An Examination of the Code of the Street in the Most Popular Rap Lyrics 2001-2009

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Anderson's (1999) Code of the Street theory encompasses the need to procure respect within violent crime-ridden communities. Rap music is important because it is widely consumed by youth. This being the case, it is worth examining the extent to which rap music endorses and proliferates what Elijah Anderson has theorized as the Code of the Street. Thus, this study is a qualitative text analysis of the Top 20 most popular Billboard Charts' raps singles from 2001 to 2009 in order to describe the presence, prevalence, and content of the street code in music. The results indicate that the most popular rap songs contain some endorsement of various aspects of the street code; however, the messages are largely misogynistic and materialistic referring to irresponsible spending and support for illicit gains through drug activity as opposed to largely endorsing violence.

Keywords: code of the streets, street code, rap music

Elijah Anderson's (1999) Code of the Street theory acknowledges the deprivation associated with poor and predominately African American areas. He describes African Americans within an inner city community, their behaviors, and how criminals and non-criminals co-exist. Hence, the present study examines the extent to which the most popular rap songs from 2001 to 2009 endorse Anderson's Code of the Street or rules for navigating inner city environments. This music is relevant given its substantial appeal to youth. Possibly, some raps reinforce Anderson's (1999) belief that the street code does not purely reflect corrupt values and socialization, but that it explains how persons adjust to daily insecurity and looming threats of violence in U.S. inner cities (Brezina, Agnew, Cullen, & Wright, 2004). The Code of the Street, then, offers some navigation for both decent (law-abiding) and the street (inclined to criminality) families to coexist in a socially disorganized environment (Anderson, 1999; Stewart & Simons, 2009). Individuals within inner city communities must adhere to the code yet demonstrate the ability to enforce violent behavior or desist from violence without losing *street credibility.*

Rap, a subcategory of music within the genre of hip hop music, is consumed by a massive ethnically and racially diverse audience. Its recent surge in popularity has occurred amidst a White youth fascination and consumption of Black popular culture coupled with a fear of African Americans and an apparent commonplace refusal to critically examine elements of music (Yousman, 2003). Rap's significance to the street code is that it may reinforce, teach, or call for the elimination of the code. This study examined the extent to which this is the case.

Richardson and Scott (2002) declared that some in American society perceive rap music as a catalyst for problems affecting the African American male. McDonnell (1992) and Samuels (1991), for example, referred to rap music as degrading given its frequent suggestions that Black men and women are sexually promiscuous and irresponsible. Of course, pre-existing stereotypes of Blacks and the impact of institutional racism and social isolation pre-date the genesis of rap in the early 1970s.

Rose (1994), Anderson (1999), Keyes (2002), and Watkins' (2001) opinions about the value of rap were more positive. They concluded that the production of rap corresponds with shifts in the material culture that many Blacks inhabit. Watkins (2001) asserted that the nihilism expressed by some Black youth in various ways is based upon racial hostilities that come from participating in mainstream society. Many Black males remain dislocated from accessing opportunities for improved social and economic life. Thus, the hip-hop subculture's hard core attitudes and values persist in response to the oppressive behavior of mainstream America.

Political Economy of the Ghetto and Anderson's Code of the Street

According to Anderson (1999), cultural adaptations are formalized and a set of rules are sustained due to poor Blacks living in communities that are socially isolated from greater society. Together, Anderson (1999) and Wilson's (1987) notions of social isolation explained the lack of sustained interaction with individuals and institutions that represent mainstream society. The social isolation reflects the impact of concentrations of urban poverty which deprive poor individuals of access to the mainstream social networks that facilitate social and economic advancement. Within these isolated communities, an informal set of street codes of conduct exist that prescribe specific actions for the social order therein amongst

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two groups of people who must co-exist-street families (those inclined to criminality) and decent families. The development of the Code of the Street within urban communities is indicative of the limited opportunities and protections afforded to African Americans within the urban setting.

Senator Daniel P. Moynihan (1965), in his report *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*, argued that a lack of progress among many African Americans was due to the lack of paternal figures and the overall progress of Black women. He further suggested that those trapped within the ghetto are a reflection of the lack of cohesiveness amongst its community members. Thus, the poor themselves should be held accountable for the problems they have created. Subsequently, three levels of intensity were identified to explain the disadvantages which led to growing hostility among African Americans towards mainstream institutions: (1) Police, employment, and housing practices; (2) educational ineffectiveness; and (3) ineffective political structures. The riots that raged in the cities of Los Angeles, Chicago, and Detroit during the summer of 1967 were a display of discontent with the racism associated with symbols of institutional White power. Worgs (2006) perceived the violent reaction by African Americans as justified because it was a profound portrayal of: (1) Retribution for being oppressed and dehumanized; (2) oppressed individuals attempting to gain respect; and (3) Blacks demanding inclusion and a respect for Black culture. The Code of the Street emphasized the same anomalies in a contemporary social context (Anderson, 1999).

An important element to consider toward understanding disadvantaged communities is the opportunity structures that are available to their residents. For example, prior to World War II, the federal government established the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) in 1933. This was to bail out White homeowners who had defaulted on their mortgages as a result of the Great Depression. HOLC provided low interest loans to those who had lost their homes by redefining zoning practices. Blacks, however, in an era of segregation, were relegated to deteriorated housing. By the 1960s, Blacks had opportunities to live in public housing, which many appreciated because they were much better than what they had before. As the decades passed, however, the poor maintenance of these areas coupled with redlining loan practices (whereby African Americans were routinely deemed "too risky" to receive loans for home purchases), (Institute on Race and Poverty, 2000) continued to keep Blacks segregated, marginalized, and socially isolated. Consequently, Blacks' had limited access to meaningful opportunities for upward social mobility, such as quality education.

Tabb (1970) explained that ghetto residents are manipulated for their one resource-unskilled labor. In more recent times, available employment has not kept pace with this population, leading to increased numbers of unemployed workers. Advertisements of pricey consumer goods in the media constantly reminded residents of the inaccessibility of goods and services. Business owners in poor urban communities manipulate the impoverished conditions by charging residents in the ghetto higher prices for these goods and services. A system of credit practiced by business owners perpetuated a system of debt which allowed owners to refuse services or charge high interest rates on credited items to "quasi-extort" residents. Not surprisingly, then, as crime declined nationally, African Americans remained at increasing risk of being unemployed and incarcerated.

