

**Beyond the Music: An Investigation of the Political
Effects of Rap Music.**

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“For Black and Latino youth who have been denied high-quality education, school is no longer the place where they learn literacy and politics. Rather, for many, mass media has become their classrooms.”

Patricia Hill-Collins, *From Black Power to Hip-Hop*, 2006, 191.

“Music has long permeated the daily life of most African-Americans; it has played a central role in the normal socialization process; and during moments characterized by intense movements for social change, it has helped to shape the necessary political consciousness.”

Angela Davis, “Black Women and Music: An Historical Legacy of Struggle,” 2001, 217

In 2004, Jadakiss wrote the controversial song discussed by conservative news pundit, Bill O’Reilly. This discussion was not O’Reilly’s first critique of rap music or rap artists. O’Reilly also ridiculed Pepsi’s endorsement of rapper Ludacris, whom the pundit labeled as misogynistic and vulgar. However, O’Reilly’s critique of Jadakiss dealt with the political lyrics of his song. Jadakiss song entitled *Why*, a top 20 single on the Hip-Hop charts, asked many titillating, political questions about President George W Bush, the republican administration, the 2000 national election and the events of September 11, 2001 (Heim 2004). O’Reilly commented that the song was an “atrocious (Heim 2004).” This example represents only one of many examples of political messages included in rap songs as well as political controversies surrounding rap artists and the hip hop community¹.

Some of the most controversial questions were those that asserted George W. Bush’s alleged involvement with the events of 9/11. Jadakiss asked “[w]hy did Bush knock down the towers?” In his defense, Jadakiss stated that “...it’s only a metaphor...” He continues, “I think that before 9/11 the intelligence agencies weren’t communicating a lot of the important information. And ultimately, at the end of the day, he’s the boss. The buck stops with him”. Previously Jadakiss commented to Billboard.com that he

¹ For more examples of political references in rap music throughout rap history look in appendix A.

“...felt [Bush] had something to do with it. That’s why I put it in there like that. A lot of my people felt he had something to do with itⁱⁱ”. However, Jadakiss was not the only artist that presented political views via the song. Other political questions and ideas were presented. Specifically questions about the results of the 2000 election and the presidency of George W. Bush. In this song Styles P, a rap artist part of the group the L.O.X. with Jadakiss, states,
Why vote Republican if you Black....
Why the country ain’t flipped when they jerked the votes the last election

In this lyric, Styles P questioned the logic of voting for the Republican Party if you are Black, because of the ideas that the Republican Party does not advance issues relevant to the Black agenda (Williams 2003). For instance, it has been asserted that the Republican Party has been advancers of implicit racial messages that resided on white fear of African Americans. Implicit racial messages were displayed in the Bush/Dukakis election, of which it is argued that the image of Willie Horton was used to prime White fear of African Americans. Mendelberg has argued that this tactic played particularly toward the fear of Black men, raping, harassing possibly murdering white women. (Mendelberg 2001).

Similarly, the second line is also a specific reference to the relationship between the government and the people. This verse discussed the catastrophe that occurred in Florida with the ballot count, including the eventual disenfranchisement of many people of color. In Florida, during the 2000 presidential election there were technological problems where the candidate’s name did not accurately line up with the button that was used to vote for that candidate. Subsequently, many ballots were counted by hand. However all ballots were not counted because of a temporal problem in which case the United States Supreme Court made the final decision of the new President.

Another artist, Common, also referenced George W. Bush in his verse on the remix of Jadakiss’ song. In his verse, Common questioned Bush’s concern when it came

to the search for Osama Bin Laden who was recognized as ordering the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

Why is Bush acting like he trying to get Osama
Why don't we impeach him and elect Obama

After questioning Bush's motive for the hunt of Osama Bin Laden, Common quickly offers a solution, to impeach Bush and elect the Black senator from Illinois, Barack Obama. This call for direct action is one form of using rap to mobilize and educate those who listen to the music.

It can also be suggested that Black Nationalist sentiments are expressed through this song. For instance, Jadakiss' reference to the outrage warranted from the results of the 2000 election could demonstrate the Black Nationalist attitudes of having control over the politics in one's community (country) as well as a belief of self-reliance. Therefore, Jadakiss believes there should have been some form of resistance to the obvious exclusion of votes in the 2000 presidential election. Similarly, Common appeals to Black Nationalist attitudes of supporting a Black political candidate whenever he runs. Common's suggestion of electing Senator Barack Obama was not simply a poetic technique but it also was referencing Obama's racial identification as a factor. I am sure Common could have presented another problem with the current administration but he decided to appeal to Blacks sentiments and beliefs of electing a Black official to eliminate problems and gain concessions. These two artists have expressed Black Nationalist sentiments in very subtle ways. However, one may still wonder do these presentations of Black Nationalist attitudes actually affect one's support of Black Nationalism?

In this paper I explore the quantitative avenues of some of these relationships and theories. In this paper, I will demonstrate that the study of rap music assists in the understanding of the development of some political attitudes, thoughts and ideologies among those who listen to rap. As previously discussed, various media outlets have been involved in the debates over freedom of speech, political correctness and political ideologies. I mostly agree with Patricia Hill-Collins that media is becoming one of the dominant means of educating minority youth, however, I argue that schools and family still maintain a large role in the socialization of political attitudes and add that mass media is becoming more of an important education source for youth, regardless of racial or ethnic identification.

This paper evaluates how rap music influences the attitudes and ideologies that are accepted and supported by individuals. I am predominately interested in the effects of rap music on Black Nationalist ideology. Black Nationalism has observed increased empirical research of the effects of these ideologies on different attitudes and behavior (Brown and Shaw 2002; Davis and Brown 2002; Dawson 2001; Harris-Lacewell 2004). Nevertheless, there are still many empirical areas of this ideology that remain untested. One of the untested areas includes examination of the relationship between Black ideology and rap music. This paper assesses the relationship between listening to rap and Black Nationalist ideology, positing the following hypotheses:

H₁: Observing survey data, among those who listen to rap, men will demonstrate a stronger relationship Black Nationalist ideology than women.

H₀: Among those who listen to rap, there is no difference between the relationships of males and females and Black Nationalism.

H₂: Observing survey data, Blacks who listen to rap will have a stronger relationship with Black Nationalism than those who do not listen to rap.

H₀: There is no relationship between rap and Black Nationalist.

