



UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.

EXPLORING THEMATIC CHANGES IN THE MOST POPULAR RAP LYRIC:

A MIXED METHODS CONTENT ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Aim: The study aims to systematically analyze the thematic elements in popular rap lyrics from 2004 to 2023, focusing on how these themes reflect cultural, social, and commercial trends within the genre. The objective is to understand the prevalence and evolution of these themes over two decades. **Method:** A mixed methods approach was employed, combining qualitative content analysis with quantitative data examination. The dataset consisted of 200 songs, representing the top 10 songs with rap lyrics from each year between 2004 and 2023. Lyrics were systematically coded using a codebook developed from existing literature and refined through iterative analysis. **Results:** The analysis revealed several prevalent themes in rap lyrics, including authenticity and storytelling, brand and name dropping, brutality and violence, contemplation and introspection, cultural and local referencing, dissing, emotions and feelings, the most frequent theme of all, empowerment and sexual agency, flexing, misogyny, and sociopolitical commentary. The distribution of these themes varied across the study period, reflecting changes in cultural and social dynamics. **Discussion:** The findings emphasize the dynamic character of rap lyrics, with "Emotions & Feelings" occupying a prominent position, showing the genre's emphasis on personal and emotional expression. Materialistic lifestyle motifs, such as explicit brand references and flexing, are also exceedingly widespread, underscoring the significance of material affluence within the rap culture. While popular rap lyrics still contain sociopolitical critique, it is not as prominent as topics of emotional expression and materialism. This indicates a transition towards narratives in current rap music that are increasingly centered around personal experiences and materialistic themes.

Keywords: Rap lyrics, thematic analysis, hip hop culture, Billboard charts, cultural trends, content analysis

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT.....	2
1. INTRODUCTION.....	5
2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	8
2.1 THEMES IN RAP SONGS	8
2.1.1 Sociopolitical Commentary.....	9
2.1.2 Authenticity and Storytelling.....	11
2.1.3 Flexing.....	13
2.1.4 Cultural & Local Referencing.....	14
2.1.5 Emotions & Feelings.....	16
2.1.6 Brutality & Violence	17
2.1.7 Misogyny	19
2.1.8 Empowerment.....	20
2.1.9 Dissing.....	21
2.1.10 Intertextual References.....	22
3. METHODOLOGY.....	23
3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN	23
3.2 CORPUS.....	25
3.3 DATA ANALYSIS	28
3.3.1 Codebook and Codebook Construction	28
3.3.2 Data Collection and Analysis.....	35
3.3.3 Data Analysis Tools	37
3.3.4 Intercoder Reliability	37
3.4. ETHICAL CONCERNS	40
4. RESULTS.....	41
4.1 OVERALL THEME DISTRIBUTION	41

4.2 AUTHENTICITY & STORYTELLING	44
4.3 BRAND & NAME DROPPING	47
4.4 BRUTALITY & VIOLENCE.....	50
4.5 CONTEMPLATION & INTROSPECTION.....	52
4.6 CULTURAL & LOCAL REFERENCING	53
4.7 DISSING.....	56
4.8 EMOTIONS & FEELINGS	58
4.9 EMPOWERMENT & SEXUAL AGENCY	60
4.10 FLEXING.....	62
4.11 MISOGYNY.....	64
4.12 SOCIOPOLITICAL COMMENTARY	66
5. DISCUSSION	68
5.1 MAIN FINDINGS	68
5.2 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS.....	72
5.3 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS	76
5.4 LIMITATIONS.....	78
5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH.....	81
CONCLUSION.....	82
REFERENCES.....	84
APPENDENCIES.....	91
APPENDIX A	91
APPENDIX B.....	111
APPENDIX C.....	134
APPENDIX D	145
APPENDIX E.....	154
APPENDIX F	155

1. Introduction

Throughout history, music has played a central role in human civilization. In fact, evidence indicates that even Neanderthals utilized music for vital social functions before the advent of language, serving a crucial role in emotional communication and fostering social cohesion in early human communities (Mithen, 2006). The ubiquity of music and its integration into everyday life highlights its deep-seated cultural significance and diversity across global societies (Greenberg et al., 2021; Mehr et al., 2019; IFPI, 2023). Its adaptability to various behavioral contexts and capacity to reflect cultural and social nuances underscore its role as a dynamic form of cultural expression (Aina & Miquel, 2012; Eyerman & Jamison, 1998). This enduring cultural relevance of music has persisted while also adapting and evolving in the modern digital era.

In the context of contemporary music history, hip hop has become a pervasive cultural force. Characterized by the four representative elements of breakdancing, DJing, graffiti art, and rapping, it has deeply influenced various artistic expressions and emerged as a significant cultural movement, mainly resonating with young audiences (Androutsopoulos, 2009; Chukwuma & Onwuekwe, 2022; Morgan & Bennett, 2011). At the core of the cultural hypernym of hip hop is rapping, which consists of the structured placement of rhymed lyrics over musical beats and has assumed a predominant role within hip hop in recent years, establishing itself as its own genre system called hip hop or rap (Alim, 2009; Krim, 2000, as cited by Androutsopoulos, 2009; Androutsopoulos & Scholz, 2002).

Over time, with help of the digital trajectory, starting around two decades ago, the genre has experienced globalization and a surge in popularity, becoming one of the most and widely listened-to in the global music market (Spotify, 2023). This shift has not only transformed media consumption and cultural engagement but also facilitated a direct and faster connection between rappers and their listeners, enhancing the immediacy and impact of their music (Nordgard, 2018; Spilker et al., 2018).

The direct interaction between hip hop and by extension rap with its audience significantly influences youth language by providing a platform for identity expression and social navigation through distinctive linguistic styles like slang and colloquialisms (Androutsopoulos, 2009). The genre reshapes everyday speech by introducing new words, altering meanings, using wordplay and wit, and rearranging grammar, reflecting its dynamic nature (Abba, 2023; Lewis, 2023). This innovation impacts youth language as young individuals adopt these expressions and styles, contributing to the evolution of contemporary English (Aina & Miquel, 2012).

Whilst rap has a significant impact on language in terms of its style and vocabulary, there is a dearth of thorough examination about the subjects that modern rappers tackle. This gap leaves the broader picture of how cultural shifts and youth perspectives are reflected in rap music unexplored. In sociolinguistics, it is often shown how changes in language use reflect social change, a concept that also applies to rap music, where social criticism, political messages, and social movements play a significant role, underscoring the strong link between society and the themes in rap music (Armstrong & Ferguson, 2010; Androutsopoulos & Scholz, 2002; Eyerman & Jamison, 1998; Pardue, 2004).

Numerous analyses of rap songs have been undertaken, yet these studies concentrated on themes like misogyny or violence, or sampled songs that predate the digital shift around the year 2004 (Weitzer & Kubrin, 2009; Herd, 2009; Androutsopoulos & Scholz, 2002). Additionally, only songs classified as exclusively rap or hip hop were considered, while rap lyrics within non-rap songs were excluded. In other words, research is still lacking on the themes addressed in the most influential modern rap lyrics, impacting not only the core rap audience but also mainstream listeners. This narrow focus fails to capture the dynamic and multifaceted nature of rap as a form of cultural expression. The lack of comprehensive thematic analysis in modern rap music thus represents a significant research gap. Addressing this gap is crucial for understanding how rap music not only reflects but also shapes the evolving cultural landscape. By only examining the most prevalent themes and their evolution over time, one can identify how cultural values, concerns, and interests have shifted, reflecting broader societal changes. Additionally, identifying these themes and their trends provides insights into the issues and topics that resonate most with young audiences, helping to understand their perspectives and priorities.

Considering the digital shift since 2004 and the importance of capturing the themes in the most influential, audience-reaching songs with rap lyrics, this bachelor's thesis will use the Billboard charts to identify the most popular songs. Therefore, the central research question guiding this bachelor's thesis is:

"What themes are represented in the most popular rap lyrics in the End-Year Hot 100 Billboard charts over the last two decades, and how have these themes developed over time?"

2. Theoretical Framework

To provide a comprehensive theoretical background for this study, it is essential to delve into academic literature concerning hip hop and rap. This exploration involves examining the diverse themes represented in rap lyrics, which provides insight into the genre's cultural significance and the nuanced ways it reflects and influences societal trends. Analyzing these themes offers a foundational understanding to inform the analysis in this research. By focusing on the evolution and representation of themes in rap songs, we can gain a deeper understanding of how the genre captures and shapes the cultural and social dynamics of different eras.

2.1 Themes in Rap Songs

In the realm of rap music, lyrical themes serve as the backbone of the genre, reflecting the diverse array of topics and issues that resonate with its audience. These themes, which range from social and political commentary to personal experiences and beyond, play a crucial role in shaping the narrative and cultural significance of rap. By dissecting the lyrics, one can uncover the genre's unique perspective on life, culture, and society. These themes serve not only as reflections of the artists' realities but also as influential narratives that shape listeners' perceptions and identities (Reza, 2018). This exploration of themes provides invaluable insights into how rap not only mirrors the world around it but also shapes perceptions and influences its listeners.

Since its origin in the urban landscapes of New York, representing only Black youth culture, rap and hip hop found their way into the mainstream. Mainstream non-rap/hip hop artists

began incorporating its elements into their music, signifying an early indication of rap and hip hop merging with other genres like pop, and giving rise to new hybrid genres such as pop rap, country rap, and trap (Dyson, 2004; Grant, 2024; Mitchell, 2001; Tang, 2020). This evolution has broadened the reach and impact of rap, integrating its unique themes and cultural expressions into a wider musical and cultural context.

In the following sections, the most prevalent and impactful themes found in rap songs, as identified in academic literature, will be presented. Each thematic block will shed light on how these topics are articulated in rap and music lyrics and their broader implications for understanding the genre's cultural influence.

2.1.1 Sociopolitical Commentary

Rap music has historically served as a powerful platform for social commentary and political activism, addressing issues like police brutality, drug addiction, and economic hardship, while also revealing intraracial class divisions (Dyson, 2004; Morgan & Bennett, 2011; Wilson, 2018). Issues of police brutality, drug addiction, and economic hardship are often intertwined with themes of street life and urban challenges, highlighting the genre's roots in the struggles of inner-city communities (Wilson, 2018). Hence, rap is regarded as a means of political defiance, with hip-hop musicians establishing themselves as influential figures pushing for a society that embraces diversity (Pardue, 2004; Tang, 2020). Songs often convey intense emotions toward existing structures, encapsulating both acceptance and resistance against perceived injustices while embodying a form of popular resistance (Berker, 2022).

The effect of rap music stretches worldwide, significantly affecting both musical and political situations. It frequently advocates for the rights and concerns of ethnic minorities and addresses local issues (Mitchell, 2001). An exemplary instance may be found in Kendrick Lamar's body of work, which are well acclaimed for their storytelling about prevailing over challenges and tackling social problems. These works emphasize the genre's function in questioning and countering preconceptions, as well as amplifying the voices of and for marginalized people (Wilson, 2018).

The role of music in social movements is particularly evident in African-American history. From slave songs to "freedom songs" African-American music has conveyed messages of hope and transcendence through decades of struggle, forming the foundation of the civil rights movement (Floyd, 1995, as cited in Eyerman & Jamison, 1998). This tradition carries an inherent tension between exclusion and inclusion, balancing a separate African-American identity with a broader American musical identity and therewith reflecting the socio-political climate (Eyerman & Jamison, 1998). In the 1960s, music significantly influenced the cognitive praxis of social movements, evolving alongside the expanding civil rights movement. This era witnessed remarkable innovation that reshaped American and global culture, with lyrics reflecting the socio-political landscape and realities (Eyerman & Jamison, 1998; Lewis, 2023).

Content analyses of rap songs across European countries reveal consistent themes of social critique and self-presentation, highlighting the genre's ideological role in reflecting hip hop's sociopolitical orientation (Androutsopoulos & Scholz, 2002). European rappers frequently address a range of socio-political issues in different narrative styles, from introspective reflections to overtly provocative statements (Androutsopoulos & Scholz, 2002). Similar themes

have emerged in other parts throughout history, with art and music serving as channels for traditions of resistance and critique (Marcuse, 1964). The resources of human culture, including music and artistic expression, have always played a role in political struggles (Eyerman & Jamison, 1998).