Markedly, the combined effects of poverty, African American male dysfunction, family disruption, and cultural isolation have had long-lasting effects upon residents of inner cities (Kubrin, 2005). This is manifested by a cultural dysfunction of the family, and is partially explained by the matrifocality of the Black family and fractured Black familial structures (Frazier, 1939). Many Black females fall prey to deviance within the ghetto. Black single women with dependants are often left unprotected while living in the proximity of illegitimate economies, such as prostitution and drug dealing. Limited legitimate avenues mixed with numerous illegitimate avenues create a unique situation unparalleled in White and middle class Black communities (George, 1998). These various postindustrial urban experiences of alienation, unemployment, police harassment, and social and economic isolation are referenced in rap music (Rose, 1994). Dyson (1991) described the rhetorical value of rap as a means for African Americans to express dysfunction. He argued that the messages within rap music should be taken seriously since they include a reclaiming of Black history, invoking Black consciousness, and challenging the powers that propelled the Black community into a downward spiral. The suggestion then, is that rap merely reflects life.

Despite socio-economic challenges, only certain African American families succumb to the ills of poverty, while others in the same vicinity do not. Anderson (1999) attributes these different outcomes to the degree to which families embrace the Code of the Street. Brezina et al. (2004) recognized that street lessons are handed down to, so called, street families, who grew up hard and whose homes may have been marked by drugs, alcohol, and neglect. The children in these families learn firsthand that survival and respect should not be taken for granted. Given that this ideology is present in rap music, this study attempts to describe this street code.

The present study builds on the work of Charis Kubrin (2005) who examined the gangster ("gangsta") rap albums that "went platinum" in sales from 1992 to 2000 for references to the Code of the Street. She found that the code was a staple of gangsta rap. The most common theme of the Code therein was respect. There were 21 rappers who referenced the code. They portrayed violence as a social control mechanism, described efforts to resist victimization, and perpetuated various aspects of the code such as "not disrespecting", "not snitching" and misogynistic attitudes.

This study used a more accurate indicator of rap consumption-the Billboard Top 20 Rap Singles charts from 2001 to 2009--for references to the Code of the Street. In so doing, the genre of rap also goes beyond gangsta rap. The concern is that these Billboard singles' lyrics are the ones that get substantial airplay and these songs are the ones that likely shape the images of Black Americans, even influencing how Black youth come to perceive themselves and, in turn, how they construct their realities. Hence, the research question: To what extent is Anderson's (1999) Code of the Street described in the most popular rap lyrics of 2001 to 2009?

Method

Sample

This study employed a qualitative text analysis of rap lyrics. First, the Billboard Top 20 rap singles charts for 2001 to 2009 were obtained online from a Billboard website at Billboard.com. Then, the lyrics were obtained from the public domain on various websites. This resulted in a dataset of 180 songs. To properly assess the richness of the data, the strategy involved understanding the native or "insider" view (emic) of rap versus the outsider (etic) perspective. The latter is what the researchers, as rap music outsiders, know from the literature and have assumed about the music. The insider's views (emic) are the perspectives of rap artists. As is common in qualitative studies, the researchers began the analysis process by developing an etic-based list of expected codes based on Anderson's description of the Code of the Street with respect as a central theme; other codes included references to guns, drugs, male and female relations, and law enforcement. Specifically, the codes within the lyrics indicative of an endorsement of the Code of the Street all relate to the central idea of obtaining and maintaining street credibility or respect through: a) fighting to garner respect, b) retaliation when slighted, c) staging areas for bad behavior, d) nihilism - disregard for mainstream conformity, e) irresponsible spending and the display of wealth, f) objectification of women for street respect, g) sexual sugges-

tiveness for street respect, and h) negative attitudes towards law enforcement.

The primary researcher also listened to a number of songs and watched any available videos on YouTube and other media. This researcher also read books and articles about the lives of many of the artists who had Top 10 songs for insight into the artist's life and his or her likely experience and first-hand knowledge of the Code of the Street, and its rules of conduct.

Procedure

The lyrics were then uploaded into Atlas-ti version 5.2.12 (a qualitative data management software program) and coded by the researchers, independently, for signs of the street code. Memoing (comparisons of the lyrics with the literature) was done; as was the counting of various terms indicative of the code. Some lyrics were difficult to interpret because of the duality of meanings of specific street terms; therefore, reference books and persons in the rap industry were contacted for explanations of the meanings of various terms.