H₃: Observing experimental data, those who listen to political rap will be more accepting of Black Nationalism than those who are exposed to no music.

H₀: There is no causal relationship between political rap as a subgenre and Black Nationalist ideology.

Two studies were conducted that empirically examine the relationships between rap and Black Nationalism. These studies were conducted by Michael Dawson and Melissa Harris-Lacewell. This work expands upon the examinations completed by these two political scientists by separating rap music as a sole entity to influence Black political attitudes. This examination is not concerned with how the sample view rap. For instance, viewing rap as destructive or informative should not impact my hypotheses of rap impacting Black political attitudes. Similarly, the exclusion of rap from other Black information sources should still display significant impact upon Black political attitudes.

This paper follows in three parts. The first is a discussion of the survey data and results. Next, I detail the empirical analysis and results utilizing experimental data. Finally, the article concludes discussing the results with a clear assertion that there is a relationship between exposure to rap music and the support of Black Nationalist ideology and listening to political rap leads to Black Nationalist attitudes.

Data and Methods

This paper examines if there is a positive relationship between listening to rap and Black Nationalism. Similarly, among those who listen to rap, is the relationship between

Black Nationalism and rap stronger for men in comparison to women? Finally, is there a causal relationship between political rap and Black Nationalism?

I begin by observing data from the 1993 National Black Politics Study (NBPS)². There is one rap variable analyzed in this chapter. This variable measures if an individual listens to rap at all. I argue that those who listen to rap are exposed to the beliefs and ideologies expressed by the artist and will demonstrate more support for Black Nationalism than those who do not listen to rap. Essentially, this variable is coded to capture those who listen to rap. More people reported that they do not listen to rap than those who reported that they do listen to rap. Out of 1206 respondents to this question, 52.3% do not listen to rap, while 47.7 percent do listen to rap music.

Black Nationalism

There are two common operationalizations of Black Nationalism. One operationalization of Black Nationalism is to measure particular strands of the ideology as observed in Dawson's 2001 book *Black Visions*, where he uses four measures in an index to measure Black autonomy, one strand of Black Nationalism. Dawson found a positive relationship between acceptance of Black autonomy and the belief that rap is a source of information.

Similarly, Brown and Shaw expand on Dawson's four variables and utilize eight variables that are separated to measure two different strands of Black Nationalism,

² NBPS was sponsored by the University of Chicago and conducted by SSI, a private company. The survey was designed "to provide information on attitudes and opinions regarding a number of issues of importance to Black Americans" (Dawson, et al. 1993, 2). The data was collected through random telephone calls to 1,206 cases. The subjects were selected randomly by selecting telephone numbers out of a specific frame. The subjects represent a sample of 65 percent of all Black households inside the United States during the years 1993-1994.

community nationalism and separatism (Brown and Shaw 2002; Dawson 2001)³. Brown and Shaw contend that not all Black Nationalisms are the same. They suggest there are different types of Black Nationalism that have existed over time. In fact, they focus on two facets of Black Nationalism that they identified empirically by displaying that different Black Nationalist attitudes load upon different factors thereby measuring different strands of the popular ideology. They found that affluent Blacks were supportive of community nationalism and younger males were typically support of separatism. This study of Black Nationalism was very important because it demonstrated that some aspects of Black Nationalism may be preferred depending on the subgroup one comprises.

However, another popular operationalization of Black Nationalism is to measure the core doctrine of Black Nationalism as expressed in the empirical work of Davis and Brown's 2002 article which expands on Brown and Shaw's 2002 article. Davis and Brown included ten variables they believed measured Black Nationalism by illustrating that all the variables loaded on one factor and not two factors as Brown and Shaw asserted (Davis and Brown 2002). Moreover, my study utilizes the nationalist index identified by Davis and Brown, therefore expanding on other Black Nationalist indices. My index captures all strands of Black Nationalism using the range of variables present in the 1993 NBPS.

I began by examining the relationship between the variables to observe if they are related. This examination was completed by factor analysis⁴. Next, I created the dependent variable, Black Nationalism, using the ten measures of Black Nationalism as

³ The measures that were used to construct the two nationalist variables can be found in Appendix B.

⁴ These results can be found in Appendix A.

suggested by Davis and Brown in their 2002 article⁵. Theoretically, I chose variables that encompass Black Nationalism. However, empirically these variables were chosen because they were demonstrated to load into one factor.

⁵ The measures are: 1) Blacks should shop in Black-owned stores 2) Blacks should vote for Black Candidates whenever they run, 3) Blacks should rely on themselves and not others, 4) Blacks should participate in Black-only organizations whenever possible, 5) Blacks should form their own political party, 6) Blacks should have control over the government in mostly Black communities, 7) Blacks should form a separate nation, 8) Blacks should support the creation of all male public schools for Black youth, 9) Black children should study an African language and 10) Blacks should have control over the economy in mostly Black communities. The Black Nationalist variables were first recoded into dichotomous variables, ranging from 0 = “strongly disagree” or “disagree” responses to 1 = “strongly agree” or “agree” responses and then they were computed into an additive index. All of the “don’t know” or “refused” responses were coded as system missing. For each item, higher values represent more agreement with Black Nationalist strategies on a 10-point scale. If the respondent strongly agrees or agrees with all 10 items, then she would score ten “1s” which gives her a Black Nationalism score of ten. Conversely, if a respondent scored all “0s” on the items, then she would strongly disagree or disagree with all of the Black Nationalist measures. This coding logic produces a normally distributed interval index that goes from 0 to 10, with median values indicating different degrees of general support for Black Nationalism.