In conclusion, themes expected to be found in rap music include street life, urban challenges, police brutality, drug addiction, economic hardship, and discussion of class divisions, all intertwined with the genre's historical and ongoing role in advocating for social justice and political activism.

2.1.2 Authenticity and Storytelling

Authenticity in rap and hip-hop culture is intertwined with the themes of social and political commentary. Thus, it is defined by the presence of reflections and anecdotes about the artist's present or previous life, as well as reporting on strategies to combat and overcome injustice, racism, social difficulties, and urban problems.

The concept of authenticity holds great significance in rap music, as it is intricately connected to the ideals of maintaining genuineness and remaining loyal to one's origins and individual encounters. This theme is conveyed through diverse methods, encompassing the depiction of personal hardships and urban issues, as well as the portrayal of impoverished neighborhoods that exhibit harsh and violent lives (Pennycook, 2007; Reza, 2018; Wright, 2010). In general, reporting on socio-political concerns is commonly perceived as inherently genuine. The street culture in this instance plays a pivotal part in expressing genuineness in rap music.

The streets are regarded as the heart and soul of hip-hop, providing valuable perspectives on the genre's inception and sociological backdrop (Alim, 2009).

The concept of authenticity in hip-hop, frequently expressed as "keepin' it real," questions the perception of the genre's worldwide dissemination. Some people argue that it is often criticized for its excessive focus on violence, drugs, and living in disadvantaged neighborhoods. It is often seen as a conviction that these harsh lifestyles are fundamentally genuine. Rappers frequently differentiate themselves from artists in other genres by presenting an authentic and unadulterated portrayal of their lives, characterized by rebellion and a lack of concern for the outcomes (Lal, 2023). The focus on authenticity in rap music plays a vital role in artists' ability to establish credibility and create a strong bond with their audience by emphasizing their origins and personal hardships (Staggini, 2022). According to Wright (2010), authenticity is a social concept that plays a crucial role in validating not just the music itself, but also the artists, listeners, and the wider hip-hop culture. The sense of authenticity has a significant impact on the decision-making process of music consumers and can affect their purchasing habits. Moreover, Wright proposes that authenticity in rap is a comprehensive notion that includes the artist's public persona, cultural portrayal, and whole way of life, rather than being restricted to just the lyrics.

In summary, authenticity and storytelling in rap music are deeply intertwined with the genre's emphasis on social and political commentary, establishing credibility and connecting with the audience through reflections on personal hardships and societal injustices.

2.1.3 Flexing

Transitioning from the theme of authenticity and storytelling, where rappers recount their past struggles and the challenges they have faced, the narrative often shifts to one of triumph and success. After highlighting their resilience and the authenticity of their experiences, rappers frequently emphasize their achievements, showcasing the rewards of their perseverance. This transition allows artists to flex about their current status, wealth, and skills, illustrating how their hard work has paid off.

Overcoming the hardships of life and achieving success in the rap industry permits artists to boast about their material wealth, success, and exceptional rap skills. Flexing, a prevalent theme in rap music, revolves around flaunting luxury and affluence. This theme, often referred to as "flex culture", involves artists displaying their wealth through luxury items, extravagant lifestyles, and opulent visuals (Staggini, 2022). The concept of flexing extends beyond mere accumulation of wealth to include the lifestyle and opportunities that accompany financial success. This theme resonates with listeners who view it as a reflection of their aspirations and experiences, particularly in the context of economic struggle and the pursuit of wealth (Reza, 2018; Harris, 2024).

Rappers have turned into influential figures who shape popular taste, create fashion trends, and attain celebrity status, exerting their influence not only in the realm of music but also in broader cultural domains (Power & Hauge, 2008). As an example, Kanye West brought about a notable cultural change in hip-hop by redirecting the attention from street conflicts to topics

such as sneakers, fashion, and artistic design. The transformation highlighted the significance of rappers as influential people in the realm of fashion and design, hence reinforcing the idea of showcasing wealth and success in the hip-hop narrative (Lal, 2023).

The depiction of affluence in rap music is complex and has several aspects. It might serve as an inspiration, highlighting the artists' financial success and luxurious lifestyle, or it can be a criticism of materialism and societal ideals. The lyrics and music videos frequently mirror wider cultural perspectives on affluence and materialism, presenting "flexing" as a recurring topic that simultaneously celebrates and scrutinizes the influence of money in popular culture (Harris, 2024; Staggini, 2022).

To summarize, the act of flexing in rap music serves as a means to emphasize the intricate connection between money, lifestyle, and cultural ideals. It encompasses the desires and criticisms of a culture that is closely linked to ideas of affluence and achievement.

2.1.4 Cultural & Local Referencing

Rap artists incorporate cultural references that resonate with their listeners by embedding local landmarks, traditions, and colloquial language into their lyrics (Androutsopoulos, 2009). Through these cultural references, artists convey localized narratives that simultaneously engage in a global dialogue, reflecting the cultural synchronization present in hip hop (Tang, 2020). Such lyrics embody cultural expressions that enrich hip hop by bridging cultural divides through shared stories.

Local Referencing in Rap Music. Artists weave local references into rap music through elements such as local landmarks, temporal references, and representations of their communities, rooting their lyrics in familiar, tangible environments (Androutsopoulos & Scholz, 2002). This practice includes self-referential talk that celebrates distinctive language use, creating localized narratives that contribute to global hip hop dialogue (Androutsopoulos, 2009). Alim (2009) emphasizes the thematic importance of the street in rap music, illustrating how artists draw from their surroundings to express their experiences.

Localization extends beyond linguistic nuances to include cultural themes and contexts that distinguish hip hop on a local level. By challenging language practices and ideologies, rap artists infuse their music with local elements that reflect and shape their cultural surroundings (Pennycook, 2007). These localized themes form a distinct layer within the global hip hop culture, illustrating the interplay between global and local influences.

Rap Scene Representation & Identity. Self-presentation is part of rap music, often centered on artists expressing themselves and their crew, frequently through boasting, dissing and storytelling (Androutsopoulos & Scholz, 2002; Tang 2020). The rap scene discourse extends this theme, where songs reference the local or national hip hop scene with both praise and critique, particularly concerning the music industry. Such songs also emphasize love and devotion to hip hop culture, addressing elements like graffiti and the significance of vinyl records in the genre (Androutsopoulos & Scholz, 2002).

Brand & Name Dropping. Mentioning brand or proper names plays a significant role in rap music, incorporating cultural elements into the lyrics. This characteristic of hip hop culture dates back to early African American vernacular traditions like from the late 1960s. The

references in rap songs span a wide array of subjects, including musicians, actors, brands, fictional characters, and media products, reflecting the broader influence of American culture on the global stage (Androutsopoulos & Scholz, 2002). Brand mentions have become increasingly prominent in rap, particularly since the late 1990s when the genre embraced luxury goods and aspirational status symbols, exposing audiences to these brands through lyrics, videos, and lifestyles (Herd, 2009; Power & Hauge, 2008). This trend underscores the cultural obsession with materialism and branding in modern hip hop, linking the music directly to global consumerism.

2.1.5 Emotions & Feelings

Rap music serves as a vibrant platform for expressing a diverse range of emotions and experiences. Berker (2022) notes that it provides young people an outlet for emotions such as anger, rebellion, disappointment, and fear, while also reflecting moments of joy, hope, and satisfaction. Famous rap artists who have escaped inner-city struggles serve as inspirations for Black youth, promoting messages of resilience and hope (Wilson, 2018). Rap lyrics often delve into themes of love and sex, with some songs narrating sexual acts (Androutsopoulos & Scholz, 2002). These tracks capture the complexity of human relationships, conveying the nuances of affection, desire, and intimacy. In other instances, rap lyrics serve as a medium for introspection and contemplation, where artists reflect on life and express feelings like melancholy (Androutsopoulos & Scholz, 2002). For example, in "Sicko Mode", Travis Scott texts convey a sense of dissatisfaction and melancholy, suggesting that despite any success or wealth, nothing

feels truly good (Lal, 2023). This introspective tone highlights the pursuit of success and the emotional complexities that accompany it (Reza, 2018). These introspective themes in rap provide a platform for artists to explore and articulate their inner thoughts and struggles, adding depth to the genre's emotional landscape. Additionally, the genre embraces themes of celebration, with lyrics centered around partying, dancing, and enjoying life. Songs in this category depict the process of throwing a party or simply having fun, sometimes in connection with other themes, but often as standalone expressions of joy (Androutsopoulos & Scholz, 2002).

2.1.6 Brutality & Violence

In rap music, the theme of brutality and violence is often closely intertwined with narratives about street life and sociopolitical issues. These themes naturally arise from the artists' personal stories and the emotions tied to their experiences, frequently serving as reflections of the harsh realities faced by the artists and their communities. For instance, criminal activities may be depicted as responses to the struggles of street life, drug use as coping mechanisms for emotional distress, or substance abuse as part of a celebratory culture. These elements are deeply embedded in the broader socio-economic and cultural contexts of rap music, illustrating the complex and often harsh realities that define the artists' lives.

While the often brutalizing features of gangsta rap, with its emphasis on urban decay, greed, misogyny, capitalism, crime, homophobia, joyless sex, male physicality, and violence, appear to be declining, these themes remain prominent in rap music, especially regarding drug use (Mitchell, 2001). Pioneered in the mid-80s, gangsta rap became the most commercially

lucrative subgenre of hip-hop. Characterized by stories of violence, promiscuity, drugs, and a disdain for law enforcement, it represented a rebellion that felt magnetic and refreshing (Lal, 2023).

Over time, references to alcohol in rap songs increased, correlating with a rise in the portrayal of violence (Herd, 2009). Songs focused on cannabis often depict the pleasure of consuming it in the company of friends, sometimes narrating humorous or strange encounters. Despite being a relatively minor theme, cannabis use appears across rap in different languages (Androutsopoulos & Scholz, 2002). Media outside of the U.S., including in countries like Brazil, have often stereotyped hip-hop as the music of drugs and violence (Morgan & Bennett, 2011).

Themes of sex in rap music also intersect with violence and brutality. Songs often contain illicit content related to sex, seductive dances, and immodest dressing, particularly influencing younger listeners (Chukwuma & Onwuekwe, 2022; Androutsopoulos & Scholz, 2002). Although brutality and violence often appear as markers of authenticity in rap, it's crucial to recognize that their presence does not inherently imply authenticity (Pennycook, 2007). While hip-hop has positive influences, it also faces criticism for promoting negative behaviors, such as violence, misogyny, and materialism (Morgan & Bennett, 2011). Songs often convey violence toward existing structures, encapsulating both acceptance and resistance against perceived injustices while embodying a form of popular resistance (Berker, 2022).

In summary, the themes of brutality and violence in rap music are complex and multifaceted, reflecting the harsh realities of street life, socio-political struggles, and personal experiences of the artists. These themes are expected to appear in narratives about drug use,

criminal activities, and social injustices, illustrating both the challenges and the resistance inherent in the culture.

2.1.7 Misogyny

Misogyny, as described by Adams and Fuller (2006), refers to a strong aversion or hostility towards women. It takes the form of an ideology that devalues women, treating them as mere possessions to be owned, utilized, or mistreated by males. The argument presented by Adams and Fuller suggests that rap music frequently portrays women as objects for sexual exploitation and mistreatment, thereby endorsing notions, principles, convictions, and prejudices that demean women. The results delineate six recurrent motifs in sexist rap music, with a specific emphasis on disparaging remarks about women pertaining to sexual matters, acts of violence against women, particularly in the context of sex, and depictions of women as expendable entities (Adams & Fuller, 2006).

Underlining this portrayal of women, Weitzer and Kubrin (2012) discovered that misogyny was present in 22% of 403 rap songs analyzed. This suggests that, while not as ubiquitous as some critics argue, misogyny is still a prominent theme in rap music. The trend in American rap of calling women derogatory terms, as highlighted by Senegalese rapper Faada Freddy (Pennycook, 2007), and the pervasive sexism in rap lyrics discussed by Dyson (2004), underscore the significant impact these portrayals can have on cultural perceptions. Furthermore, Androutsopoulos and Scholz (2002) observed that some rap songs explicitly narrate sexual acts, reinforcing misogynistic themes and objectifying women through lyrics and imagery.