Finally, a potential network diagram of the connection of street code concepts was manipulated for the best association of ideas using Atlas-ti (see Figure 1). Frequency counts of terms were taken and both diagramed and table formatted to readily identify patterns in the data. The findings were then considered in terms of the literature regarding the Code of the Street and in rap music, in particular.
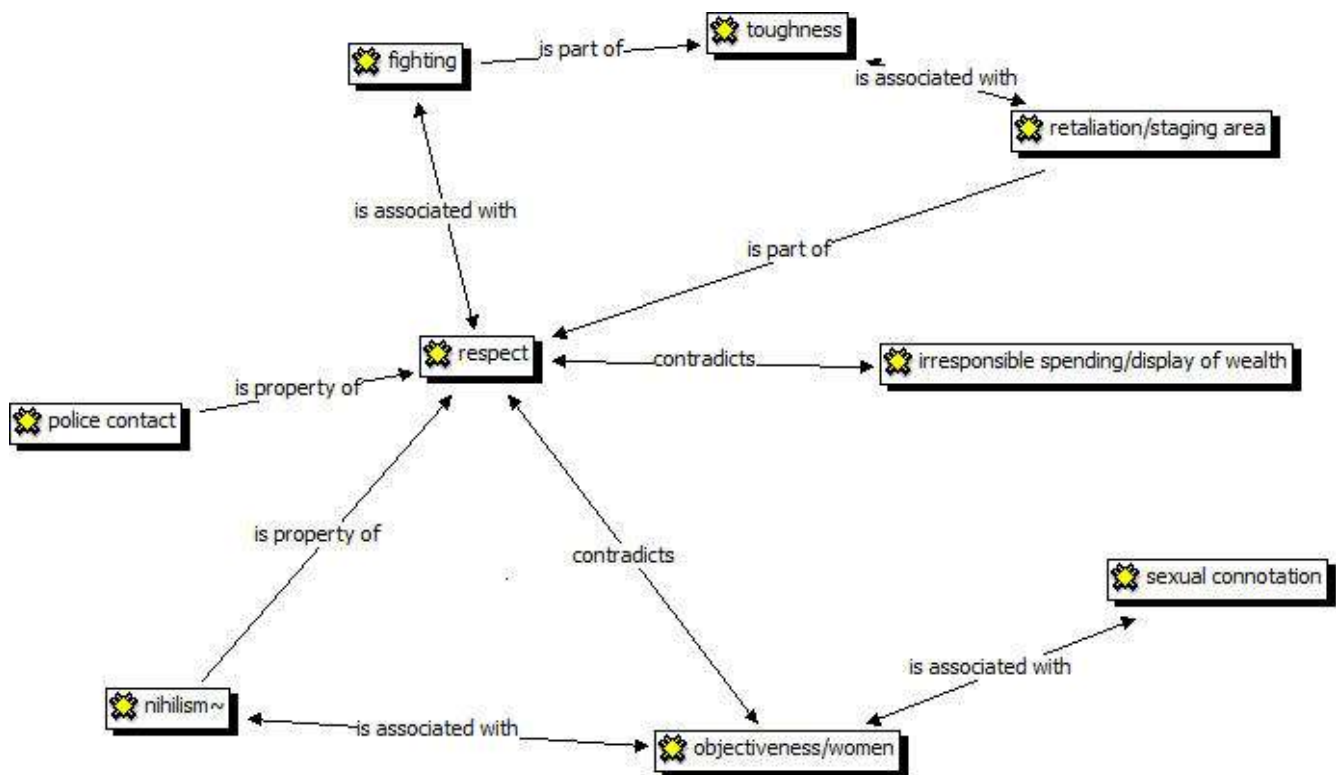

Figure 1. A potential network diagram of the connection of street code concepts.

Regarding paradigmatic disclosure, one researcher is an African American male, born, and raised in a southern state. He admires the rap art form and knows a number of southern rappers personally. His interest in the topic is constructivist, towards understanding the often overlooked dynamics of rap music given the scant volume of qualitative examination of rap and the apparent role of the street code therein. The other researcher is a former radio disc jockey and an admirer of the rap art form. She is a non-American, Black female who also approached the research effort utilizing a constructivist paradigmatic lens to understand the music's content.

Results

Overall, the years in which Anderson's street code was most evident were 2005 and 2006 (see Table 1). In this regard, references made to the code of the street are highlighted below.

Table 1.
Frequency of Responses and Participant Involvement Combined

Year	Song
2002	Cam'ron featuring Juelz Santana-*Oh Boy*, #6
	Eve featuring Alicia Keys-*Gangsta Loving*, # 9
	Big Tymers-*Still Fly*, # 11
	Cam'ron-*Hey Ma*, # 20
2003	50 Cent-*In Da Club*- # 1
	YoungBloodz-*Damn!*, #20
2004	Terror Squad-*Lean Back*, # 1
	Petey Pablo-*Freek a Leek*, # 3
	Jay- Z-*Dirt Off Your Shoulders*, # 7
	Kanye West-*Jesus Walks*, #11
	Kanye West featuring Syleena Johnson, *All Falls Down*, #15
2005	Kanye West featuring Jamie Foxx-*Gold Digger*, #6
	The Game featuring 50 Cent-*Hate It or Love It*, #10
	Trillville-*Some Cut*, #11
	Ying Yang Twins-*Wait (The Whisper Song)*, #12
	Young Jeezy-*Soul Survivor*, # 16
	T. I.- *You Don't Know Me*, #17
	Webbie featuring Bun B Give Me That, #20
2006	Yung Joc- *It's Goin' Down*, # 1
	T. I.- *What You Know*, # 5
2007	Ludacris featuring Mary J. Blige-*Runaway Love*, # 8
	Rich Boy- *Throw Some D's On It*, # 14
2009	T.I. featuring Justin Timberlake-*Dead and Gone*, #2

Note. 2001 and 2008 = no clear mention of the Code.

Guns

One of the etic codes with which the researchers began the study was an exploration of artifact references to a firearm or gun. Gun terminology is relevant in communicating the street code; in that, rappers relate it to: a) fighting to garner respect, b) retaliation when slighted, and c) staging areas for bad behavior.

The rap songs for the year 2001- 2009 contained multiple terms to describe various types of guns that may be readily available. Guns are used to protect oneself from intrusion, or as a means to gain respect by either a show of force or to deter or repel violence by the mere knowledge of the presence of a gun. Among the Top 20 rap songs from the year 2001 to 2009 there were 42 songs with at least one term for guns. The terms that were most commonly used were: Gun, Glock, AK47, Hammer, Heater, .44 Caliber, Strap, and Baby Tech. The Top 10 songs for the years 2001 to 2009 had fewer terms than the Top 11 to 20 songs. The Top 10 songs were more focused on socializing and night life than on gun violence.

Related to guns, rapper Sean Paul of the Youngbloodz (2003) exclaimed in the hit *DAMN!* (number 20 on the rap charts):

> Oh you fo sho with it/ then pull yo pistol/ Show a nigga you ain't hoe with it/ And I ain't selfish I will let you and your folk feel it/ Talkin' big boy shit/ Mean muggin' like a motherf***** with my hand on my d***.