Table 1: Support for Black Nationalist Attitudes by Listen to Rap and Gender

	Listen to Rap		No Rap	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
<i>Blacks Should Support All Male Schools</i>	68%	67%	60%*	50%*
<i>Blacks Should Join Black-Only Organizations</i>	59%	64%	51%	57%
<i>Blacks Should Vote for Black Candidates</i>	24%	29%	28%	26%
<i>Blacks Should Control Government in Black Communities</i>	70%**	81%**	65%	61%
<i>Blacks Should Shop in Black-Owned Stores</i>	81%**	89%**	83%	85%
<i>Blacks Should Form a Separate Nation</i>	14%**	22%**	14%	10%
<i>Black Should be Self-Reliant</i>	83%	87%	82%	84%
<i>Blacks Should Control Economy in Black Communities</i>	77%*	84%*	68%	71%
<i>Blacks Should Form Their Own Political Party</i>	57%**	68%**	38%	42%
<i>Black Children Should Study an African Language</i>	77%	75%	67%	64%

Source: 1993-1994 National Black Politics Survey (NBPS);

Notes: Table entries are percentages of men and women who listen or do not listen to rap and their support of the following nationalist attitudes: 1) Blacks should shop in Black-owned stores 2) Blacks should vote for Black Candidates whenever they run, 3) Blacks should rely on themselves and not others, 4) Blacks should participate in Black-only organizations whenever possible, 5) Blacks should form their own political party, 6) Blacks should have control over the government in mostly Black communities, 7) Blacks should form a separate nation, 8) Blacks should support the creation of all male public schools for Black youth, 9) Black children should study an African language and 10) Blacks should have control over the economy in mostly Black communities. † $p \leq .1$, * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$.

The above table presents various interesting findings. These results demonstrate relationships between listening to rap and support of these Black Nationalist attitudes. Generally men who listen to rap are more supportive of Black Nationalist attitudes than women who listen to rap. There are of course few exceptions. Specifically, among rap listeners women are more supportive of the attitudes that Blacks should support all male Black schools and Black children should learn an African language, however, the differences are not significant. Similarly, among those who do not listen to rap, men and women are equally split on how many of the Black Nationalist strategies are supported. Men who listen to rap are significantly more supportive of five of the ten Black Nationalist attitudes. For instance, 81 % of men who listen to rap are more supportive of controlling the government in Black communities than 71% of Black women who listen to rap. Among rap listeners, men are 89% supportive of shopping in Black owned stores while women are 81%. Similarly, men are 68% supportive of Blacks forming their own political party while women are 57% supportive of this attitude. 84% of Black males are supportive of the attitude that Blacks should control the economy in Black communities compared to 77% of Black females. Bracey, Rudwick and Meier describes different type of nationalisms including *Bourgeois Reformism* or “the slating and supporting of Negro candidates for political office; the drive for Black political and administrative control of local and county areas where negroes predominate; and the formation of all-Black political parties” (Bracey, Rudwick and Meier 1970). It may be suggested from the above results that males who listen to rap are more supportive of Bourgeois Reformist Nationalism. Finally, men are 22% supportive of forming a separate nation while women are only 14%. This attitude is the less supported nationalist attitude. This attitude is one

of two attitudes that do not receive a majority of support from either gender group or between those who listen and do not listen to rap. Therefore, the belief of forming a separate nation is not a very popular belief but its acceptance is increased among men who listen to rap.

Women who do not listen to rap are significantly more supportive of the attitude “Blacks should support the creation of all male schools,” with 60% of women and 50% of men who do not listen to rap agreeing with this attitude. While women are more supportive of this attitude among those who listen to rap, the differences are no longer significant. These findings support the belief that both rap and Black Nationalism appeals more to males than females. This belief is supported because of the sexist and patriarchal lyrics of rap and history of Black Nationalism. The above results examine if men differ from women depending on exposure or no exposure to rap music and support of Black Nationalist attitudes. Next, I complete Logit regression analysis to observe these effects together.

Table 2: Logit Regression Analysis of Black Nationalism, Rap and Gender

	Listen to Rap	Gender
<i>Blacks Should Support All Male Schools</i>	.463*** (.124)	.237- (.129)
<i>Blacks Should Join Black-Only Organizations</i>	.321** (.119)	-.214† (.124)
<i>Blacks Should Vote for Black Candidates</i>	-.065 (.133)	-.083 (.138)
<i>Blacks Should Control Government in Black Communities</i>	.551*** (.130)	-.348** (.138)
<i>Blacks Should Shop in Black-Owned Stores</i>	.008 (.160)	-.416* (.176)
<i>Blacks Should Form a Separate Nation</i>	.437* (.172)	-.498** (.172)
<i>Black Should be Self-Reliant</i>	.147 (.157)	-.200 (.168)
<i>Blacks Should Control Economy in Black Communities</i>	.552*** (.138)	-.274† (.145)
<i>Blacks Should Form Their Own Political Party</i>	.853*** (.123)	-.305* (.128)
<i>Black Children Should Study an African Language</i>	.504*** (.131)	.114 (.136)

Source: 1993-1994 National Black Politics Survey (NBPS);

Notes: Table entries are logit regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. These analysis include the following nationalist strategies: 1) Blacks should shop in Black-owned stores 2) Blacks should vote for Black Candidates whenever they run, 3) Blacks should rely on themselves and not others, 4) Blacks should participate in Black-only organizations whenever possible, 5) Blacks should form their own political party, 6) Blacks should have control over the government in mostly Black communities, 7) Blacks should form a separate nation, 8) Blacks should support the creation of

all male public schools for Black youth, 9) Black children should study an African language and 10) Blacks should have control over the economy in mostly Black communities. All of the Black Nationalist variables are dichotomous. Listening to rap is coded as one and not listening to rap is coded as zero. Similarly gender is a dichotomous variable with 1 representing female. † $p \leq .1$, * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$.

Observing Table 2: *Logit Regression Analysis of Black Nationalism, Rap and Gender*, gender and rap significantly impact most of the Black Nationalist attitudes except three. Gender does not significantly affect the beliefs that Black children should support an African language, Blacks should rely on self and Blacks should vote for Black candidates whenever they run. Comparably men are generally more significantly supportive of the other Black Nationalist attitudes with the exception of the belief that Blacks should form all male Black schools; here women are significantly more supportive. Likewise, rap does not significantly impact agreement with the attitudes Blacks should be self-reliant, vote for Black candidates whenever they run for political positions or shop in Black own stores. However, the other seven variables are significantly and positively supported by those who are exposed to rap music. These results further demonstrate that rap music listeners and men are overwhelmingly more supportive of most of the Black Nationalist attitudes. Now let's examine what happens to these relationships when control variables are inserted and Black Nationalism is created into one variable as a Black Nationalist index.

