive to claims of authenticity in rap music because they are part of ethnic groups that are less threatened by an imminent danger of assimilation. Perhaps this is because their communities have traditionally encountered less resistance to assimilation, they valued assimilation as a strategic unproblematic goal, and/or they are already part of the majority white culture into which minority cultures are assimilating.

The data also suggest that the moral viewpoints that are prevalent in the rap community reflect sensible choices by youth to embrace ethical systems that are relevant to their sociocultural circumstances. An increased sensitivity to the value of justice is sensible for young people from communities that have been systematically treated unfairly. The same can be said for the value of challenging traditional authority figures. Lastly, a devotion to authenticity is a reasonable response for communities that are threatened by cultural erasure. All in all, rap-listeners' concepts of the "good person" are colored by their perceptions (and their cultural forbearers' perceptions) of what it takes to thrive in their society and contribute to their communities. Even for young people that are not in hood environments, a system of moral ethics that pays increased attention to justice, autonomy, and authenticity could be useful for navigating the moral dilemmas in their lives. These values may also be broadly useful to young people across the board who experience marginalization simply by being youth in a world that feels like it privileges adults.

Many educators are interested in encouraging the moral development of young people that are part of the hip-hop community. (give example) When trying to engender more prosocial behaviors in rap listeners it is important to think about how to do this in a culturally relevant fashion; one that considers the moral dilemmas that are most prevalent in their context as well as the costs of prioritizing certain values in certain communities. If your culture isn't threatened by oppression it is easier to imagine a moral system where authenticity isn't much of a concern. If approaches to moral education do not take context into consideration, young people will experience these curricula as out of touch with the everyday moral dilemmas that they find themselves in, and the constraints placed on their lives by systemic injustice.

The results of this study also call for further exploration of hip-hop and its use as an important resource in moral education. More work needs to be done exploring the ways that young people are currently using rap texts to motivate themselves to be better human beings in the world, playing songs in order to help themselves feel more self-efficacious, to feel more in tuned with their community, or to gain insights into how to navigate an unfair society. By studying how young people are organically and intentionally morally educating themselves with hip-hop media we can use these insights to inform the development of culturally relevant interventions that use hip-hop as the cultural basis for therapy, leadership training, and civics education.

Young people will continue to gravitate to moral exemplars that are part of the cultural lifeworlds that they come from. Figures like Kanye West will remain influential role models for youth who see value in his courage and authenticity. It is imperative that

we understand the ethical systems that young people find meaningful, which values those ethical systems prioritize, and also which blindspots they have. This will not be achieved by censorship or by protecting children from rap perspectives. We do not move towards making young people more holistic moral thinkers by removing rap voices from the conversation, but instead by bringing them in dialogue with other ethical theorists – from Socrates to the Dalai Lama. Towards this end, more work in comparative moral psychology is called for; particularly studies that investigate how modern cultures and subcultures promote the prioritization of particular values, and how young people are navigating these various ethical systems as they develop their own moral voices.

Appendix 1.0: Hip-Hop Practice Index (HHPI)

*A survey created to assess the extent to which individuals 1.) participated in hip-hop related practices, 2.) identified with hip-hop culture, and 3.) were immersed in communities where hip-hop was prevalent.

<u>1. Practice</u>

How knowledgeable are you about hip-hop (rap)?

How many hours of hip-hop rap do you listen to per day, either while doing something else or as your main activity?

How often do you attend concerts, performances or parties where hip-hop is featured or discussed?

How often do you visit websites where hip-hop music is featured or discussed?

Have you ever written a rap verse?

Have you ever freestyled?

Have you ever produced a beat?

How many years have you been listening to hip-hop?

How up to date are you regarding new hip-hop music?

How easy is it for you to understand the lyrics in hip-hop music?

What is your usual level of involvement when you listen to hip-hop music?

2. Identity

How important has Hip-Hop music been in your life in the past 3 years?

I often find myself quoting hip-hop songs in my everyday life.

How important is it to know and understand the words to hip hop songs?

People that listen to hip-hop music look at the world in a similar way.

People that listen to hip-hop music look at the world differently than non-listeners.

Hip-hop music contains words of wisdom that I live by.

Hip-hop is a big part of my life.

I don't really relate to hip-hop music. (reverse coded)

I would be fine if I didn't listen to hip-hop for the next 30 days. (reverse coded)

I want the people around me to know that I relate to hip-hop music.

I am a part of the hip-hop generation.

3. Cultural Immersion

The subjects that they talk about in hip-hop are things that I experience in my everyday life.

Do your parents like hip-hop music?

How important is it that your friends understand hip-hop music?

Where I live most people listen to hip-hop.

Where I grew up most people listen to hip-hop.

Where I hangout most people listen to hip-hop.

I don't know many people that don't like hip-hop.

People around me try to live a hip-hop lifestyle.

Appendix 2.0 Authenticity Sub-Scale

* A survey created as an addendum to the Moral Foundations Questionnaire used to assess the extent to which students value authenticity as a moral virtue.

When you decide whether something is right or wrong, to what extent are the following considerations relevant to your thinking? Please write a number from 0-5 next to each statement using this scale:

- Whether or not someone stayed true to themselves.

- Whether or not someone kept it real

- Whether or not someone sold out.

- Whether or not someone was authentic.

Please read the following sentences and indicate your agreement:

- I have a problem with people that "jump on the bandwagon" just because something is popular.

- One of the worst things someone can do is portray themselves as something that they are not.

- I think it is wrong for people to change who they are in order to advance in life.

- It is ok to fake an emotion sometimes in order to make others feel comfortable. (reverse coded)

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