Youngbloodz' lyrics described Anderson's (1999) perspective of the consequences that could occur if a person is tested on the streets. The rapper subsequently dares his opponent to a possible gun battle when he perceives he has been disrespected. Furthermore, Sean Paul is not afraid to shoot his opponent or anyone that may put his life in jeopardy and goes further by "mugging" or giving his opponent a sense that he is crazy to convince his opponent to reconsider the gun battle because the risk of losing his life may be greater than the rapper's. Similarly, the Terror Squad's *Lean Back* which featured Fat Joe and Remy (No. 1 on the rap charts for 2004) mentioned the acceptability of violence:

> I don't give a f*** 'bout your fault or mishappenin's/ Nigga we from the Bronx, New York where… shit happens/ Kids clappin love to spark the place/ Half the niggas on the squad got a scar on they face/ It's a cold world and this is ice.

The Game, in *Hate It or Love It* (No. 10 on the rap charts for 2005), described, "Been banging since my lil nigga Rob got killed for his Barkley's/ That's 10 years I told Pooh in '95 that I will kill you if you try me for my Air Max 95s." The Game begins "gangbanging" for protection, but this grows into a deeper street code adeptness. He acknowledges Pooh's respect from the streets regarding his status as being a "jacker" or what Anderson (1999) would call a stick up man. Markedly, he lets the assailant know that he is different from his friend and will kill Pooh if he tests his manhood to obtain his expensive sneakers (Air Max 95s). The Game describes some fear of being robbed, but he embraces the possibility of reacting violently. According to Anderson (1999), it is critical that the victim is able to withdraw or respond to the challenge based upon how that person has been socialized. The Game and Pooh suggest

that they were socialized by a gang culture, and they possess tendencies that place them at risk for trouble.

Artists who make reference to a gun all described the consequences that may occur if disrespected. This consequence must be without empathy and includes physical harm if the disrespected party has a gun. Anderson (1999) noted that the general atmosphere of danger leads even non-violent individuals to buy guns for protection. In such settings where dire economic conditions force some to use desperate measures, having a gun becomes an equalizer.

Rapper T. I.'s *Dead and Gone* (No. 2 on the rap charts for 2009) tried to make sense of the issue of respect, guns, and violence within the inner city neighborhoods and acknowledged:

Niggas die everyday/ All over bullshit, dope money, dice game, ordinary hood shit/ Could this be 'cos of hip-hop music?/ Or did the ones with the good sense not use it?/ Usually niggas don't know what to do when their back against the wall so they just start shootin'/ For red or for blue or for blo I guess/ From Bankhead or from your projects.

Drugs

Terminologies used for drugs are relevant to the street code, in order to communicate the ideal of Nihilism -disregard for mainstream conformity and irresponsible spending and display of wealth. For many, high unemployment makes selling drugs a reasonable source of income. This dynamic flourishes in the midst of employers' racial preferences; Blacks' economic isolation from the mainstream; and Blacks' lack of access to the human and cultural capital for meaningful legitimate employment. As drugs and drug dealers succeed within a neighborhood their street life becomes more normal, as characterized by the neighborhood.

Regarding to the Top 20 rap songs of the years 2001-2009, the terms that symbolized drugs were identified and broken down by the type of drugs. Drugs referenced included cocaine, marijuana, ecstasy, promenthezine codeine, and prescription drugs. The Top 20 songs contained 22 terms for cocaine. The most common terms for cocaine were crack, coke, and bricks. Of all the illicit drug references, cocaine was most common. The terms for marijuana were more likely in the top 11 to 20 songs as opposed to the Top 10. Markedly, there were eight different terms for ecstasy (i.e., E, pills, rolling, jigga, poppin Ps, skittles, strong and X) and five terms for promenthazine codeine. The deviant use of codeine mixed with a soft drink or juice is known mostly in Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. The five terms referencing this were in the works of David Banner with Chamillionaire and Paul Wall. These artists mentioned the drug's association with Southern street culture. The terms describing prescription drugs, Prozac and Nexenol, were found only once in the Top 20 rap songs. While Anderson referred to drug use as an element of the street code, rap music indicates how the specific drugs vary by region.

The staging area or scene known for drug trafficking in rap music is referred to as the *trap*. Dealers and addicts gave the staging area this label because of the cajoling of drug dealers to increase their profits by trapping or enticing others into drug usage. Yung Joc's *It's Goin' Down* (No. 1 on the Top 20 rap charts for 2006) and T. I.'s *What You Know* (No. 5 on the rap

charts for 2006) vividly described the trap. Yung Joc states, "Catch me in the hood posted at the sto/ Pistol in my lap on the phone counting dough." Additionally, his status allows him to "flip work" [sell drugs] successfully which earns him the ghetto moniker the Black Donald Trump. Similarly, T. I.'s, 2006, song describes similar success yet he deviates from the code by revealing where he keeps his product- in a Louis Vutton knapsack. T. I.'s street credibility allows him to expand his market to various locations beyond his community and he is trusting that his associates will respect him. According to Anderson (1999), a person could miscalculate his surroundings and be robbed, murdered, or set up in a drug trap especially when venturing into an unfamiliar city.

Petey Pablo's *Freek a Leek* (No. 3 on the rap charts for 2004) encourages a young woman to, "Sniff a little coke, take a little x, smoke a little weed, drink a little bit/ I need a girl that I can freak wit." At the conclusion of his song, he goes further to say, "I like to thank Seagrams Gin because I drink it and they paying for it." Webbie's, *Give Me That*, featuring Bun B, (No. 20 on the rap charts for 2005) went further to describe a woman attached to the fast life with the description:

She five foot seven, 139 pounds/Thirty-six, 24, 38 pretty fine brown bad lil broad/ I ain't seen her in a minute since the all-star game and I'm still trying to hit it [have sex]/ Got a baby for this nigga that I used to sell thangs/ He caught a fed case and he ain't leave her no change/ She sold all of his jewels, she sold all of his cars/ Now she dancing in the shaker club strippin' for the stars.