Next, I complete a regression analysis of rap and its impact on Black Nationalist ideology. Various control variables are used in this analysis, including, gender, income, urbanicity, education, age, marital status, employment status, and race of interviewer. The gender variable is coded as a dichotomous variable where 1 equals female and 0 equals male. This coding scheme is beneficial because I would like to observe any significant difference of the relationship between rap music, Black Nationalism and the

impact it has on Black women. Hence, I assert that the outcome will follow this equation:

$$\text{Black Nationalism} = a - \beta_1(\text{gender}) - \beta_2(\text{age}) - \beta_3(\text{education}) + \beta_4(\text{urbanicity}) + \beta_5(\text{listen to rap}) + \beta_6(\text{race of interviewer}) + \beta_7(\text{Marital Status}) - \beta_8(\text{income}) + \beta_9(\text{linked fate}) + e$$

Table 3: Support for Black Nationalism by Listening to Rap

	NBPS
Listen to Rap	.498** (.171)
Gender (1= Female)	-.346** (.166)
Income	-.046 (.035)
Education in Years	-.016 (.025)
Age	-.022*** (.006)
Interviewer Race (1=Black)	-1.17 (.924)
Linked Fate	.949*** (.189)
Marital Status (1=Married)	-.037 (.049)
Urbanicity	.246 (.171)
Constant	7.61 (.006)
Sample Size	845
Adjusted R ²	0.079

Sources: 1993-1994 National Black Politics Survey (NBPS).

Notes: Table entries are OLS regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Support for Black nationalism (the dependent variable) is an additive index of the following items: 1) Blacks should shop in Black-owned stores 2) Blacks should vote for Black Candidates whenever they run, 3) Blacks should rely on themselves and not others, 4) Blacks should participate in Black-only organizations whenever possible, 5) Blacks should form their own political party, 6) Blacks should have control over the government in mostly Black communities, 7) Blacks should form a separate nation, 8) Blacks should support the creation of all male public schools for Black youth, 9) Black children should study an African language and 10) Blacks should have control over the economy in mostly Black communities.

† $p \leq .1$, * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$.

Observing these regression results it is evident that rap does have an impact on the support of Black Nationalist ideology. Those who listen to rap maintain a higher significant affinity for Black Nationalist sentiments with the various control variables implemented in the model. This relationship is very important when discussing the relationship between popular culture and political ideology; specifically when analyzing the influence that rap music has on Black political attitudes.

Rap impacts one's acceptance of Black Nationalist ideology. Other variables of significance are age, gender and the belief that what happens to other Blacks impacts one's life. Younger people are more accepting of Black Nationalism, as well as males and those who believe they are connected to other Blacks. These results are supported by many assertions that Black Nationalism appeals to the younger generation and males while emphasizing Black unity. In fact, Malcolm X stated that the Black Muslim (Black Nationalist) movement attracted a certain type of person usually young males (Berry 1989). Also, observed in the OLS analysis is the relationship females have with Black Nationalist ideology. Females do not accept nationalist views as regularly as men partly because of the historical patriarchal behavior and attitude of some of the most prominent nationalist organizations (Hill-Collins 2006). These results support my hypotheses. It is demonstrated here that rap impacts support of Black Nationalism and that men show more support of Black Nationalism than women. The hypotheses concerning the relationship between rap and Black Nationalism are fully supported.

Having observed the relations rap music has with some Black political attitudes it is necessary to observe the impact of different genres of rap on these same attitudes. It is specifically imperative to understand if exposure to rap *causes* Black Nationalist or Black

Feminist attitudes. Next, I examine both the causal relationships of rap music and the impact of particular genres of rap music on Black Nationalist ideology. It is essential to observe the effects of rap by genre because a different genre has the possibility of affecting Black political attitudes differently.

The isolation of political rap is important for my analysis because of "...the existence of more than one type of rap..." (Stapleton 1998, 230). Currently artists like Lil Wayne, Outkast, Ice Cube and Jay-Z have produced politically conscious music. Jay-Z's song 99 problems not only invokes the fourth amendment right of legal search and seizure but also discusses the issues NWA discussed over a decade earlier of police brutality and racial profiling. Therefore there are different subgenres of rap music that need to be identified and examined closely. With apparent political assertions in rap music it is necessary to examine rap's impact on one's political attitude.

Experimental analysis allows for the observance of causal relationships as well as an analysis of the various subgenres of rap music. Similarly, conducting an experiment allows more control of the variables manipulated thereby giving the investigator the option of examining various aspects of rap including comparing rap from the past, as represented in the 1993-1994 NBPS, to current rap. Therefore, this experiment provides a follow-up of the survey data from the 1993-1994 NBPS by allowing the study of subgenres and examining more current rap.

This quantitative method assists researchers in answering very specific questions, allowing for more in-depth studies, but most importantly allowing for examination of causal relationships.

The control of variables is essential to dispel any arguments of different forms of rap being popular during the years prior and up to 1993 and 1994 and comparing the rap popular during those years to current popular rap. For instance, it has been argued that there is a golden era of Hip-Hop where rap songs had more meaning and were more politically and socially relevant. It is believed that the rap of today is not as meaningful or informative as the rap of the past. On the contrary I believe that there still exists politically and socially conscious rap present today. For instance, there are two examples of popular rap artists who were very vocal about political and social issues during the 2008 election season. These two rap artists, both from Atlanta, GA, are Ludacris and Big Boi of Outkast. These artists both created political rap songs which are not typical of the type of rap they usually produce.

Manipulations/Conditions

The experiment had four conditions and a control group. The four conditions were; political rap, mainstream rap and rhythm and blues music and popular mainstream music (pop music). The different genres of music were presented through three carefully selected songs. These songs represented both popular and not so popular contemporary and past rap artists⁶.

The genre of particular interest is that of political rap. Therefore, an analysis of the songs of this genre is necessary to demonstrate how they fit with my definition of political rap. The first political rap song used in the experiments was the song of

⁶ I specifically used artists and songs between the years of 1995-2005. These years were used because this is the time when hip hop artists were on the billboard charts with multiple albums in the top five categories of the billboard. These years can also represent a follow up of the previous National Black Politics Study conducted during 1993-1994. This follow up examination is important because many believe the late 1980's and early 1990's represent an era in hip hop where more political rap was popular (golden era) (Perry 2004). Therefore, one can argue that the results from the NBPS represent one type of music, political rap and not all rap in general.