Misogynistic themes in rap music often include the portrayal of women as materialistic and overly sexual. Reza (2018) notes that women are frequently depicted as gold diggers and promiscuous. This representation reduces women to objects for male gratification, perpetuating stereotypes and degrading women. Adams and Fuller (2006) emphasize that interpretations of misogyny in rap music can vary based on the listener's perspective, with female respondents more likely to view rap and hip-hop music as misogynistic and offensive compared to male respondents.

Another way of portraying women in rap music is through materialistic and overly sexual themes. Reza (2018) notes that women are frequently depicted as gold diggers and promiscuous. This representation reduces women to objects for male gratification, perpetuating stereotypes and degrading women. Adams and Fuller (2006) emphasize that interpretations of misogyny in rap music can vary based on the listener's perspective, with female respondents more likely to view rap and hip-hop music as misogynistic and offensive compared to male respondents. Overall, these findings illustrate that misogyny remains a significant theme in rap music, manifesting through the objectification and degradation of women, both sexually and materially.

2.1.8 Empowerment

In spite the presence of ample evidence showcasing misogynistic lyrics in rap music, there is also a noticeable counter-movement that emphasizes empowerment. Female MCs are gaining more visibility and influence in the hip-hop industry. They are actively discussing gender-related topics and use hip-hop as a means to empower and educate young people. In

doing so, they are challenging preconceptions and enhancing the genre's diversity and inclusivity (Morgan & Bennett, 2011). Wilson (2018) emphasizes that, although misogyny exists, rap music should be regarded as a constructive force that confronts stereotypes and empowers underprivileged communities. Moreover, Travis (2012) emphasizes that rap music improves one's perception of oneself and one's value, promoting the development of strength, progress, a sense of belonging, and transformation in society. The components of empowerment mentioned are crucial in fostering positive self-esteem, individual growth, a sense of community, and the promotion of social justice among young people. The comprehensive method of empowering individuals and communities through rap music demonstrates its ability to be a potent instrument for personal and community advancement.

2.1.9 Dissing

While rap music frequently addresses themes of empowerment and motivation, it also encompasses the contrasting element of dissing. Dissing, or the act of disrespecting and criticizing others, is a fundamental component of the genre, reflecting its competitive and confrontational nature (Racine, 2018; Tang, 2020). In contrast to the affirmative messages of empowerment, dissing allows rappers to assert their dominance and credibility within the rap community (Tang, 2020; Androutsopoulos & Scholz, 2002).

Dissing, defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary (2024) as an insulting expression of disrespect or criticism, is deeply rooted in the cultural context of rap music. It involves the

exchange of competitive insults, allowing participants to showcase their wit and verbal dexterity, a practice that has been integral to rap battles and lyrical confrontations (Racine, 2018).

In rap, dissing typically manifests through lyrics that challenge and criticize others, serving as a platform for verbal sparring. This practice enables rappers to demonstrate their lyrical prowess and reinforce their reputations. While linguistic elements like flow, punchlines, and metaphors are crucial, the message and content behind the diss are paramount. Eminem, a prominent figure in rap, describes diss feuds as both verbal and commercial contests, aiming to surpass rivals not only in linguistic skill but also in the impact and substance of their criticisms, ultimately influencing record sales and public perception (Racine, 2018). Some rappers use dissing to attack those they consider “fake rappers,” thereby returning to the theme of authenticity and being real. However, dissing can also be less aggressive and rebellious, serving more as a tool for entertainment, fame, and public attention (Tang, 2020).

In summary, the themes of dissing in rap music reveal its role as a critical mechanism for asserting authenticity, dominance, and credibility, while simultaneously serving as a form of entertainment and public engagement within the competitive landscape of hip-hop.

2.1.10 Intertextual References

Sampling is a foundational element in hip hop, crucial for creating instrumentals and adding depth to the genre’s sound. Sampling plays a pivotal role in the creation of hip hop instrumentals, being one of the earliest techniques employed in the genre (Dyson, 2004). This practice extends beyond the lyrical content of rap music, incorporating various forms of audio

material such as music pieces and speeches, which has become a defining feature of hip hop culture (Androutsopoulos & Scholz, 2002). Textual sampling, including quotations and references, is also a prominent aspect of rap lyrics and songs (Roth-Gordon, 2009). These textual samples can take many forms, such as direct quotations from other songs, excerpts from speeches, lines from movies, or snippets of interviews. The diversity and multiculturalism of hip hop are further highlighted by the inclusion of musical samples from various cultural backgrounds, reflecting the genre's global influence (Mitchell, 2001). By incorporating these elements into their lyrics, rappers create layers of meaning and intertextuality, which not only enrich the music but also connect different cultural and musical traditions, showcasing hip hop's broad appeal and adaptability.

3. Methodology

This chapter will explain the research methodology, detailing the research design, sampling strategy, data collection and analysis processes, operationalization, as well as the study's reliability and validity, providing a comprehensive overview of how this study aims to analyze the prevalent themes in popular rap lyrics.

3.1 Research Design

The central aim of this research is to explore the thematic elements in the most popular rap lyrics from 2004 to 2023. The study seeks to identify and analyze trends in thematic representation within each year and across this two-decade span. To achieve this, a mixed

methods approach has been adopted, combining qualitative content analysis with quantitative data examination to offer a comprehensive overview of the recurring themes in rap music.

A total of 200 songs, representing the top 10 songs with rap lyrics of each year from 2004 to 2023, were analyzed in this study, providing a substantial dataset to ensure robust findings. These songs were selected from the Billboard Year-End Hot 100 charts, ensuring that the most popular and influential tracks were included.

The qualitative analysis focuses on an in-depth examination of lyrics to identify key themes. This involves systematic coding of the lyrics, breaking down the text into smaller units, and categorizing them based on recurring themes. A codebook curated from the literature serves as the basis for this process, but adjustments are made throughout to refine the categorization. Additionally, the analysis interprets the songs and lyrics, considering broader contexts and deeper meanings behind the words. This approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the thematic elements in rap music, reflecting its dynamic nature as a form of cultural expression. Furthermore, it evaluates the evolution of themes over time, providing insights into the shifts in thematic focus within the genre.

The quantitative analysis complements the qualitative findings by providing a numerical dimension to the prevalence and variations of themes across the two-decade span. This involves counting the frequency of each theme and analyzing the distribution of these frequencies over the years. For instance, the study tracks how often certain themes appear annually, identifies the most frequent sub-themes, and examines the overall distribution to determine which years saw the highest and lowest frequency of various themes. This approach helps quantify trends,

showing how specific themes have either shifted or remained consistent. The quantitative data substantiates the qualitative findings, providing a solid foundation for the subsequent analysis.

3.2 Corpus

To conduct this study, the research process begins by accessing the Billboard Year-End Hot 100 charts from 2004 to 2023, identifying the top 10 songs with rap lyrics each year, starting from the number 1 position on the chart. For extracting historical chart information, data is gathered from the Billboard Online Database and archived Billboard Magazines. This step ensures that all relevant data regarding song rankings and artist details are comprehensively covered for the entire study period.

“Rap Lyrics” refer to the sections of a song characterized by rhythmic and rhyming speech, often delivered in a spoken or chanted style. This study focuses exclusively on the lyrical content of rap lyrics, analyzing the messages and themes conveyed by rappers or hip hop artists, rather than the rhythmic or rhyming aspects.

To ensure a comprehensive representation of the diversity within rap and other genres, the selection process incorporates a variety of rap subgenres, such as trap and conscious rap, alongside contributions to non-rap genres like pop and country, thereby reflecting the widespread influence of rap across musical styles over the study period.

A song is categorized as a primary rap song if the main artist is a rapper and the primary genre is hip hop or a subgenre of rap. The entire song, including all rap and vocal passages, is

analyzed to capture the full range of stylistic and thematic elements, ensuring a comprehensive reflection of the intricate interplay of lyrics, delivery, and musical composition.

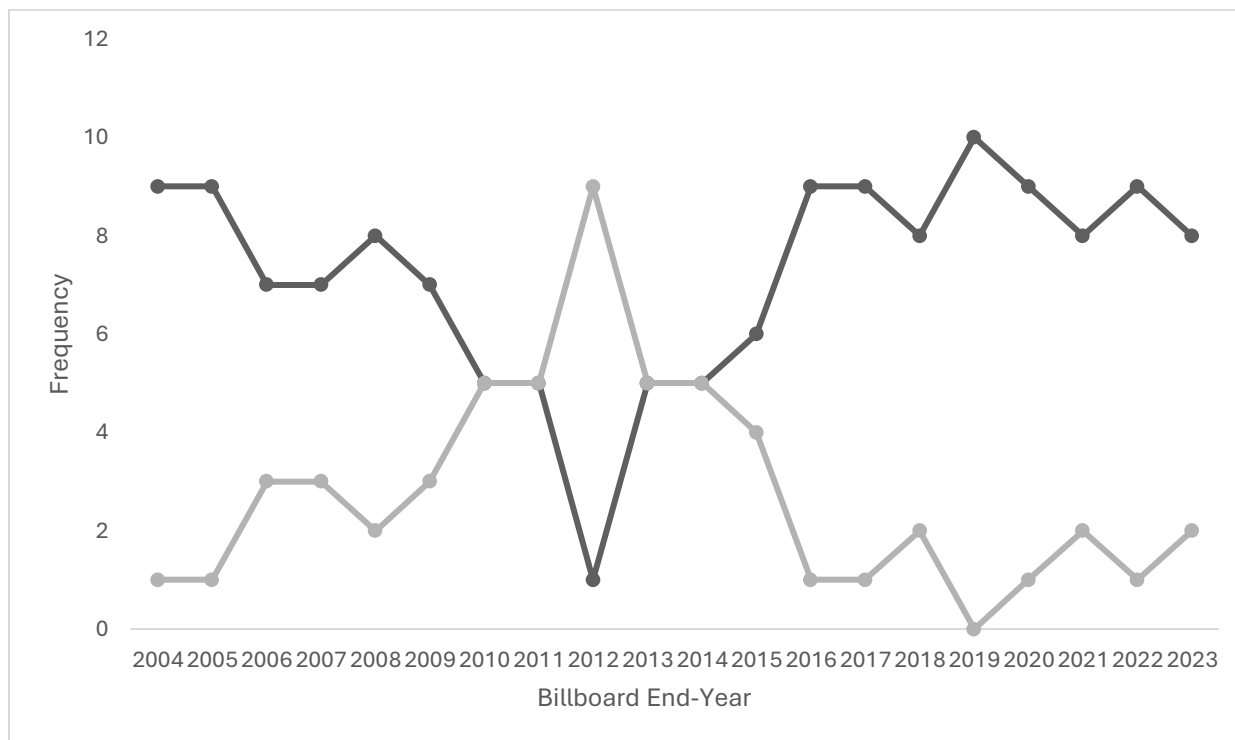
Conversely, a song is categorized as a feature rap song if the main artist is not primarily a rapper and/or the primary genre is not hip hop or a subgenre of rap, but features a rapper as a guest. In these cases, only the rap lyrics of the featured rapper are analyzed, excluding the vocal elements from other artists. This focus on the rap segments ensures that the analysis remains centered on the contributions of rap artists, even within a broader musical context.

The exclusion criteria ensure a focused analysis by excluding songs that are not primary rap songs or feature rap songs, or lack a significant rap artist presence. Non-rap and non-English parts of the chosen songs are excluded to maintain a clear focus on rap-specific thematic and stylistic elements. To avoid redundancy, any previously analyzed song is skipped in subsequent analyses, with the next nearest new rap lyrics on the charts being examined instead, ensuring each song is analyzed only once to uphold dataset integrity and uniqueness.

In total, there are 152 primary rap songs and 48 feature rap songs in the dataset. As illustrated in Figure 1, this distribution indicates that the majority of the top 10 songs with rap lyrics each year are primarily comprised of primary rap songs.

Figure 1

Distribution of Primary and Feature Rap Songs Among Top 10 Billboard Year-End Songs (2004-2023)



Note. Figure 1 shows the distribution of primary rap songs (dark grey) and feature rap songs (light grey) in the Billboard Top 10 from 2004 to 2023.