The nexus of the drug addict and the drug dealer is very fragile. The dealer must be ever vigilant. The status of the drug dealer is often based not solely upon the material gain he or she receives, but the violence that the person could inflict to protect his/her territory, the product, and material gains. Jay Z, in *Dirt Off Your Shoulder*, (No. 7 on the rap charts in 2004) exclaimed, "Trying to stretch out the coca, like a wrestler, yes sir/ Keep the Heckler [automatic machine gun] close, you know them smokers'll test you." Jay Z suggests a willingness to inflict physical harm if an addict tries to violently steal drugs from him; he understands that if he is robbed it will render him vulnerable to other addicts and competing drug dealers, as Anderson (1999) described. Similarly, Rich Boy' *Throw Some D's On It* (No. 14 on the rap charts for 2007) described drug dealing's danger:

Rich Boy sellin' crack f*** niggas wanna jack/ Shit tight no slack just bought a Cadillac/ Took it to the chop shop..../ But I still got my glock cocked/New money mother***** don't you see the big knot/Don't you see the big chain/Don't you see the big rims/Wonder who they hatin' on.

The bravado which Rich Boy lauds includes common status symbols associated with being a drug dealer and excessive spending. The illicit proceeds, in the form of large sums of cash, are not taxed, legitimately saved, or invested because of the reporting requirements of financial institutions (Brown 2005). Instead, it is moved more rapidly than legitimate earnings to conceal its origin.

Big Tymers' *Still Fly* (No. 11 on the rap charts for 2002) attached the label "stunting" to those who display financial wealth, but are irresponsible with spending. Their satirical lyrics included, "Gator boots/ with the pimped out Gucci suits/ Ain't got no job but I stay sharp/ Can't pay my rent, cause all

my money's spent but that's OK, cause I'm still fly." As Anderson (1999) described, individuals within the most depressed areas commonly find a way to afford high priced items. He went further to explain the frustration of grandmothers and mothers as they observe the destructive spending habits of their own children in order to maintain a competitive image with others in the community who overindulge materially.

Kanye West's *All Falls Down* (No. 15 on the rap charts in 2004) also noted the irresponsible spending habits of Blacks within the inner city. He described a young woman who is enrolled in college yet the allure of expensive things has led her to question the value of staying in school. Subsequently, he laments the nihilism among Blacks and is concerned that young Blacks would prefer "to shine" because in his terms:

We shine because they hate us, floss 'cause they degrade us/ We trying to buy back our 40 acres/ And for that paper, look how low we a'stoop/ Even if you in a Benz, you still a nigga in a coop/coupe. I say f*** the police, that's how I treat 'em/ We buy a lot of clothes when we don't really need em/ Things we buy to cover up what's inside.

West questioned his motivation and the hip-hop subculture's leadership for coercing the financially illiterate and for being financially illiterate. The waste associated with desires for expensive items that persons are unable to even pronounce was apparently troubling for the young rapper. Similarly, Terror Squad's Fat Joe described in *Lean Back* (No. 1 in 2004), "Got 'da Phantom [a Rolls Royce] in front of da building, Trinity Ave [Trinity housing project]…they still figure me bad." The pride in his very expensive car renders an enigmatic portrait for onlookers; thus, garnering attention to an irrational image of having a Rolls Royce in a housing project.

Nearly all of the artists on the Top 20 from the years 2001 to 2009 have some attachment to a corporate sponsor. For example, Coogi, Vokal, Rocawear, Sean Jean, and Courvoisier liquor are substantial sponsors of the hip-hop subculture. It is important to note that when Busta Rhymes, P. Diddy and Pharrell made *Pass the Courvoisier II* (No. 12 on the rap charts in 2002), liquor sales of this product increased 20%, much of this in the Black community (Lindenmuth, 2003). Rap music's association with the streets is most similar to arguments made by Anderson (1999) and Marable (1983) regarding targeted advertisements of expensive goods given the ill-advised spending habits of many poor Blacks.

Respect for Men and Women

Objectification of women for street respect and sexual suggestiveness for street respect. Anderson (1999) masterfully identified within his ethnography that a lack of access to legitimate avenues of masculinity led to the creation of an alternate Black male identity that emphasizes a street reputation. This includes sexual suggestiveness and the objectification of women as signs of male bravado. Recently, Miller (2008a) described the expectations of masculinity and respect among some African American males as involving the use of violence for sexual conquest. Rap music has remained a male dominated arena and feminists have been critical of its misogynistic overtones by Black men and the threat it poses to Black women.

Miller (2008a), Hutchinson (1999), and Anderson (1999) agreed that the several alternative forms of masculine identities formed by African American men, in low income neighborhoods, put women at greater risk for violent victimization. Hutchinson (1999) went further to conceptualize a form of hierarchy based upon the types of men within a neighborhood's social context. At the top of the hierarchy are: a) the drug dealer, b) rappers and those employed within the drug trade, and c) men that have legitimate forms of employment. Both Miller (2008a) and Hutchinson (1999) concluded that media images endorsing hyper sexual conduct placed inner city females at risk of being disrespected and sexually assaulted. Their study participants revealed that men oftentimes took advantage of women simply because of their physical advantage.

For example, female rapper Eve's *Gangsta Loving* (No. 9 on the rap charts for 2002) exclaimed:

I know these bitches wanna settle you/Gotta say you on my short list, a few/ Them other dudes is OK/ But I'm feelin' you/ Want ya in the best way/ So whatchu gone do about it/ Why don't you just test me/ You won't wanna do without it/ No I'm coming at you hard/ Meetin' a thug/ And I ain't givin' up/ Till I get that gangsta love.

Eve embraces what Hutchinson (1999) described as masculinity hierarchies within low income Black communities. Eve is enthralled by her potential mate's masculinity. She feels free to accost him aggressively for sex. However, other males on the lower spectrum of the hierarchy may be deemed disrespectful if they exhibit hyper masculinity that does not fit their place in the hierarchy. Therefore, men who exhibit decent standards may be cast aside and feel rejected because, in inner city neighborhoods, decency is considered a sign of weakness.

Cam'ron's *Hey Ma* (No. 20 on the rap charts for 2002) revealed the power of material symbolism when competing for a potential sex partner:

Hey ma, what's up, let's slide, all right, all right/ And we gonna get it on tonight/ You smoke, I smoke, I drink, me too, well good/ Cause we gonna get high tonight/ Got drops got Coups, got trucks, got jeeps, all right/ Cause we gonna take a ride tonight/ So ma, what's up, let's slide, all right, all right/ And we gonna get it on tonight.