Georgia.....Bush by rap artist Lil Wayne. This song was written after the devastation of New Orleans by Hurricane Katrina. It is a commentary of the strife in New Orleans as well as the slow response by governmental officials to the victims and survivors of this natural disaster. In the first verse and chorus of this song, Lil Wayne rhymes:

Nooooowww

This song is dedicated to the one wit the suit
Thick white skin and his eyes bright blue
So called beef wit you know who
Fuck it he just let him kill all of our troops
Look at the bullshit we been through
Had the niggas sittin on top they roofs
Hurricane Katrina, we shoulda called it Hurricane (Geeoorrggiaa) Bush
Then they tellin y'all lies on the news
The white people smiling like everythin cool
But I know people that died in that pool
I know people that died in them schools
Now what is the survivor to do?
Got no trailer, you gotta move
Now it's on to Texas and to (Geeoorrggiaa)
They tell you what they want, show you what they want you to see
But they don't let you know what's really goin on
Make it look like a lotta stealin goin on
Boy them cops is killas in my home
Nigga shot dead in the middle of the street
I ain't no thief, I'm just tryin to eat
Man fuck the police and president (Geeoorrggiaa) Bush
So what happened to the levees, why wasn't they steady
Why wasn't they able to control this?
I know some fok' that live by the levee
that keep on tellin me they heard this, stole this
Same shit happened back in Hurricane Betsy
1965, I ain't too young to know this
That was President Johnson now
but it's president (Geeoorrggiaa) Bush

[Chorus]

We from a town where (Georgia)
Everybody drowned, and
Everybody died, but baby I'm still prayin wich ya
Everybody cryin but (Georgia)
Aint nobody tried, there's no doubt on my mind it was (Georgia) Bush

The song can be classified as a political rap song according to my definition because it satisfies the first and the second criteria. This first verse and chorus references a political leader and political position with the constant mention of President George W. Bush. Similarly, this song is filled with references to extensions of political institutions such as the armed forces, and the police department. Lil Wayne also mentions a historical government official, President Johnson. The song satisfies the second criteria by raising awareness of the governmental response to New Orleans after the hurricane. Similarly, he discusses the state of the people and life in New Orleans during this tumultuous time, therefore acknowledging the problems in this city after this disaster. Finally, this song represents the southern region and a recent song.

The second song used in this genre is the song *Police State* by rap artists Dead Prez. This song symbolizes the northern region and a song that satisfies the middle of the time range identified. This song expresses ideas of Black life and injustice in America. It primarily deals with the issue of law enforcement, specifically, the prison system and police. The song begins with an intro by African People's Socialist Party Chairman Omali Yeshitela. In this introduction the chairman details a definition of a state. This definition of a state is an example of a political reference. Moreover, the Chairman also mentions the police department which is an extension of governmental and political departments.

[Chairman Omali Yeshitela]

You have the emergence in human society
of this thing that's called the State

What is the State? The State is this organized bureaucracy

It is the po-lice department. It is the Army, the Navy

It is the prison system, the courts, and what have you

This is the State -- it is a repressive organization

But the state -- and gee, well, you know,

you've got to have the police, cause..
if there were no police, look at what you'd be doing to yourselves!
You'd be killing each other if there were no police!
But the reality is..
the police become necessary in human society
only at that junction in human society
where it is split between those who have and those who ain't got

[Dead Prez]

I throw a Molotov cocktail at the precinct, you know how we think
Organize the hood under I Ching banners
Red, Black and Green instead of gang bandanas
F.B.I. spyin on us through the radio antennas
And them hidden cameras in the streetlight watchin society
With no respect for the people's right to privacy
I'll take a slug for the cause like Huey P.
while all you fake niggaz {*UNNNGH*} try to copy Master P
I want to be free to live, able to have what I need to live
Bring the power back to the street, where the people live
We sick of workin for crumbs and fillin up the prisons
Dyin over money and relyin on religion for help
We do for self like ants in a colony
Organize the wealth into a socialist economy
A way of life based off the common need
And all my comrades is ready, we just spreadin the seed

(Chorus: Dead Prez)

The average Black male
Live a third of his life in a jail cell
Cause the world is controlled by the white male
And the people don't never get justice
And the women don't never get respected
And the problems don't never get solved
And the jobs don't never pay enough
So the rent always be late; can you relate?
We livin in a police state

The rap artists Dead Prez discuss the resistance and anarchist tactics they believe can be used against the government. The vivid details of combating the police station with a bomb demonstrate one form of anarchy against a governmental institution. Dead Prez also discusses the invasion of privacy and the prevalence of a capitalist hierarchy. These

artists are very militant and call for direct action while informing others with their lyrics. They discuss the realities of prison, economic disparity, and sexism in this song while exerting the acceptance of socialist ideology. Hereby this song satisfies all three criteria of my political rap definition. This song makes a political reference, raise awareness about an issue in the community and it provides an example of a solution to the problem as is articulated in the song with the illustration of overthrowing the prison system.

Finally, Ice Cube takes a different stance in his song by critiquing the Black community. His song still represents a political song because it makes a reference to Uncle Sam, a popular political figure. Also, this song raises awareness about the disparities and problems in the Black community in the voice of a critic of that community. Other songs identify problems of the Black community but may not use this approach. Ice Cube's approach is important because it displays other types of political rap including rap that is not a blatant critique of the government but emphasizes ideas of self-determination and self-reliance.

Could you tell me who released our animal instinct?
Got the white man sittin' there tickled pink.
Laughin' at us on the avenue
Bustin' caps at each other after havin' brew
We can't enjoy ourselves
Too busy jealous... Of each other's wealth
Commin' up is just in me
But the Black community is full of envy
Too much back-stabbin'
While I look up the street I see all the japs grabbin'
Every vacant lot in my neighborhood
Build a store, and sell their goods
To the county of sips (?)
You know us po niggas: nappy hair and big lips?
Four or five babies on your crotch
And you expect Uncle Sam to help us out?
We ain't nothin' but porchmonkeys
To the average bigot, redneck honky

You say comin' up is a must
But before we can come up, take a look at US

This song demonstrates how music can be used not only as defenders of the Black community but also critics of the community. Self-criticism has been a popular political tactic throughout Black history. We have seen examples of self-criticism followed by reform tactics through the Black Women's Club Movement, Booker T. Washington and more recently Bill Cosby.