To ensure the accuracy and reliability of the song lyrics used in this study, a rigorous and multi-step verification process was implemented. To ensure accuracy and reliability, lyrics were initially gathered from LyricFind and MusixMatch and then compared with those on Genius. Discrepancies were resolved by manually listening to the songs. This meticulous process guarantees a reliable dataset for analyzing thematic elements in rap music.

A detailed lists of the top 10 songs with rap lyrics for each year can be found in Appendix A, providing a thorough overview of the songs included in the analysis.

3.3 Data Analysis

This chapter details the key components of the methodology used for this analysis, starting with the construction of the codebook that forms the basis of the analysis. The codebook is critical for categorizing themes and ensuring consistent coding across the dataset. Following this, the use of data analysis tools is outlined, highlighting the software used to systematically analyze the thematic content and visualize patterns within the data. Finally, the section explains the importance of intercoder reliability in maintaining the accuracy and validity of the findings, ensuring that the themes identified are consistent and objectively applied.

3.3.1 Codebook and Codebook Construction

The codebook serves as the foundational tool for systematically analyzing the selected rap lyrics, categorizing various themes derived from the literature review. It was developed using a combination of deductive and inductive approaches. Initially, themes were identified through a comprehensive literature review, drawing on established research and theoretical frameworks. The deductive approach ensured that the codebook was grounded in existing knowledge. As the analysis progressed, the codebook was refined inductively, with new codes being created and existing codes being merged or deleted based on the data. This iterative process allowed for the

adaptation of the codebook to better capture the nuances and complexities of the rap lyrics and its themes being analyzed.

Each theme is meticulously designed into a code, encompassing various sub-themes to explore specific dimensions of rap lyrics, offering a nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the content. The codebook is structured so that each main code is connected to its sub-codes, with each sub-code having its own definition and example quotes from the analyzed lyrics. This hierarchical structure, shown in Table 2, allows for a detailed and organized analysis of the themes present in the rap lyrics.

Table 2

Example Structure of Codebook

Code	Subcode	Definition	Example Quotes
2. Brand & Name Dropping	2.1 Brand Mentions	2.1 References to luxury goods, fashion brands, commercial products, companies, or organizations. This includes broader brand names and commercial entities mentioned within the lyrics.	Gucci, Prada etc, “Chevy Impala” (referring to the brand of the car)

The code “Authenticity & Storytelling” captures the significance of genuine self-presentation and reflections on personal and urban realities. This code was developed using both inductive and deductive approaches.

From an inductive perspective, subcodes such as “Keepin’ it Real/Authenticity,” “Personal Narratives/Self-Presentation,” and “Street Culture” were identified (Alim, 2009; Lal, 2023; Pennycook, 2007; Reza, 2018; Staggini, 2022; Wright, 2010). “Keepin’ it Real/Authenticity” highlights the artist’s credibility, “Personal Narratives/Self-Presentation” involves the artist’s personal life stories, and “Street Culture” focuses on the authenticity of life on the streets. Notably, “Street Culture” was adjusted during the research process to encompass not only the negative aspects and issues of street life but also neutral and positive depictions.

On the other hand, the subcodes “Dialogue and Skits” and “Standards and Expectations” were established through a deductive approach. “Dialogue and Skits” features conversational scenarios and role-playing, while “Standards and Expectations” captures lyrics about the artist’s standards, desires, and criteria for their ideal partner or other objects of desire. “Brand & Name Dropping” examines references to brands and proper names within the lyrics.

The code “Brand & Name Dropping” examines references to brands and proper names within the lyrics. This code was developed using both inductive and deductive approaches.

From an inductive perspective, subcodes such as “Brand Mentions” and “Proper Names” were identified (Androutsopoulos & Scholz, 2002; Herd, 2009; Power & Hauge, 2008). “Brand Mentions” references luxury goods and commercial products, while “Proper Names” includes mentions of famous individuals and media products. Conversely, the subcode “Self-Referential

Names” was created deductively to distinguish instances where artists use their own nicknames or alter egos, separating these from broader references to proper names.

“Brutality & Violence” explores the depiction of violence and brutality in rap lyrics. Only from an inductive perspective, subcodes such as “Discrimination,” “Drugs,” “Sexual Violence,” “Urban Violence,” and “Violence and Crime” were identified (Androutsopoulos & Scholz, 2002; Berker, 2022; Chukwuma & Onwuekwe, 2022; Herd, 2009; Lal, 2023; Mitchell, 2001; Morgan & Bennett, 2011; Pennycook, 2007). “Discrimination” refers to discriminatory attitudes, while “Drugs” includes narratives about substance abuse and drug dealing. “Sexual Violence” intersects sex with violence, and “Urban Violence” focuses on street crime and gang conflicts. Lastly, “Violence and Crime” describes violent and criminal activities.

“Contemplation & Introspection” involves thoughtful consideration of broader issues and personal reflections. This code includes lyrics that examine one’s own thoughts, feelings, actions, motivations, and memories, with reflections on the past and expressions of longing for earlier times. It also captures changes in perspective or growth over time, highlighting the artist’s evolving understanding and personal narratives and is based on an inductive process (Androutsopoulos & Scholz, 2002; Reza, 2018). Initially, this code was part of “Emotions & Feelings” but evolved into a distinct main code due to its unique focus on also philosophical questions and deeper reflections on the artist’s past and experiences, representing an inductive approach.

“Cultural & Local Referencing” encompasses how artists embed their cultural and local identities into their lyrics. From an inductive perspective, subcodes such as “Community Representation,” “Cultural Synchronization,” “Local Landmarks,” “Rap Scene Discourse,”

“Temporal References,” and “Intertextual References” were identified (Alim, 2009; Androutsopoulos, 2009; Androutsopoulos & Scholz, 2002; Dyson, 2004; Herd, 2009; Mitchell, 2001; Pennycook, 2007; Power & Hauge, 2008; Roth-Gordon, 2009; Tang, 2020). “Community Representation” involves descriptions of neighborhoods or communities, while “Cultural Synchronization” blends global and local cultural elements. “Local Landmarks” includes mentions of specific places or institutions, and “Rap Scene Discourse” references the local or national hip-hop scene, including industry critiques. “Temporal References” capture mentions of specific times or historical contexts, and “Intertextual References” include samples, quotations and references to other works of art or literature.

“Dissing” refers to direct or indirect insults aimed at others, including accusations, criticisms, and competitive verbal sparring in lyrics. All subcodes within “Dissing” were identified inductively, capturing various forms of dissing from personal attacks to challenges of others’ credibility or dominance (Androutsopoulos & Scholz, 2002; Racine, 2018; Tang, 2020).

“Emotions & Feelings” delve into the emotional landscape of rap lyrics, capturing a wide spectrum of emotions. Inductively, subcodes such as “Anger” (expressions of rage or frustration), “Celebration and Fun” (descriptions of partying and enjoying life), “Disappointment” (narratives of letdown and despair), “Fear” (references to experiences of being afraid), “Hope” (lyrics conveying optimism for the future), “Joy” (expressions of happiness), “Love and Sex” (descriptions of romantic or sexual interactions), “Rebellion” (themes of defiance and resistance), and “Sadness” (conveying sorrow and emotional pain) were identified. Additionally, “Motivation and Encouragement” (lyrics inspiring action and resilience) were initially created inductively but later refined through deductive analysis. The subcodes “Lost and

Empty” (feelings of confusion and emotional emptiness), “Stressed” (descriptions of being overwhelmed), and “Insecure” (expressions of self-doubt and lack of confidence) were developed deductively, closely linked to the “Contemplation & Introspection” code (Androutsopoulos & Scholz, 2002; Berker, 2022; Lal, 2023; Reza, 2018; Wilson, 2018).

“Empowerment & Sexual Agency” examines lyrics focusing on themes of autonomy, equality, and positive sexual expression. The subcodes “Confident Sexuality” (highlighting lyrics where female rappers describe sexual acts in an empowering manner, promoting a positive attitude towards sex) and “Woman Empowerment” (which includes lyrics that challenge traditional misogynistic images, promote gender equality, and celebrate women’s strength and autonomy) are based on literature (Morgan & Bennett, 2011; Travis, 2012; Wilson, 2018). Conversely, “Homosexual Empowerment” (capturing lyrics that reference homosexuality in a positive or neutral context, empowering the LGBTQ+ community) was created inductively during the research process.

“Flexing” delves into the boasting culture prevalent in rap music. The subcodes include “Flexing with Material Goods” where artists boast about possessions like money, cars, and jewelry; “Flexing with Physical Appearance” which involves boasting about beauty and style; “Flexing with Rap/Music Skills” highlighting lyrical abilities, flow, and versatility; and “Flexing with Fame” focusing on boasting about status, popularity, and the perks of being famous (Harris, 2024; Lal, 2023; Power & Hauge, 2008; Reza, 2018; Staggini, 2022). These themes reflect the culture of braggadocio in rap, emphasizing success and the rewards of perseverance and hard work.

Misogyny captures themes that portray negative and stereotypical views of women. This includes “Sex Objectification” where women are depicted merely as objects of desire; “Sexual Acts (Misogynistic)” narratives that describe sexual activities in a demeaning manner; “Violence Against Women” mentions of male violence towards women; and “Materialistic Stereotyping (Misogyny)” where women are portrayed as valuing men primarily for their financial resources (Androutsopoulos & Scholz, 2002; Adams & Fuller, 2006; Dyson, 2004; Pennycook, 2007; Reza, 2018; Weitzer & Kubrin, 2012).

“Sociopolitical Commentary” examines rap lyrics addressing political and social issues. This includes “Activism and Resistance” promoting social and political activism; “Class Divisions” discussing socioeconomic distinctions within racial groups; “Discussion of Minorities” references to ethnic, racial, and sexual minorities; “Economic Hardship” mentions of poverty and financial struggles; “Social Critique” examining societal issues and injustices; “Urban Issues” highlighting the broader social issues related to street life; and “Youth Protest” expressing rebellion or dissatisfaction by young people, which are all created inductively (Androutsopoulos & Scholz, 2002; Berker, 2022; Dyson, 2004; Eyerman & Jamison, 1998; Lewis, 2023; Mitchell, 2001; Morgan & Bennett, 2011; Pardue, 2004; Tang, 2020; Wilson, 2018). The subcode “Against Police” was developed deductively to incorporate more generalized criticism of law enforcement and systemic issues, extending beyond specific instances of police brutality.

“Unclassified Content” includes subcodes to filter out content that does not fit into the main thematic categories. These subcodes were all developed deductively. “Not English” identifies and excludes lyrics performed in languages other than English. “Not Rap” categorizes

parts of songs that do not contain rap elements. “No Theme” is used for sections lacking a discernible theme or meaningful content. “Other Themes” captures new, unique, or unexpected themes that emerge during the analysis but are not currently represented in the existing codebook.

This comprehensive framework allows for a detailed and systematic analysis of the lyrical content, capturing the thematic richness of rap lyrics. Detailed descriptions of each main code and its subcodes with example quotes are provided in Appendix B.

3.3.2 Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection process began with identifying the top 10 songs with rap lyrics from the Billboard charts. After determining the top 10 songs for each year, the lyrics were gathered by obtaining data from LyricFind and MusixMatch. This initial collection provided the primary text for analysis.

To ensure the accuracy and reliability of the song lyrics used in this study, a rigorous and multi-step verification process was implemented. Initially, lyrics were gathered from LyricFind and MusixMatch. These sources provided the primary text for analysis. Subsequently, the collected lyrics were compared with those available on Genius to identify any discrepancies. If differences in words or entire sentences were noted between the sources, a further verification step was taken. This involved manually listening to the songs to accurately determine and adjust the lyrics.

Following the identification of the top songs with rap lyrics, the Genius platform was utilized as a valuable resource to gain a deeper understanding of the context and meanings behind the lyrics. The annotations and user comments on Genius offered insights into ambiguous references, cultural nuances, and lyrical meanings, which were essential in avoiding misinterpretation. This approach ensured a more accurate and thorough analysis of each song's content, enriching the study and providing a robust foundation for understanding the themes present in the rap lyrics.