Likewise, 50 Cent's *In Da Club* (No. 1 on the rap charts for 2002) noted:

You can find me in the club, bottle full of bub/ Look mami, I got the X if you into takin' drugs/ I'm into havin' sex, I ain't into makin' love/ So come to gimme a hug if you're into getting' rubbed.

Anderson (1999) and later Miller (2008a) revealed that girls in inner cities who are poor, but who landed a ghetto superstar experienced this like winning a lottery. Consequently, the participants interviewed by both scholars revealed that coercion via drug and alcohol consumption combined with the gilded display of wealth by *ballers* (i.e., wealthy individuals) gives some women and men the unrealistic perception that their status has improved. Brooks (1995) labeled this ideology as the centerfold syndrome. The *centerfold syndrome* is comprised of five components: voyeurism, objectification, the need for validation, trophyism, and the fear of true intimacy. The problem occurs as men begin to glorify what are often unreal

media-generated images of women. For instance, Ying Yang Twins' *Wait (The Whisper Song)*, No. 12 on the Top 20 chart for 2005, referred to the tendency of African American men to create unreal images of the woman as if willing to see the woman as delicate and tender, but then succumbing to the street code which demands that a person resist the vulnerability that comes with truly loving women. The resistance is then articulated in misogynistic objectification:

> Hey, how you doin' lil mama? Lemme whisper in your ear/ Tell you something that you might like to hear/You got a sexy ass body and your ass look soft/ Mind if I touch it and see if it's soft/ Naw, I'm just playin' unless you say I can/ And I'm known to be a real nasty man/ And they say a closed mouth don't get fed/ So I don't mind asking for head/ You heard what I said/ We need to make our way to the bed/ And you can start usin' yo head/ You like to f***, have yo legs open all in da butt/ Do it up slappin' ass 'cuzz the sex gets rough/ Switch the positions and ready to get down to business/ So you can see what you've been missin'/ You might had some but none like this/ Just wait till you see my dxxx/ Ay bitch, wait till you see my d***/ I'ma beat dat p**** up.

According to Burgest (1990), men's unrealistic sexual expectations of women are exacerbated at times by games women play with their bodies to receive favors in a relationship. The result for some African American women is that their male counterparts, products of family dysfunction, act and speak derogatorily.

Kanye West's *Gold Digger* (No. 6 on the 2005 rap charts) rationalized the extent to which some men will go to attract a "high maintenance" / "gold digger" (i.e., with expensive tastes) female. This gold digger uses sexual favors to sustain herself financially. West revealed that this woman's character would place love-starved men at risk for "getting played" (deceived and exploited). It is the beauty and charm of the woman that allows her to set a trap for unsuspecting men. Trillville's *Some Cut* (No. 11 on the rap chart for 2005) described his potential female mate as a freak given her pierced tongue and visible tongue ring (often done for enhanced sexual pleasure). The rapper proceeded with graphic descriptions of aggressive bravado to persuade the woman to engage in public fellatio. Miller (2008b) stressed that young men in these communities are encouraged by local norms to act in a lewd and violent manner, which renders young women vulnerable to sexual victimization.

Rap Music as Reflective of the "Code of the Street" and Problems in the Urban Ghetto

In addition to the references made to the Code of the Street, contemporary rap includes reflexive discussions of concern about the community, for example, on the rap charts, Kanye West's *Jesus Walks* (No. 11 for 2004), Ludacris' *Runaway Love*, featuring Mary J. Blige, (No. 8 for 2007), and T. I.'s *Dead and Gone* (No. 2 for 2009). These songs expressed a variety of issues, such as a need to reclaim religion as a moral foundation, family disorganization and the need to communicate constructively in order to avoid confrontation.

Jesus Walks by Kanye West begins with, "Yo, We are at war!" He makes reference to the social problems of terrorism, racism, and personal demons. West described the Midwest as a region where young Blacks are restless, depressed, and hungry: A place where, "Niggas might snatch your necklace/ And next these Niggas might jack your Lexus." Similarly, many of Anderson's study participants (1999) (the mothers and grandmothers in particularz0 referenced Christianity as the lens through which they might interpret and address the chaos and crime in their community. West's song includes the ever present reality of death and violence. He goes further to ask God to show him the way because the Devil [society] intends to take him under, "The only thing that I pray is that my feet don't fail me now." Nevertheless, West questions the attentiveness of God with, "And I don't think there's nothing I can do now to right my wrongs/ I want to talk to God but I'm afraid we ain't spoke in so long." He goes on to question other rappers whom fans regard as role models, but whom he perceives as failures in that role given their preference to project a harsh street machismo. Anderson (1999) referenced this phenomenon by concluding that the *old head* or old fashioned model of mentorship was being replaced by younger more identifiable role models that are active within popular culture.

Ludacris' *Runaway Love*, expressed the problems that affect young women residing within dysfunctional homes. The rapper used the family lives of three little girls whom they named Lisa, Nicole, and Erica as a premise for a story. According to the rapper, Lisa's family life is cold because her home life includes herself and an alcoholic mother. The men that inconsistently come in and out of her mother's life emotionally, physically, and sexually abuse her while creating a false consciousness within her mother that Lisa has become her competition for men. Consequently, the girl runs away from home. Nicole is a young girl whom society mistreats. A young lady Stacy becomes her best friend and "anchor" when times become unbearable. However, a gang related drive-by takes Stacy's life and leaves Nicole alone and vulnerable. The heartbreak of losing her closest friend encourages Nicole to run away.

The final character of the rap is Erica, an 11-year old girl who is promiscuous and drug dependant. She becomes pregnant by a teenage boy who abandons her. Unable to obtain monetary or emotional support the young lady becomes afraid then runs away. The fictitious characters throughout the song dealt with their problems by turning to an alternative support system-the streets. Ludacris, in his lyrics, and Miller (2008b), in her research, both concluded that the most disheartening matter facing young Black women is the manner in which female victims are held accountable for their own victimization. The result is often bad choices in the absence of meaningful care and support.