Additionally, there are three other conditions and a control group. The three other conditions are mainstream rap, rhythm and blues and popular mainstream music (pop music). The political rap songs (*Georgia...Bush*, *Police State* and *Us*) were discussed in detail because of their importance to this study. Mainstream Rap songs can be identified as party songs or songs whose emphases are celebratory. This genre includes *Walk it Out* by DJ Unk, *In Da Club* by 50 cent and *Gin and Juice* by Snoop Dogg. Rhythm and Blues genre includes *Love* by Musiq, *Let it Burn* by Usher and *This is How We Do It* by Montell Jordan. Finally, the popular music genre consists of *What I've Done* by Linkin Park, *Saving Me* by Nickleback and *This Love* by Maroon 5.

Procedures and Results

This sample consisted of students from Benedict College, a historically Black College in Columbia, SC. My interests are specifically of the affects of political rap music on Black political attitudes. Therefore, an all Black sample was necessary to examine these questions. Students for this sample were solicited by flyers placed at various locations, email to the student body and investigator's assistants who passed out handbills before and during the experiments. The students were promised a compensation of five dollars after completing the survey. Subjects who agreed to

participate in the study arrived at Alumni Hall on Benedict's campus. Once the student arrived at Alumni Hall the investigator informed each student that she was conducting a study and asked them to sign the consent form if they agreed to participate.

Each subject was randomly assigned to one of five groups by receiving a number 1 through 5 after signing his consent form. The subjects were sent to the respective classrooms which were designated by numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on the door. Randomization is necessary to encourage unbiased results in experimentation and account for external validity problems (Horiuchi, Imai, Taniguchi 2006). The subject was given 20-30 minutes to listen to all the songs and complete the short questionnaire to measure their acceptance of Black Nationalist views. The songs were presented via radio and controlled by research assistants who started and ended the songs⁷. Those in the control group did not hear any music but instead read an article then completed survey.

⁷ The sample size of this survey is 191 participants with ages ranging from 18 to 48 years old. The racial categories of the participants also varied with 175 of the students identifying as African American, two Latinos, one Arab-American, one Native American and 8 people self-identified as Multi-ethnic. This study was conducted two days for a total of 6 hours. The study took place at a time when students did not have any other classes to ensure maximum participation. The experiment did not begin in each classroom until a minimum of five students were present. If students were assigned to a study that was in process the student was asked to remain in the hall until the completion of the study in process.

Table 1: Means of Black Nationalist Attitudes

	Control	Pop	R&B	Mainstream Rap	Political Rap
<i>Blacks Should Form a Separate Nation</i>	2.47	2.31	2.18	2.33	2.63
<i>Blacks Should Control Economy in Black Communities</i>	3.41	3.59	3.47	3.19	3.63
<i>Blacks Should Support All Male Schools *</i>	3.26	3.63	3.74	3.62	3.95
<i>Blacks Should Form Their Own Political Party†</i>	3.47	3.36	3.5	3.05	3.78
<i>Blacks Should Join Black-Only Organizations</i>	3.07	2.8	3.26	3.33	3.17
<i>Blacks Should Vote for Black Candidates</i>	2.61	2.68	2.84	2.24	2.80
<i>Blacks Should Control Government in Black Communities</i>	3.39	3.51	3.21	3.2	3.51
<i>Blacks Should be Self-Reliant</i>	3.54	3.73	3.87	3.45	3.73
<i>Black Children Should Study an African Language</i>	3.51	3.67	3.81	3.71	3.78
<i>Blacks Should Shop in Black-Owned Stores</i>	3.05	2.93	3.39	3.29	3.46

Source: Experimental Data Benedict College;

Notes: Table entries are means resulting from one-way ANOVA analysis. The answer responses were 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neutral, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree. The following nationalist strategies: 1) Blacks should shop in Black-owned stores 2) Blacks should vote for Black Candidates whenever they run, 3) Blacks should rely on themselves and not others, 4) Blacks should participate in Black-only organizations whenever possible, 5) Blacks should form their own political party, 6) Blacks should have control over the government in mostly Black communities, 7) Blacks should form a separate nation, 8) Blacks should support the creation of all male public schools for Black youth, 9) Black children should study an African language and 10) Blacks should have control over the economy in mostly Black communities. † $p \leq .1$, * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$.

Observing the Means of Black Nationalist Attitudes (Table 1), it is obvious that there is a pattern established with those exposed to political rap music expressing more agreement of Black Nationalist attitudes than those in the other conditions. This pattern is generally true except in a few cases. The attitudes that “Blacks should vote for Black candidates whenever they run”, “Black children should study an African language” and

“Blacks should be self reliant” all display higher means by those in the R&B group. Similarly, the belief that “Blacks should join Black only organizations” is increased by exposure to mainstream rap. Therefore a relationship exists that demonstrates listening to Black music in general influences support of Black Nationalist attitudes. These means only show on average the support of various Black Nationalist attitudes. The one-way ANOVA did identify significant results with the variables “Blacks should support all male schools” and “Blacks should form their own political party.” However, this analysis does not display significance comparing the different conditions to political rap. In this study I assert that political rap increases one’s support of Black Nationalism compared to other conditions and specifically compared to exposure to pop or mainstream rap music or no exposure to music. Completing analysis that assesses the differences between the means of the various conditions allows me to assess these relationships. Next, I complete means difference tests (t-tests) to analyze the differences between conditions and support of Black Nationalism.

Table 1.2: Mean difference of Conditions on Support of Black Nationalist Attitudes

	Control vs. Political Rap	Pop vs. Political Rap	R&B vs. Political Rap	Mainstream Rap vs. Political Rap
<i>Blacks Should Form a Separate Nation</i>	-0.16	-0.32	-0.45*	-0.30
<i>Blacks Should Control Economy in Black Communities</i>	-0.22	-0.04	-0.16	-0.44†
<i>Blacks Should Support All Male Schools</i>	-0.69**	-0.32†	-0.21	-0.33†
<i>Blacks Should Form Their Own Political Party</i>	-0.31†	-0.42*	-0.28	-0.73**
<i>Blacks Should Join Black-Only Organizations</i>	-0.10	-0.37†	0.09	0.16
<i>Blacks Should Vote for Black Candidates</i>	-0.20	-0.12	.04	-0.56*
<i>Blacks Should Control Government in Black Communities</i>	-0.12	0	-.30	-0.31
<i>Blacks Should be Self-Reliant</i>	-0.19	0	0.14	-0.28
<i>Black Children Should Study an African Language</i>	-0.27	-0.11	0.04	-0.07
<i>Blacks Should Shop in Black-Owned Stores</i>	-0.41†	-0.53*	-0.07	-0.17

Source: Experimental Data Benedict College;

Notes: Table entries are difference of means resulting from t-tests analysis. In this analysis I compared each condition with the condition of interest political rap to observe any significant difference between exposure to political rap music and other music genres or no music. † $p \leq .1$, * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$.