The coding process involved categorizing themes based on both individual words and larger abstracts within the lyrics. For themes such as "Brand Mentions," "Proper Names," "Self-Referential Names," and "Local Landmarks," coding was performed at the individual word level. This allowed for precise quantification of specific mentions within the lyrics. For other themes, the coding was performed at the abstract level. Abstracts were provided by LyricFind or MusixMatch and served as the units of analysis. Each abstract or specific part of the song was evaluated to identify the presence of themes. If an abstract contained elements related to a particular theme, it was coded accordingly. This method ensured that the analysis captured the nuanced expressions and thematic diversity within the lyrics, providing a comprehensive understanding of the thematic elements in rap music. The use of abstracts, often marking shifts in style, theme, or musical change, allowed for a more structured and systematic approach to coding, reflecting the natural segmentation of the song's content.

3.3.3 Data Analysis Tools

In this study, Atlas.ti was employed for both the qualitative and quantitative analysis of thematic elements in rap lyrics. A custom codebook was developed and applied to categorize and systematically document occurrences of themes in the lyrics. The comprehensive features of Atlas.ti enabled efficient management and analysis of large datasets, allowing for systematic coding and retrieval of complex data. This software was indispensable for uncovering nuanced themes in rap lyrics and for visualizing connections between various thematic elements.

During the qualitative analysis, Atlas.ti facilitated the application of codes to specific quotes or abstracts of the lyrics, allowing for a detailed examination of thematic content. The software's ability to handle large amounts of data ensured that the analysis was thorough and robust. As part of the quantitative analysis, Atlas.ti provided detailed insights into the frequency and distribution of codes. It allowed for the quantification of themes, showing how many instances of each code appeared per song, per year, and across the two decades. This dual approach of qualitative and quantitative analysis provided a comprehensive understanding of the thematic trends in rap lyrics.

3.3.4 Intercoder Reliability

To enhance the reliability of the analysis, an independent coder analyzed 10% of the data using the same codebook. In this case, from the 200 songs analyzed, the coder analyzed 20 randomly chosen songs. The independent coder underwent training to familiarize himself with the codebook and its criteria to ensure consistent application of themes and subcategories. This

process involved coding a subset of lyrics, and the results were then compared to assess the level of agreement. The Cohen's Kappa was then used to calculate the intercoder reliability, providing a statistical measure of consistency between the primary coder and the independent coder. Any discrepancies were reviewed and discussed to refine the coding process and ensure consistent interpretation of the codebook, enhancing the robustness of the study findings.

The overall Cohen's Kappa score for all codes was 0.749. This score indicates substantial agreement between the coders, which is particularly noteworthy given the field of analysis. Analyzing music lyrics can be challenging due to their often ambiguous and context-dependent nature. Lyrics can be interpreted in various ways, and the context can significantly influence their meaning. Therefore, achieving a Cohen's Kappa score of 0.749 is considered a strong indication of reliability in this context. The Cohen's Kappa scores for the main categories can be found in Table 1.

Table 1

Cohen's Kappa of the Main Categories

Main Group Code	Cohen's Kappa
Social Political Commentary	0.858
Local and Cultural Referencing	0.945
Brand and Name Dropping	0.861
Flexing	0.707
Feelings and Emotions	0.699

Introspection and Contemplation	N/A
Brutality and Violence	0.890
Misogyny	0.729
Dissing	N/A
Sexual Agency	0.863
Authenticity and Storytelling	0.728
Unclassified Content	0.763

Note. This table presents the Cohen’s Kappa scores for various grouped codes used in the analysis. Each group code has several subgroups within it, except for Dissing and Introspection and Contemplation.

* N/A: Perfect agreement, Cohen’s Kappa is undefined.

In the case of the main codes “Introspection and Contemplation” and “Dissing” the observed agreement (P_o) was 1, indicating perfect agreement between the coders. The expected agreement (P_e) was also 1, resulting in a division by zero when calculating Cohen’s Kappa, making it undefined. This is denoted as ‘N/A’ in the table to indicate that the agreement was perfect.

For “Introspection and Contemplation” the initial split into different codes revealed that the subcodes were too similar and frequently double-coded. Therefore, they were merged into a single code to avoid redundancy and reflect the actual coding practice more accurately.

Similarly, for “Dissing” there were initially multiple subcodes, but due to the limited number of instances and the general nature of the disses, these were combined into a single code. This approach provided a more coherent and manageable coding structure.

By merging these codes, the analysis became more streamlined, ensuring that each main code accurately represented the content without unnecessary fragmentation.

3.4. Ethical Concerns

Adhering strictly to copyright laws, this research ensures that all lyrical content is cited correctly and used exclusively for scholarly analysis without infringing on the rights of copyright holders. The use of lyrics for academic purposes falls within fair use guidelines (Butler, 2017). In addition, care is taken to approach the explicit language and potentially offensive themes often found in rap music with sensitivity and professionalism. The analysis focuses on understanding the cultural context and functional use of such content within the music, rather than on its shock value, thus avoiding the perpetuation of stereotypes or biases.

4. Results

The primary aim of this study is to explore and analyze the thematic elements in popular rap lyrics from 2004 to 2023. This section begins by providing an overall view of the distribution of themes across the study period, giving readers a broad perspective on the prevalence of each theme. Following this, each main theme is examined in depth, presenting the general findings, the overall frequency distribution of the theme, and the most frequent sub-themes where applicable. This structured approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of the thematic trends in rap music over the two decades.

4.1 Overall Theme Distribution

The analysis of popular rap lyrics from 2004 to 2023 revealed a total of 5,373 coded themes, with an average of 268.7 themes per year (see Table 2). The most frequently occurring theme is “Emotions & Feelings”, which appeared 1,332 times, accounting for 24.8% of all themes. The second most frequent theme is “Brand & Name Dropping”, with 1,138 occurrences, representing 21.8% of the total themes. “Flexing” occurred 588 times, resulting in an average of 29.4 occurrences per year, representing 10.9% of the total data. “Cultural & Local Referencing” followed with 523 occurrences, averaging 26.2 per year, and constituting 9.7% of all themes. “Brutality & Violence” were mentioned 510 times, averaging 25.5 per year, and accounting for 9.5% of the data. “Authenticity & Storytelling” appeared 449 times, with an average of 22.5 occurrences per year, representing 8.4% of the dataset. “Misogyny” was recorded 238 times, averaging 11.9 per year and constituting 4.4% of the total themes. “Contemplation &

Introspection” had 188 occurrences, averaging 9.4 per year, and making up 3.5% of the data. “Empowerment & Sexual Agency” was mentioned 115 times, with an average of 5.8 occurrences per year, accounting for 2.1% of the total themes. Lastly, “Sociopolitical Commentary” appeared 105 times, averaging 5.3 per year, and representing 2% of the dataset. In contrast, the least occurring theme is “Dissing,” with only 31 instances, making up a mere 0.6% of all themes. A total of 156 times, the code or theme could not be identified, was not a real theme, or was not in English. A detailed overview of the distributions of all themes can be found in Table 2.

Table 2

Overall Theme Distribution

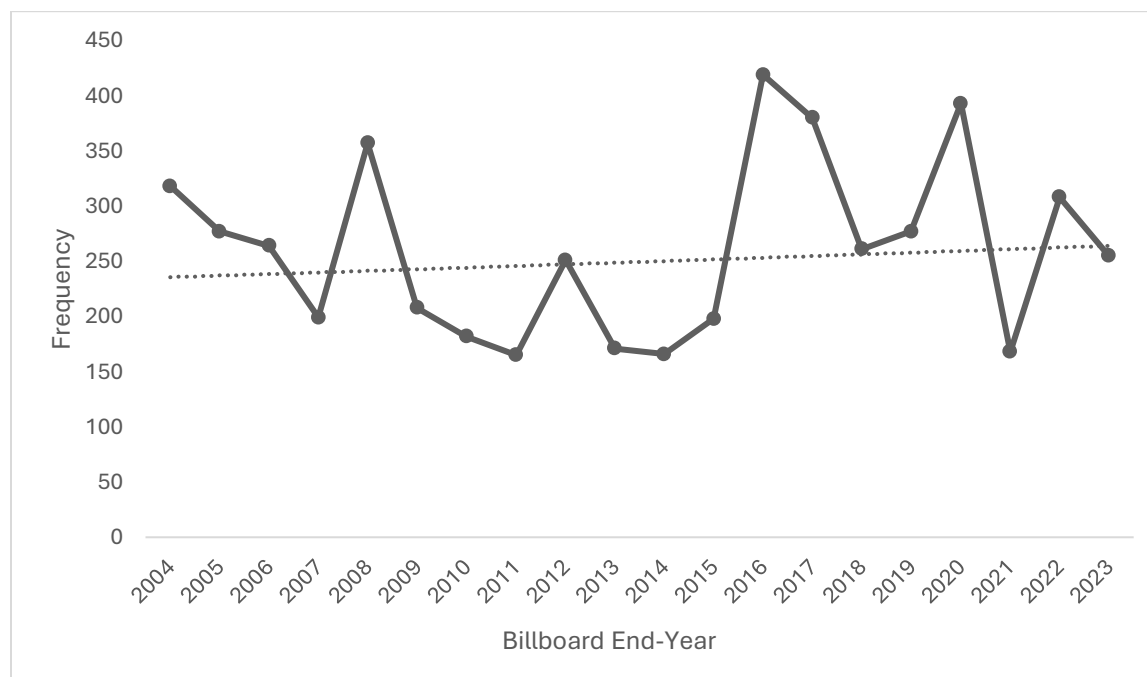
Theme	Frequency	Average	Percentage
Authenticity & Storytelling	449	22.5	8.4
Brand & Name Dropping	1138	57.0	21.8
Brutality & Violence	510	25.5	9.5
Contemplation & Introspection	188	9.4	3.5
Cultural & Local Referencing	523	26.2	9.7
Dissing	31	1.6	0.6
Emotions & Feelings	1332	66.6	24.8
Empowerment & Sexual Agency	115	5.8	2.1
Flexing	588	29.4	10.9
Misogyny	238	11.9	4.4
Sociopolitical Commentary	105	5.3	2.0
Others	156	7.8	2.9
Total	5373	268.7	100.0

Note. The percentages in this table represent the proportion of occurrences for each theme relative to the total number of occurrences over the entire period from 2004 to 2023. The average

score represents the frequency of each theme divided by the total number of years (20), providing the average number of occurrences of each theme per year.

From 2004 to 2007, the total number of themes varied. The year 2004 recorded 318 occurrences, followed by 277 themes in 2005, 264 in 2006, and 199 in 2007. This period shows a general decrease in theme occurrences over these years. Between 2008 and 2015, the distribution of themes showed variability. The year 2008 had 357 themes, while 2009 recorded 208 themes. The totals for 2010 and 2011 were 182 and 165, respectively. In 2012, there were 251 themes, followed by 171 in 2013 and 166 in 2014. The year 2015 recorded 198 themes. This period indicates fluctuations in the yearly total of themes. From 2016 onwards, there is an increase in the total number of coded themes per year. The year 2016 recorded 419 themes, followed by 380 in 2017, 261 in 2018, and 277 in 2019. The year 2020 had 393 themes, with 168 in 2021, 308 in 2022, and 255 in 2023. This period shows higher frequencies of themes compared to the previous years, suggesting more thematic occurrences in recent years.

The data indicates that the distribution of themes in rap lyrics from 2004 to 2023 has varied over the years. The initial years from 2004 to 2007 show a decrease in theme occurrences. The period between 2008 and 2015 displays variability with both peaks and lower totals. From 2016 onwards, there is an increase in the number of themes, reflecting a higher frequency of thematic occurrences in recent years. All data can be seen visualized in Figure 2.