It appears that from 2004 to 2009 there was increasing concern, in the most popular rap lyrics, about socially disorganized aspects of the African American community. This is a significant shift because arguably rap is a viable social platform for proponents of stronger families and safer communities. T. I.'s *Dead and Gone* (No. 2 in 2009) may be interpreted not only as a lesson in going from tragedy to triumph and back, but also as a reminder of the need to change for the sake of family and friends. T. I. eloquently revisited instances where he witnessed violence inflicted upon persons close to him. Such violence led

T. I. to question whether or not the decision to follow the Code of the Street makes a man worthy of respect. The lyrics within this particular work revealed his thinking that the street code is flawed, in that it is not necessarily about a decent kind of respect, but an endorsement of violence. The disorder that he witnessed apparently wore him down to the point that he would prefer to seek respect by avoiding dangerous situations and approaching civility.

Rap Music and Black Youth Perception of the Police within the Ghetto

Negative attitudes towards law enforcement. Conflict between African Americans and the police has been ongoing since the beginning of policing in America. According to Anderson (1999), Kubrin (2005), and Brown (2005), a street code seeks to authenticate the norms that characterize the relationship between illicit actors and decent people, who inhabit separate social spheres, yet are bound by their physical community. Anderson's (1999) street code prescribes an alternative form for protection given low confidence in the police. Both he and Skolnick and Fyfe (1994) described *two Americas*, one where the officers are *our friends* and the other where the police are intimidating and inadequate. Since rap music's emergence within mainstream pop culture, rappers have described the police negatively. The inadequate policing of Black neighborhoods and negative citizen interactions are elements that foster the street code. Anderson (1999) expounded that both decent and street individuals practice the same street code regarding the police, which is, *avoiding them at all costs*. He pointed out that the reluctance to act as a snitch has a dual meaning. It protects the underground economy from police intrusion, yet it leaves the more decent individuals vulnerable to being profiled and exploited by the police. He also posited that the same efforts used to protect one against criminals are used to escape police notice.

It is hard for street criminals to report being victimized, thus, snitching becomes the process of reporting crimes to achieve a desired outcome (Rosenfeld, Jacobs, & Wright, 2003). Rapper Juelz Santana's collaboration with Cam'ron *Oh Boy* (No. 6 on the rap charts in 2002) described a shooting in which he was either the trigger man or accessory to the crime and declared:

Ya'll niggas can't f**** with the (boy)/ I'm telling ya (boy)/ Put a shell in ya (boy) now he bleedin' (oh boy)/ Get him call his (boy)/...He screamin' (boy, boy, boy)/ Damn shut up (boy) he's snitching(oh boy)/ This niggas bitchin' (boy) he's twistin' (oh boy)/ It feds was listenin' (boy) damn, whoa, damn...I'm in trouble need bail money, shit.

Parallel to Rosenfeld et al.'s (2003) interpretation of Anderson's (1999) street code, the rapper is justified for retaliating against a snitch but the victim is deemed weak for reporting being violently victimized. Young Jeezy's *Soul Survivor* (No. 16 on the rap charts in 2005) clarifies this with, "If you get jammed up don't mention my name" He continues:

Gotta watch 'er every move 'cause them eyes be on you/ Gotta drive real cool when them pies be on you/ Just because we stack paper and ball outrageous/ The alphabet boys [police] got us under surveillance.

T. I.'s U *Don't Know Me* (No. 17 on the rap charts in 2005) follows the same line of thinking by stating:

Hey once again let me remind you nigga you don't know me/ So don't be walking up and asking "what's the deal on a ki?" [kilo of cocaine]/ I don't know if you wearing wires, you could be the police/ If I was slanging blow you couldn't get an oz [ounce].

Given that many drug dealers transition out of their illicit enterprise into rap music, not snitching matters. Snitching is not only about reporting crime, but it is a form of social control or, a weapon to eliminate the competition within underground economies. For instance, rapper 50 Cent and Ja Rule's disagreements led to the dissolution of the Murder Inc. record label. 50 Cent's *In Da Club* (No. 1 on the rap charts in 2003) referred to Ja Rules' entourage in the club by stating, "Been hit with a few shells, now I walk with a limp," as a reference to an altercation that left 50 Cent hospitalized after being shot nine times. As the conflict continued, disputes about street credibility began to surface and the revelation of 50 Cent's victimization increased his street credibility. Many lyrics in 50 Cents music that described Ja Rule went from taunting to exposing Ja Rule's associates, who were reportedly tied to New York's criminal underworld. As the attachment to street culture became more public, so did the concern by law enforcement for the safety of specific rap celebrities, due to their loose associations with street figures. Moreover, federal agents began to analyze both rappers' lyrics to determine the validity of their claims of engagement in crime. Consequently, federal agents and tax auditors raided Murder Inc.'s business offices and indicted the owner Irv Gotti on numerous charges ranging from money laundering to tax evasion based upon 50 Cent's lyrics (Brown 2005). The controversy increased 50 Cent's celebrity but destroyed Ja Rule's career. Consequently, many critics within the hip-hop community labeled 50 Cent a "dry snitch."

Chamillionaires' *Ridin* (No. 10 on the rap charts in 2006) reflects Rosenfeld et al.'s (2003) conclusion that certain African Americans are paranoid about the police because of continued unfair harassment and treatment:

Do what you thinking so, I tried to let you go/ Turn up a blink of light and I swang it slower/ A nigga upset for sure cause they think they know that they catching me with plenty of the drink and dro [promenthazine codeine]/so they get behind me trying to check my tags, look at my rearview and they smilin'/ Thinkin they'll catch me on the wrong well keep trying/ Cause they denyin is racial profiling/ Houston, Texas you can check my tags/ Pull me over try to check my slab [vehicle]/ Glove compartment gotta get my cash/ Cause the crooked cops try to come up fast/ And being a baller that I am I talk to them, giving a damn 'bout not feelin' my attitude/ When they realize I ain't riding dirty bet you'll be leaving with an even madder mood/ I'mma laugh at you then I'mma have to cruise I'm in number two on some more DJ Screw/ You can't arrest me plus you can't sue/ This is a message to the laws tellin' them WE HATE YOU.