This table demonstrates what was observed in the previous table that in general those in the political rap group express more support of the Black Nationalist attitudes than those in the other group. However, this table displays the amount of difference expressed between those in the political rap condition and those in other conditions. Negative results in this chart show that those conditions are less supportive of the Black Nationalist attitudes examined than those exposed to political rap. Similarly, positive

results demonstrate greater acceptance of the attitude than those in the political rap group and a zero is no difference between those in that condition and those in the political rap condition. While most of the results are negative displaying that these groups are less support of the Black Nationalist attitudes only some are significantly different. For instance, those that were not exposed to any music (control) are significantly less supportive of the attitudes that Blacks should shop in Black owned stores, support all male schools and form their own political party. Those in the pop and mainstream rap conditions are also less supportive of those attitudes with those in the pop also being less supportive of the attitude that Blacks should join Black only organizations. Similarly those in the mainstream condition in addition to being significantly less supportive of the three attitudes of significance in the control group are also less supportive of the attitudes that, Blacks should control the economy in their own community and that Blacks should vote for Black candidates whenever they run. Finally, those in the R&B condition are significantly less supportive of the attitude that Blacks should form a separate nation. These relationships demonstrate that exposure to music does impact political attitudes⁸. This analysis alone shows that music does cause the acceptance of some political attitudes which confirms my question of whether exposure to certain music actually causes the increased support of political attitudes. In Chapter Three I was unable to assert a conclusion that music increases support of some Black political attitude because the analysis in that chapter only displayed correlation. Experimentation was essential to uncover any causation between music and political attitudes. Observing the above two charts it is apparent that music can cause the support of some political attitudes. Having

⁸ If you are interested in examining these relationships by gender the charts are in Appendix C.

established that music can be a causal factor in support of political attitudes it is necessary to examine the relationship between music and Black political ideologies. Next, I examine the impact of the various conditions on Black Nationalism. For this examination I create a scale that measures Black Nationalism as an ideology.

To measure Black Nationalism and its relationship to the various conditions implemented in the model I construct a Black Nationalist index using the same procedures as the Nationalist index constructed in Chapter Three⁹. These nationalist scores are averaged and I compare the means of support of those in the various conditions to assess if there is any relationship between support of Black Nationalism as an ideology and exposure to music. The results support my hypothesis that exposure to political rap causes increased support of Black Nationalism.

⁹ The following nationalist strategies: 1) Blacks should shop in Black-owned stores 2) Blacks should vote for Black Candidates whenever they run, 3) Blacks should rely on themselves and not others, 4) Blacks should participate in Black-only organizations whenever possible, 5) Blacks should form their own political party, 6) Blacks should have control over the government in mostly Black communities, 7) Blacks should form a separate nation, 8) Blacks should support the creation of all male public schools for Black youth, 9) Black children should study an African language and 10) Blacks should have control over the economy in mostly Black communities, were computed into an additive index that measures support of Black Nationalism with higher numbers equaling higher support.

Graph 1: Support of Black Nationalism by Genre of Music

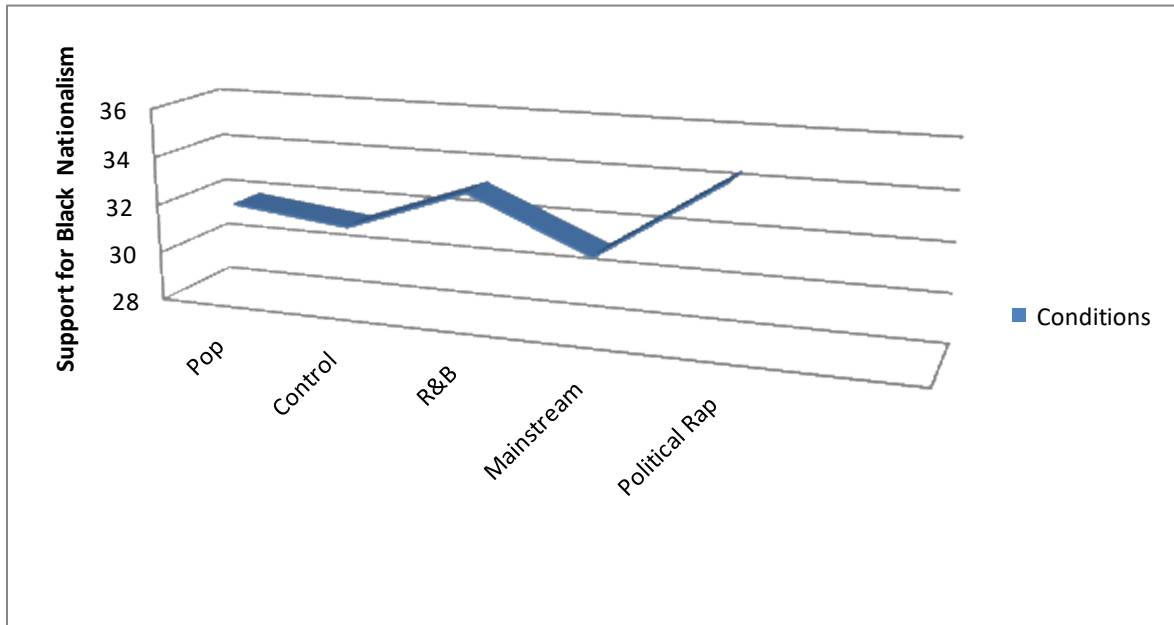


Table 2: Black Nationalism and Genre of Music

	Average Black Nationalism	t-test
Political Rap	34.46	---
Control Condition	31.37	-2.21**
R & B Music	33.21	-.843
Pop Music	31.91	-1.87*
Mainstream Rap	31.10	-2.05**

Note: The t-tests are comparisons of the treatment means with the Political rap group which has a mean of 34.46. * $p < .1$ ** $p < .05$ (2-tailed test).