Figure 2*Yearly Distribution of Frequencies for all Themes*

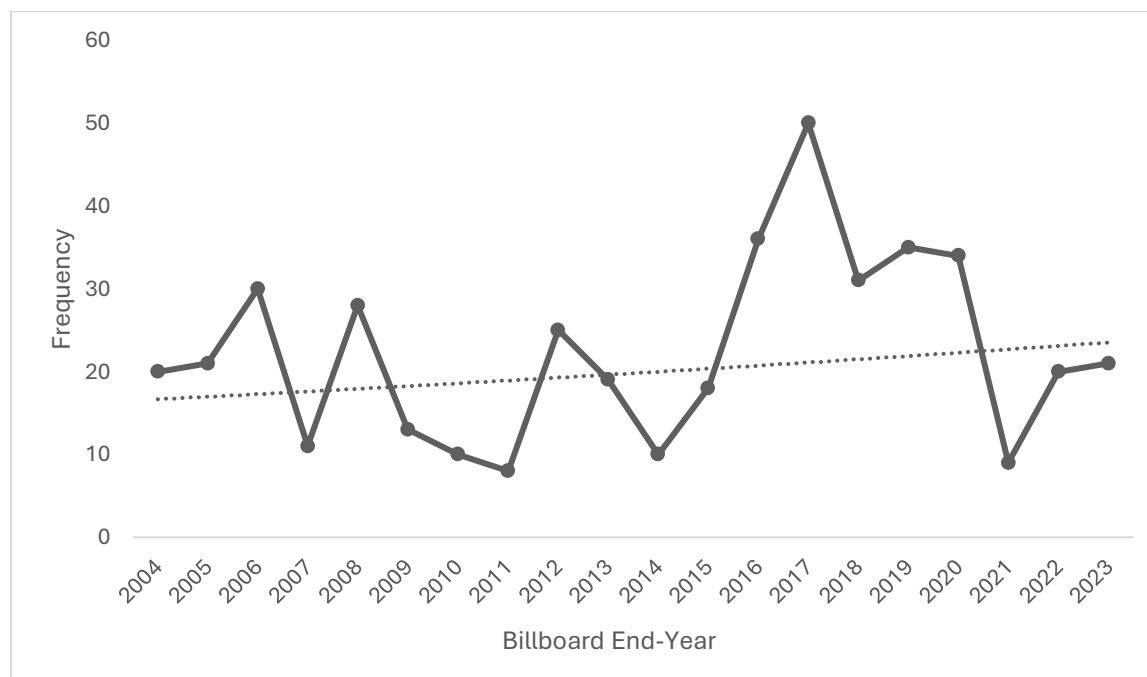
4.2 Authenticity & Storytelling

The theme “Authenticity and Storytelling” has a total amount of 449 codes occurring and an average frequency score of 22.5 instances per year (see Table C1). Authenticity & Storytelling makes up 8.4% of all codes found in the analysis (see Table 2). The highest frequency was recorded in 2017, with 50 instances accounting for 11.1% of all sub-themes within Authenticity and Storytelling across the two decades. The lowest dip occurred in 2011, with 8 instances, representing 1.8% within the theme (see Table C1).

From 2004 to 2010, the frequency of Authenticity & Storytelling themes varied. The year 2004 recorded 20 occurrences, followed by a slight increase to 21 themes in 2005, and 30 themes in 2006. The frequency dropped to 11 in 2007 but increased again to 28 in 2008. In 2009, the count fell to 13, with a further decrease to 10 in 2010. This period shows variability with some fluctuations in the occurrences of the theme. From 2016 onwards, there is a noticeable increase in the frequency of the Authenticity & Storytelling theme. The year 2016 recorded 36 themes, followed by a significant rise to 50 in 2017. The theme remained high with 31 occurrences in 2018 and 35 in 2019. The year 2020 saw 34 themes, and after a dip to 9 in 2021, the frequency increased again to 20 in 2022 and 21 in 2023. This period shows higher frequencies of themes compared to earlier years, indicating more occurrences in recent times. Detailed visualization of these distributions can be seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Yearly Distribution of Frequencies for the Theme "Authenticity & Storytelling"



The most frequent sub-themes of Authenticity and Storytelling were “Dealing with Haters,” “Personal Narratives and Self-Presentation,” and “Street Culture” (see Table D1). “Personal Narratives and Self-Presentation” was the most frequent sub-theme, with 217 instances, making up 48.3% of all sub-themes within Authenticity and Storytelling over the two decades. “Dealing with Haters” had 62 instances, accounting for 13.8%, and “Street Culture” had 75 instances, representing 16.7%. The average frequency for “Personal Narratives and Self-Presentation” was 10.9 per year, for “Dealing with Haters” it was 3.1 per year, and for “Street Culture” it was 3.8 per year. “Personal Narratives and Self-Presentation” reached its highest

frequency in 2016 with 30 instances and in 2017 with 22 instances, while the lowest frequency was recorded in 2006 and 2007 with 3 instances each year, as can be seen in Table D1.

4.3 Brand & Name Dropping

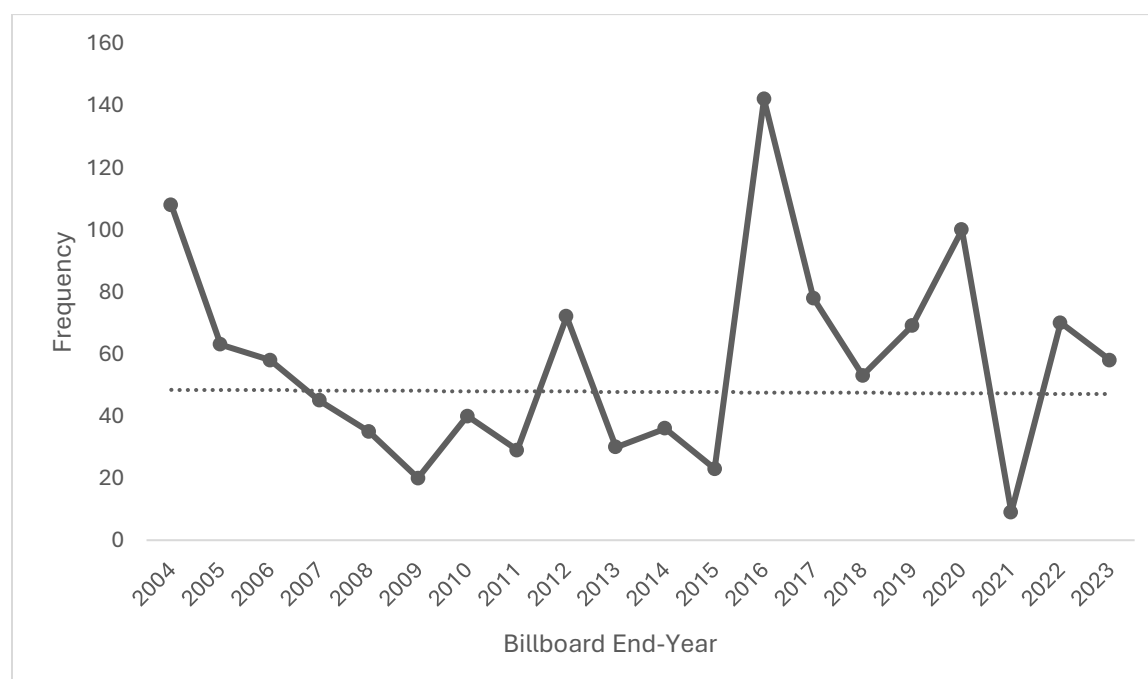
The theme “Brand & Name Dropping” has an overall frequency of 1138, averaging 57.0 instances per year (see Table C2). Brand & Name Dropping constitutes 21.8% of all themes and codes found in the analysis (see Table 2). The peak frequency was in 2016 with 142 instances, accounting for 12.5% of all frequencies within the years studied. Conversely, the lowest frequency occurred in 2021 with only 9 instances, representing 0.8% of the total. Table C2 provides a detailed overview of these statistics.

From 2004 to 2010, the frequency of “Brand & Name Dropping” themes varied. The year 2004 recorded 108 occurrences, followed by a decrease to 63 themes in 2005 and 58 themes in 2006. The frequency dropped further to 45 in 2007 and 35 in 2008. In 2009, the count fell to 20, with a slight increase to 40 in 2010. This period shows a general decline in the occurrences of the theme with some fluctuations. Between 2011 and 2015, the distribution continued to show variability. The year 2011 recorded 29 occurrences, and there was an increase to 72 themes in 2012. However, the frequency dropped again to 30 in 2013, increased slightly to 36 in 2014, and then decreased to 23 in 2015. This period indicates fluctuations in the yearly totals of the theme. From 2016 onwards, there is a noticeable increase in the frequency of the “Brand & Name Dropping” theme. The year 2016 recorded 142 themes, the highest in the dataset. This was

followed by 78 themes in 2017, 53 in 2018, and 69 in 2019. The year 2020 saw a significant rise to 100 themes, followed by a sharp decrease to 9 in 2021. The frequency then increased again to 70 in 2022 and 58 in 2023. This period shows higher frequencies of themes compared to earlier years, indicating more occurrences in recent times. All of this can be seen in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Yearly Distribution of Frequencies for the Theme "Brand & Name Dropping"



The most frequent sub-themes within “Brand & Name Dropping” are “Brand Mentions” and “Proper Names” (see Table D2). “Brand Mentions” accumulated a total of 502 instances, representing 44.1% of the sub-theme frequencies, with an average frequency of around 25 per year. “Proper Names” had a total of 526 instances, accounting for 46.2%, and an average

frequency of 26.3 per year. The highest frequency for “Brand Mentions” was in 2016 with 97 instances, while the lowest was in 2009 with 6 instances. For “Proper Names,” the highest frequency was in 2004 with 88 instances, and the lowest was in 2021 with just 1 instance. All of this can be seen in detailed statistic in Table D2.

The most frequently mentioned brands in rap lyrics from 2004 to 2023 are primarily car brands, with "Lamborghini" leading with 43 mentions, followed by "Bentley" (17) and "Mercedes-Benz" (12). Watch brands like "AP/Audemars Piguet" and "Rolex" are each mentioned 9 times. Clothing brands such as "Gucci", "Louis Vuitton", "Nike", and "Jumpman" are also prominent, with "Jumpman" mentioned 36 times. Among alcohol brands, "Hennessy" stands out with 11 mentions. Additionally, many lyrics reference music labels and other brands, illustrating the diverse range of brand mentions in rap music.

The most frequently mentioned proper names in rap lyrics from 2004 to 2023 include product names like car models, such as the “Lamborghini Mercy” (10 mentions) and the “White X6” from BMW (9 mentions). Many other musicians, primarily hip-hop artists like producers (e.g., DJ Mustard), and co-rappers are also commonly mentioned. Additionally, personal names significant to the individual artist, often not public figures, and metaphorical names for girls are frequently used in the lyrics.

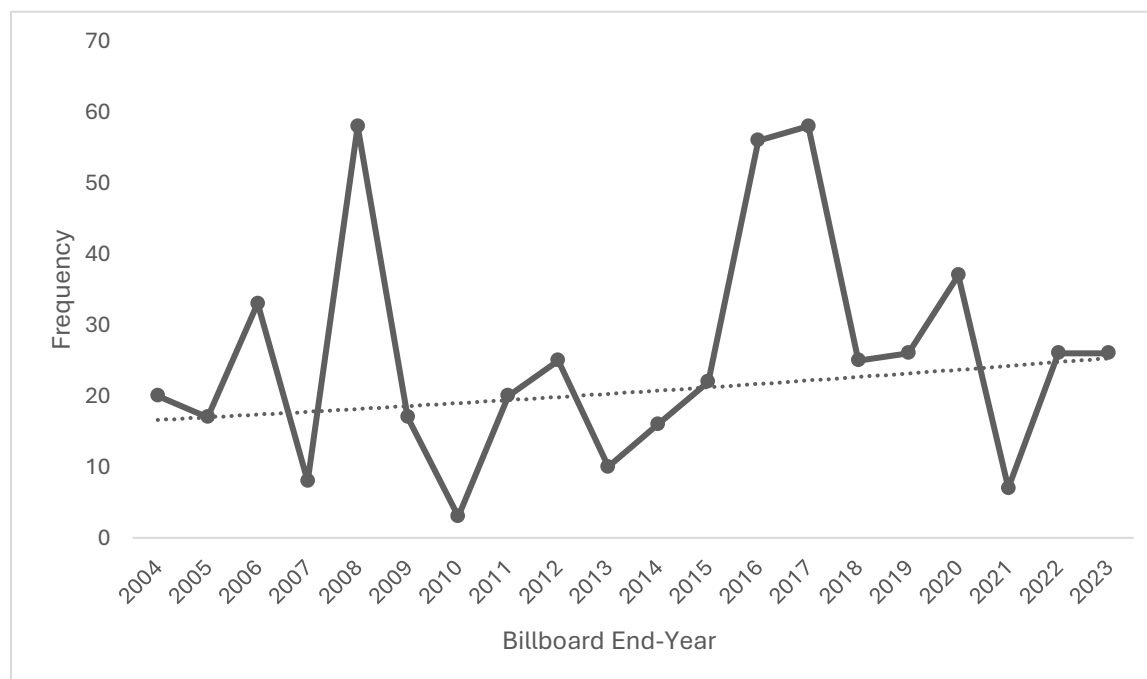
4.4 Brutality & Violence

The theme “Brutality and Violence” appeared 510 times over the two decades, averaging 25.5 instances per year (see Table C3). Brutality & Violence accounts for 9.5% of all themes and codes found in the analysis (see Table 2). The highest peaks for this theme occurred in 2008 and 2017, each with 58 instances, representing 11.4% of all frequencies within these years. Table C3 provides a detailed overview of these statistics.