Despite the divide between community and police, many citizens would agree that the absence of the police would leave the community vulnerable to chaos. Rosenfeld et al.'s (2003) study participants reported having observed a young man being shot in the back and seeing a police officer plant a gun in the man's hand to justify the killing. Chaos struck the hip-hop community with the deaths of Tupac Shakur and Biggie Smalls, in 1996, followed by suggestions of police involve-

ment in both murders. Subsequently, police misconduct has not gone unnoticed within the community and this awareness creates anxiety for those living in the more crime-ridden inner cities. The "hip-hop war" in the 1990s between the east and the west coast rappers prompted police departments in other major cities to form hip-hop units that were attached to gang units. T. I.'s *U Don't Know Me* (No. 17 in 2005) described this phenomenon, "I give a fuck about the feds investigations on me/I don't care they're at my shows and they're waiting on me."

Discussion

Rap lyrics addressing aspects of the Code of the Street are prevalent in the Top 20 Billboard charts songs from 2001 to 2009. The prominent features of the street code in most of the popular rap lyrics produced from 2001 to 2009 contained themes relating to respect, the political economy of the ghetto, African American male dysfunction, misogynistic attitudes towards Black women, police-community relationships, and visible deviance condoned by the legitimate marketing of a "street culture." For example, Kubrin (2005) found that respect was the most common street code theme in the music. Only 19 of the 180 songs made significant reference (more than a phrase) to the code; and some of these references were anti-code messages. There were 17 rappers involved as the lead artist. The modal artist was T. I., who is based in the city of Atlanta. He had three songs depicting the code: *You Don't Know Me*, No. 17 in 2005; *What You Know*, No. 5 in 2006; and *Dead and Gone*, No. 2 in 2009. It is likely of some significance that T. I. is a young African American male who also manifests aspects of the street code in his real life and, indeed, was incarcerated recently on a weapons conviction. After being released, this freedom was revoked based on drug possession and use.

One limitation of the study is that the current Billboard rating system did not exist prior to 2002. Prior to 2002, the Billboard based ratings on a song's longevity, during multiple plays by local radio stations. Beginning in 2002, artists who reflected the most sales had more longevity on the Billboard charts. Currently, the formula in place gives more credence to record sales and includes numbers from Nielson Soundscan sales data and the Nielson Broadcast systems data (Mayfield, 2003).

The study also has the usual limitations of qualitative research in that the researchers brought certain paradigmatic ideas and subjectivities to the project, even though their paradigmatic approach was largely constructivist. While the researchers made thorough efforts to understand the rap lyrics, it is possible that some meanings might have been missed, especially because the meanings of words may differ by era and by region. The study design also makes it difficult to discern conclusively whether life is imitating the art or vice versa. Future studies might examine the extent to which youth of various ages, as well as socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds internalize messages in the music that they consume.

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Students' Perception of Application of Confidentiality in Councelling Practices in Selected Secondary Schools in Rivers State, Nigeria

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This study investigated the extent to which guidance counselors applied confidentiality in counseling practices in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. The study adopted survey research design. Eight hundred secondary school students participated as respondents in this study. Purposive sampling procedure was adopted to randomly select eight local government areas used in this study. A self-structured Application of Confidentiality in Counseling Rating Scale (ACCRS) was used in collecting data for the study. Using mean score analysis and 2-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), the results revealed that guidance counselors kept secret of all their conversations and discussions with their clients in the course of their counseling practices. It was also found that there was significant difference in the perception of secondary school students on extent to which guidance counselors applied the ethics of confidentiality in counseling practices among the secondary schools investigated. The study also showed that there was significant difference in the perception of secondary school students regarding the extent to which guidance counselors applied the ethics of confidentiality in counseling practices among the secondary schools investigated. Moreover, it was evident that interaction effect did not exist in the perception of male and female secondary school students on the guidance counselors' application of the ethics of confidentiality in counseling practices among the secondary schools investigated in Rivers State. It is recommended that there is the need for guidance counselors and the counselees to apply the ethics of confidentiality in their counseling programs; therefore, keeping secret of all their discussions. Guidance counselors should ensure that the code of ethics of confidentiality in the counseling profession is maintained, emphasized and taken seriously.

Keywords: student perception, confidentiality, ethics, counseling practices, guidance counselors, Nigeria

In the school system, students are often confronted with problems in the areas of education, vocation, and personal-social. Guidance counselors are expected to render their services to the students by aiding them and offering them solutions. In the process, guidance counselors are expected to maintain the ethics of confidentiality as stipulated by the counseling profession; that is, keeping secret whatever is discussed by both parties (the guidance counselor and the students) during the counseling session. In some cases, students may not have confidence in the guidance counselors because they perceive that they are not applying the ethics of confidentiality in rendering their services.

One of the important elements in counseling that cannot be overlooked is confidentiality. Confidentiality is emphasized in the code of ethics of the counseling profession to which every practicing counselor is strictly expected to adhere. Gladding (2004) highlighted these ethics as they pertained to counseling

in the United States. In Canada, Konrad (2005) examined several codes of ethics that governed the professional practice of counselors. Also in Nigeria, the practice of counseling could not be completed without a code of ethics, of which confidentiality is primary concern. Uzoeshi (2003) stressed the need for total confidentiality to be maintained in consultancy services and private practice in counseling. This implies that the counselor has to keep secret any information obtained from a client while in private practice, unless it will constitute a threat to the client or society. Hornby (2001) defined confidentiality as a situation in which you expect someone to keep information secret. Therefore, it is concluded that the concept of confidentiality is referring to the act of keeping secret the information gathered by the counselor during the process of counseling the client.

One of the personal and professional characteristics of the counselor is the ability to maintain confidentiality (Ugwuegbulem, 1996). According to Ikpeazu (1996), the ability of the counselor to keep practice this confidentiality is essential to his/her effectiveness as a counselor. Uzoeshi (2003) stated that the counselor must keep confidential any information collected from his/her client either through an interview or while collect-

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