These results demonstrate that the genre of music heard or lack thereof significantly impacts one's support of Black Nationalism¹⁰. Those in mainstream rap, pop and the control group are significantly less supportive of Black Nationalism than those in the political rap group. This is very important because it confirms my hypotheses that the genre of music impacts Black Nationalist ideology. Specifically, political rap increases one's support of Black Nationalism. Therefore rap is important to the construction and acceptance of Black Nationalism, but not all rap. Political rap is more important to the acceptance of a Black Nationalist identity than mainstream rap. All rap music is not the same and all rap does not influence Black Nationalist sentiments. This result is very important considering the previous and current discussions around rap music. Often rap music is all grouped into negative discussions with many believing that rap only leads to sexist, nihilistic attitudes. On the other hand, others assert that rap can have positive results. Here I demonstrate that political rap positively influences Black Nationalism. These results demonstrate that there are differences in rap music and identifiable differences between the influences of rap music on political attitudes specifically Black Nationalism.

Conclusion

This paper provides important information about the relationships between rap music and Black Nationalism. Exhibited in this paper, there are significant relationships between listening to rap, gender and Black Nationalist ideology. It has been demonstrated that there are strong positive relationships between men, listening to rap and Black Nationalism. Men who listen to rap show stronger significant relationships

¹⁰ The Black Nationalist variable was created using the same procedures as identified in Chapter Three. This Black Nationalist scale has a reliability score of .73 and all the variables load on one factor.

with Black Nationalism than women. There is no relationship between rap music and Black Feminist ideology. However, some Black Feminist attitudes display relationships with exposure to rap. In this chapter other interesting findings were also uncovered. For example, listening to rap showed significant positive relationships among males with some Black Feminist attitudes compared to males not exposed to rap. Finally, listening to rap positively impacted some of the relationships between women and Black Nationalist attitudes.

Similarly, in political science, experiments on college students are not widely accepted. This type of methodology is often contested because there is belief that students are not a representative sample. However, this is the beauty of experimentation. Good experiments stem more from correct manipulation than from representative samples. It is very difficult to obtain a representative sample to participate in an experiment completing field or lab work. The emphasis is therefore placed on having the best manipulations and model to measure exactly what you need and attempt to control for all other factors.

This paper demonstrates that when observing Black political attitudes among African American music does impact one's support of Black political attitudes. I have shown that political rap increases the support of Black Nationalism, specifically in comparison to pop music, mainstream rap or no music. Therefore, what Harris-Lacewell (2004) contends is correct, there are various avenues African Americans receive political information that assist in the formation of the political attitudes and music choice happens to be one of them.

Observing that political rap causes Black Nationalist attitudes among Black participants establishes that not only is rap important but the type of rap one listens to may have more influence on his political attitude. These results were uncovered in controlled situations. Students were passively exposed to the music but it can be argued that because of the assignment of different classrooms and informing them that they were participating in a study cued them to pay more attention to the various songs than normally. If this is true, is everyday exposure to rap music influencing Black political attitudes? Similarly, understanding that political rap is not the type of rap one is frequently exposed to in places where rap is typically heard such as celebrations, night clubs and the car should we expect to observe different results among the general population?

Many major African American movements were supported and fueled by music. Rose comments, “rap continues the long history of Black cultural subversion and social critique in music and performance” (Rose 1994, 99). Therefore, examination of the relationship between Hip-Hop and Black Nationalist ideology in the United States can add another important variable to the theory of attitude formation and the support of certain ideologies in the Black Community. The inclusion of rap music exposure is a variable that should be highly considered when examining Black public opinion data and attitudes that may lead to specific political behavior of African Americans.

Appendix A

Factor Analysis of the 10-variable Black Nationalist Index

Variables	Factor 1	Factor 2
Black Political Party	0.4686	0.1554
Black Only Organization	0.495	0.0736
Vote for Black Candidate	0.4414	0.2303
Shop in Black-Owned Stores	0.4025	-0.2232
Attend All Male Schools	0.4480	0.2015
Study African Language	0.3924	0.1119
Control Government in Comm.	0.5919	-0.2477
Control Economy in Comm.	0.5986	-0.2913
Rely on Self	0.3248	-0.0863
Form Separate Nation	0.4496	0.1554

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring

Factor Analysis of the 5-variable Black Feminist Index

Variables	Factor 1	Factor 2
Black Women Suffered from Sexism and Racism	0.1160	0.1249
Black Feminist Help Black Community	0.3672	-0.0532
Black Women Should Share Political Leadership	0.3811	0.0467
Racism, Poverty and Sexual Discrimination Linked	0.3393	0.0580
Strong Black Women Should be Silenced	0.2104	-0.0696
More Black Women Should Be Clergy Members	0.3735	-0.0477

Extraction Method: Principal Factoring unrotated

Appendix B

Community Nationalist Index (Brown and Shaw):

Black people should shop in Black-owned stores whenever possible.
Blacks should have control over the government in mostly Black communities.
Blacks should rely on themselves and not others.
Blacks should have control over the economy in mostly Black communities.

Black Separatism (Brown and Shaw):

Black people should always vote for Black candidates when they run.
Do you think Blacks should form their own political party?
Black people should have their own separate nation.
Black people form a nation within a nation.

Black Nationalism (Davis and Brown, used in this study):

Blacks should shop in Black-owned stores
Blacks should vote for Black Candidates whenever they run
Blacks should rely on themselves and not others
Blacks should participate in Black-only organizations whenever possible
Blacks should form their own political party
Blacks should have control over the government in mostly Black communities
Blacks should form a separate nation
Blacks should support the creation of all male public schools for Black youth
Black children should study an African language
Blacks should have control over the economy in mostly Black communities.

Dawson's Black Autonomy:

Blacks should have control over the government in mostly Black communities
Blacks should support the creation of all male public schools for Black youth
Black people should shop in Black stores whenever possible
Blacks should have control over the economy in mostly Black communities

Black Feminism Scale:

Black women have suffered from both sexism within the Black movement and racism within the women's movement?
There is a strong tendency in American society to silence strong Black women such as Attorney Anita Hill and Justice Department candidate Lani Guinier?
The problems of racism, poverty and sexual discrimination are all linked together and must be addressed by the Black community?
Black feminist groups help the Black community by working to advance the position of Black women?
Black churches or places of worship should allow more women to become members of the clergy?
Black women should share equally in the political leadership of the Black community?

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Notes

ⁱJoe Heim, "Rapper Ups the Anti on Bush and 9/11," *The Washington Post*, 17 July 2004, Style; C01. Ginal Edition.

ⁱⁱ Ibid