From 2004 to 2010, the frequency of “Brutality & Violence” themes varied. The year 2004 recorded 20 occurrences, followed by a slight decrease to 17 themes in 2005 and an increase to 33 themes in 2006. The frequency dropped significantly to 8 in 2007, but then rose sharply to 58 in 2008. In 2009, the count fell again to 17, with a further decrease to 3 in 2010. This period shows fluctuations in the occurrences of the theme. Between 2011 and 2015, the distribution continued to show variability. The year 2011 recorded 20 occurrences, and there was an increase to 25 themes in 2012. However, the frequency dropped to 10 in 2013, increased slightly to 16 in 2014, and rose to 22 in 2015. This period indicates fluctuations in the yearly totals of the theme. From 2016 onwards, there is an increase in the frequency of the “Brutality & Violence” theme. The year 2016 recorded 56 themes, followed by 58 themes in 2017, the highest in the dataset. The theme remained relatively high with 25 occurrences in 2018, 26 in 2019, and 37 in 2020. The year 2021 saw a decrease to 7 themes, but the frequency increased again to 26 in both 2022 and 2023. This period shows higher frequencies of themes compared to earlier years, indicating more occurrences in recent times.

Figure 5

Yearly Distribution of Frequencies for the Theme "Brutality and Violence"



Regarding the most frequent sub-themes within “Brutality and Violence”, “Drugs” was the most prevalent, with 300 instances accounting for 58.8% of the sub-theme frequencies, and an average of 15 mentions per year. “Violence and Crime” followed with 178 instances, representing 34.9% and an average of around 9 mentions per year (see Table D3). “Drugs” had its highest frequency in 2017 with 40 instances and its lowest in 2010 with only 1 instance. “Violence and Crime” peaked in 2008 with 24 instances and hit its lowest point in 2021 with zero instances, which is demonstrated in Table D3.

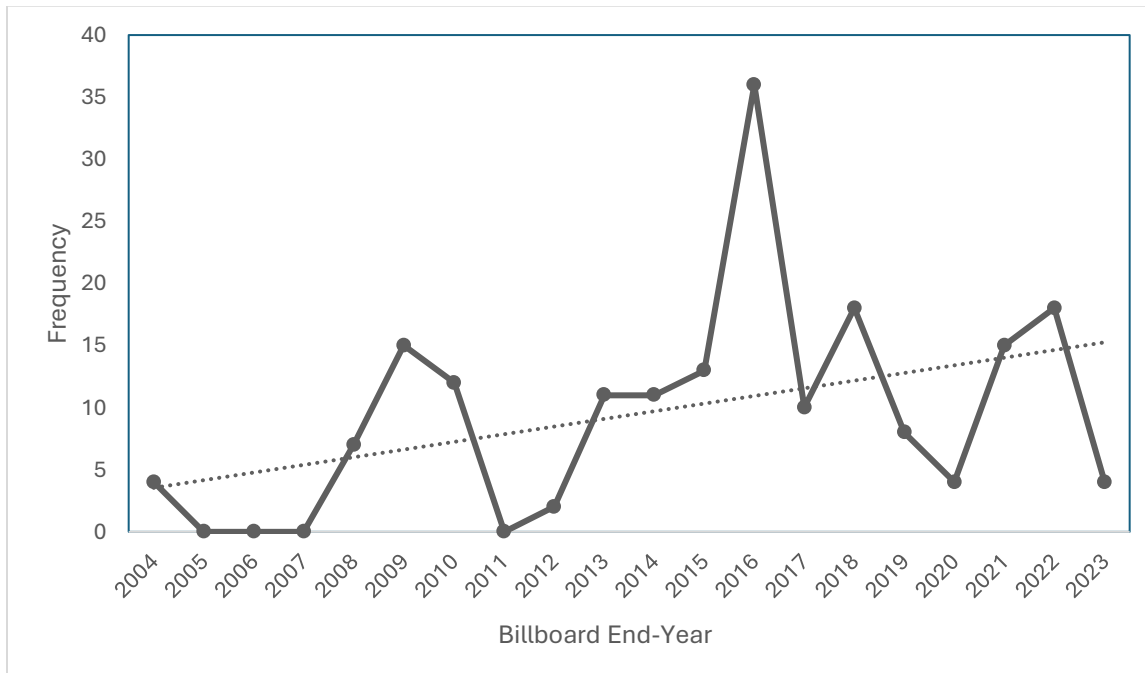
4.5 Contemplation & Introspection

The theme “Contemplation & Introspection” appeared a total of 188 times over the two decades, averaging 9.4 instances per year (see Table C4). Contemplation & Introspection comprises 3.5% of all themes and codes found in the analysis (see Table 2). Demonstrated in Table C4, the highest peak for this theme occurred in 2016, with 36 instances, representing 19.2% of all frequencies within the theme, while the lowest frequencies were recorded in 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2011, with zero instances each.

From 2004 to 2010, the frequency of “Contemplation & Introspection” themes varied. The year 2004 recorded 4 occurrences, followed by 0 themes in both 2005 and 2006. The frequency remained at 0 in 2007, then increased to 7 in 2008. In 2009, the count was 15, followed by 12 in 2010. This period shows variations in the occurrences of the theme. Between 2011 and 2015, the distribution continued to vary. The year 2011 recorded 0 occurrences, and there were 2 themes in 2012. In 2013, the frequency was 11, followed by 11 in 2014, and 13 in 2015. This period indicates variations in the yearly totals of the theme. From 2016 onwards, there is an increase in the frequency of the “Contemplation & Introspection” theme. The year 2016 recorded 36 themes, followed by 10 themes in 2017. The theme had 18 occurrences in 2018, 8 in 2019, and 4 in 2020. The year 2021 saw 15 themes, followed by 18 in 2022 and 4 in 2023. This period shows higher frequencies of themes compared to earlier years. A detailed visualization of the yearly distribution of the frequencies for the code "Contemplation & Introspection" can be found in Figure 6.

Figure 6

Yearly Distribution of Frequencies for the Theme "Contemplation & Introspection"



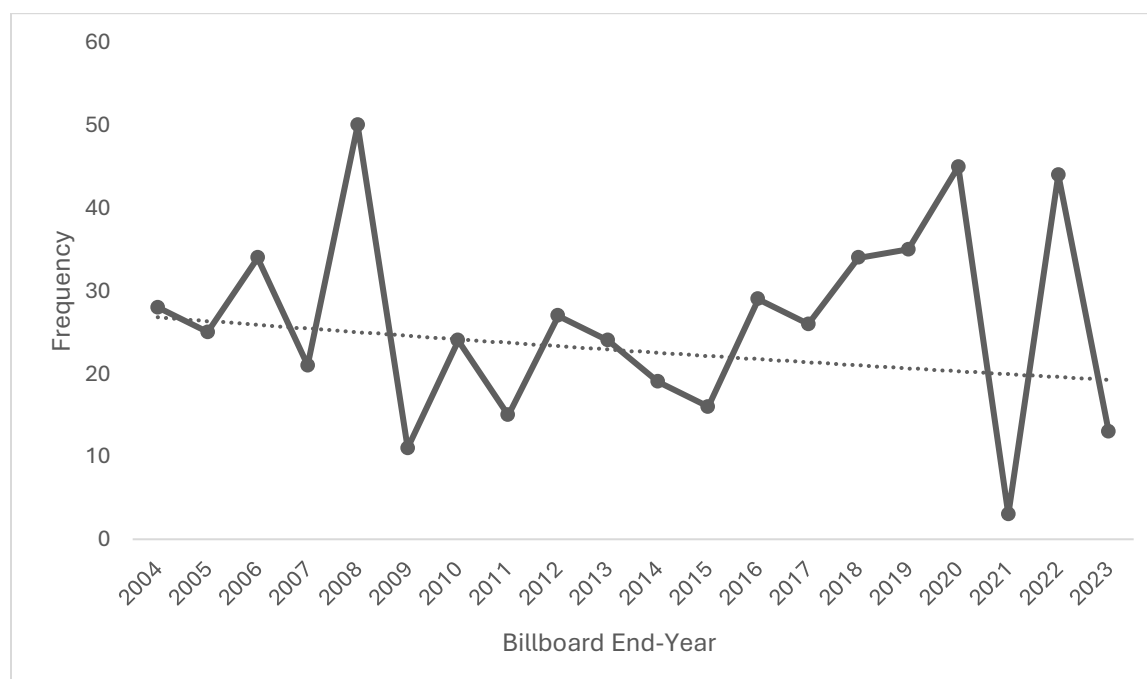
4.6 Cultural & Local Referencing

The theme “Cultural and Local Referencing” appeared a total of 523 times over the two decades, averaging 26.2 instances per year (see Table C5). Cultural & Local Referencing represents 9.7% of all themes and codes found in the analysis (see Table 2). The highest frequency was recorded in 2008 with 50 instances, representing 9.6% of all frequencies within the theme. The lowest frequency was measured in 2021, with 3 instances, accounting for 0.6% of the frequencies (as detailed in Table C5).

From 2004 to 2010, the frequency of “Cultural & Local Referencing” themes varied. The year 2004 recorded 28 occurrences, followed by 25 themes in 2005 and 34 themes in 2006. The frequency was 21 in 2007 and increased to 50 in 2008. In 2009, the count was 11, followed by 24 in 2010. This period shows variations in the occurrences of the theme. Between 2011 and 2015, the distribution continued to vary. The year 2011 recorded 15 occurrences, and there were 27 themes in 2012. In 2013, the frequency was 24, followed by 19 in 2014 and 16 in 2015. This period indicates variations in the yearly totals of the theme. From 2016 onwards, the frequency of the “Cultural & Local Referencing” theme continued to vary. The year 2016 recorded 29 themes, followed by 26 in 2017. The theme had 34 occurrences in 2018, 35 in 2019, and 45 in 2020. The year 2021 saw 3 themes, followed by 44 in 2022 and 13 in 2023. This period shows variations in the frequencies of themes compared to earlier years, which can all be seen in Figure 7.

Figure 7

Yearly Distribution of Frequencies for the Theme "Cultural & Local Referencing"



The most frequent sub-themes within “Cultural and Local Referencing” are “Local Landmarks”, “Intertextual References”, and “Community Representation”, which can be seen in Table D4. “Local Landmarks” had a total of 260 instances, representing 49.7% of the theme, with an average of 13 mentions per year. “Intertextual References” accounted for 175 instances, equaling 33.5%, with an average of 8.8 mentions per year. “Community Representation” had 46 instances, representing 8.8% of the theme, with an average of 2.3 mentions per year (see Table D4).

The most frequently mentioned local landmarks in rap lyrics from 2004 to 2023 are primarily American places like “Malibu” (9 mentions), “New York” (7), and “Atlanta” (6). General terms like “block” (15 mentions) and “hood” (13) are also common, along with international landmarks such as “Tokyo,” “Paris,” and “London.” Additionally, many lyrics reference personal locations significant to the artists, including streets, corners, and restaurants where they live or grew up.

4.7 Dissing

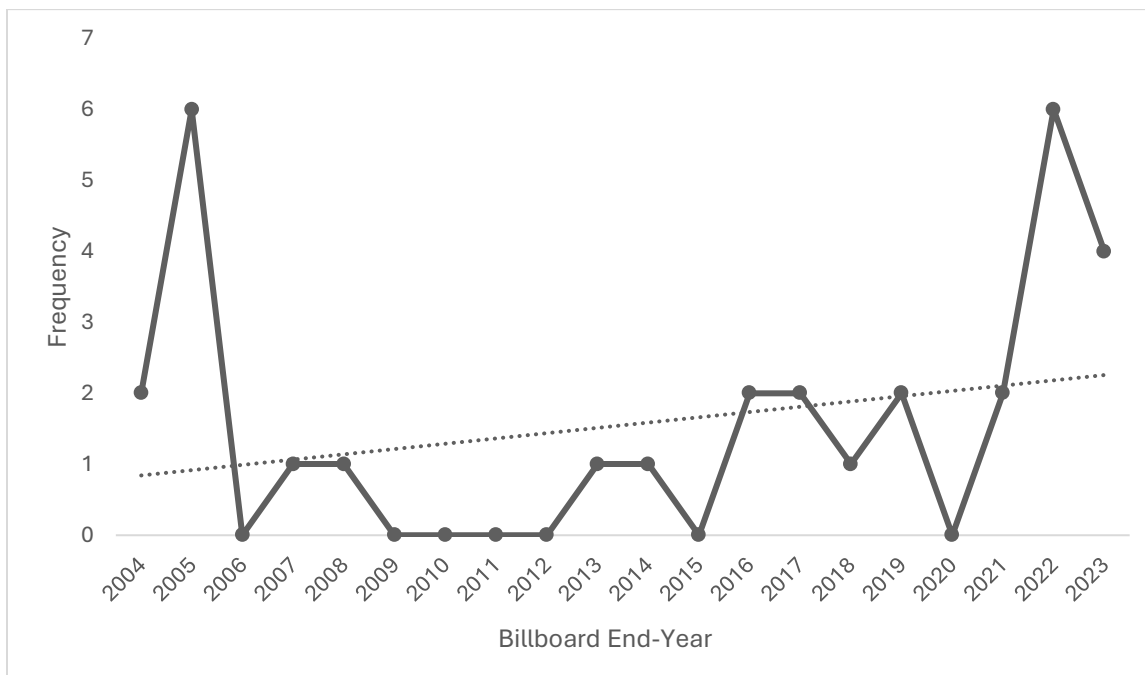
The theme “Dissing” appeared 31 times in the analysis, with an average of 1.6 instances per year (see Table C6). Dissing constitutes 0.6% of all themes and codes found in the analysis (see Table 2). The highest frequency of disses was recorded in 2022 and 2005, each with 6 instances, representing each 19.4% of all disses. The lowest frequency was observed in 2006, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2015, and 2020, with no instances in each of these years (see Table C6).

Figure 8 illustrates the distribution of dissing frequencies over the years, showing a period of variation between 2004 and 2010. The year 2004 recorded 2 occurrences, followed by 6 themes in 2005. The frequency was 0 in 2006, 1 in 2007, and 1 in 2008. In 2009 and 2010, there were 0 occurrences. This period shows fluctuations in the occurrences of the theme. Between 2011 and 2015, the distribution continued to vary. The year 2011 recorded 0 occurrences, and there were 0 themes in 2012. In 2013 and 2014, the frequency was 1, followed by 0 in 2015. This period indicates low and varying yearly totals of the theme. From 2016

onwards, the frequency of the “Dissing” theme continued to vary. The year 2016 recorded 2 themes, followed by 2 in 2017. The theme had 1 occurrence in 2018, 2 in 2019, and 0 in 2020. The year 2021 saw 2 themes, followed by 6 in 2022 and 4 in 2023. This period shows variability in the frequencies of themes compared to earlier years. For a comprehensive overview of the frequency distribution of the code “Dissing”, refer to Figure 8.

Figure 8

Yearly Distribution of Frequencies for the Theme "Dissing"



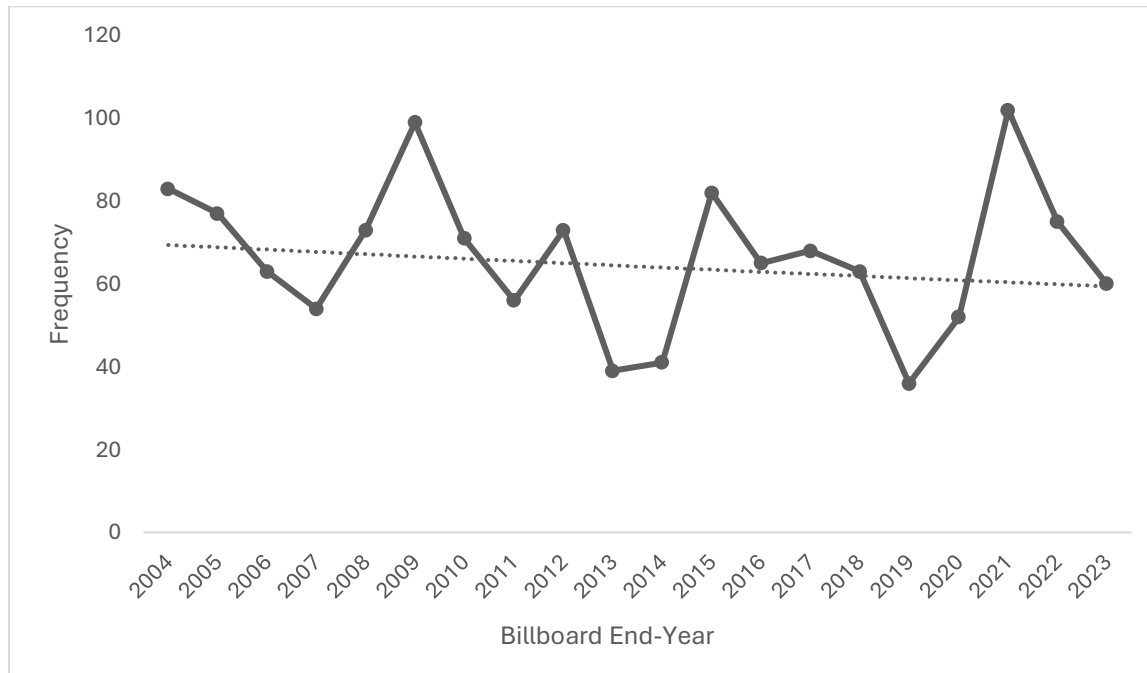
4.8 Emotions & Feelings

The theme “Emotions and Feelings” occurred 1332 times, with an average of 66.6 instances per year, making it the most frequent theme in the analysis (see Table C7). Emotions & Feelings makes up 24.8% of all themes and codes found in the analysis (see Table 2). The highest occurrence was in 2021, with 102 instances, representing 7.7% of the total “Emotions & Feelings” codes. The lowest occurrence was in 2019, with 36 instances, equaling 2.7% (see Table C7).

From 2004 to 2010, the frequency of “Emotions & Feelings” themes varied. The year 2004 recorded 83 occurrences, followed by 77 themes in 2005 and 63 themes in 2006. The frequency was 54 in 2007, then increased to 73 in 2008 and further to 99 in 2009. In 2010, the count was 71. This period shows fluctuations in the occurrences of the theme. Between 2011 and 2015, the distribution continued to vary. The year 2011 recorded 56 occurrences, and there were 73 themes in 2012. In 2013, the frequency was 39, followed by 41 in 2014, and 82 in 2015. This period indicates variations in the yearly totals of the theme. From 2016 onwards, the frequency of the “Emotions & Feelings” theme continued to vary. The year 2016 recorded 65 themes, followed by 68 in 2017. The theme had 63 occurrences in 2018, 36 in 2019, and 52 in 2020. The year 2021 saw 102 themes, followed by 75 in 2022 and 60 in 2023. This period shows variability in the frequencies of themes compared to earlier years (see Figure 9).

Figure 9

Yearly Distribution of Frequencies for the Theme "Emotions & Feelings"



The most frequent sub-themes were “Love and Sex” and “Celebration and Fun” (see Table D5). On the one hand, “Love and Sex” appeared 792 times, accounting for 59.5% of the sub-themes, with an average frequency of 39.6 per year with peaking 61 occurrences in 2004 and 60 occurrences in 2021. The lowest frequency was measured in 2013 with only 20 codes. On the other hand, “Celebration and Fun” occurred 185 times, representing 13.9% of the sub-themes, with an average frequency of 9.3 per year, reaching the highest frequency in 2015 with 24 instances and the lowest in 2021.

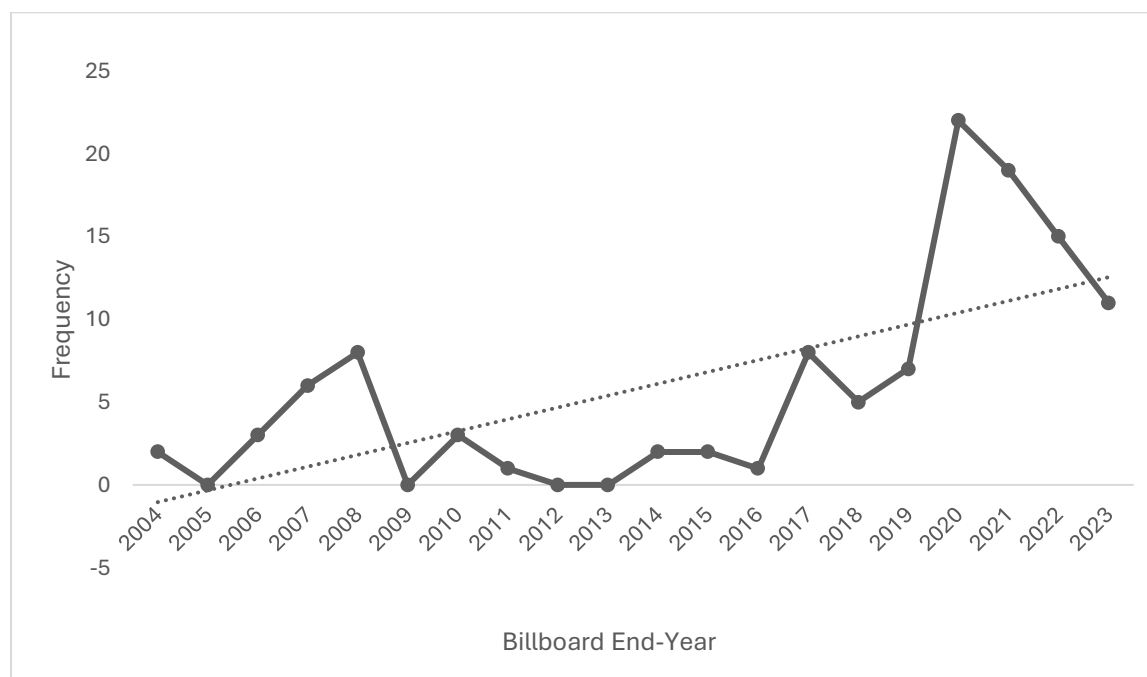
4.9 Empowerment & Sexual Agency

The theme “Empowerment and Sexual Agency” appeared 115 times, with an average frequency of 5.8 instances per year. Empowerment & Sexual Agency accounts for 2.1% of all themes and codes found in the analysis (see Table 2). The peak occurrence was in 2020, with 22 instances, representing 19.1% of the total, while the lowest occurrences were in 2005, 2009, 2012 and 2013 each with no instances (see Table C8).

From 2004 to 2010, the frequency of “Empowerment & Sexual Agency” themes varied. The year 2004 recorded 2 occurrences, followed by 0 themes in 2005. The frequency was 3 in 2006, 6 in 2007, and 8 in 2008. In 2009, the count was 0, followed by 3 in 2010. This period shows variations in the occurrences of the theme. Between 2011 and 2015, the distribution continued to vary. The year 2011 recorded 1 occurrence, and there were 0 themes in 2012. In 2013, the frequency was 0, followed by 2 in 2014 and 2 in 2015. This period indicates low and varying yearly totals of the theme. From 2016 onwards, the frequency of the “Empowerment & Sexual Agency” theme continued to vary. The year 2016 recorded 1 theme, followed by 8 in 2017. The theme had 5 occurrences in 2018, 7 in 2019, and 22 in 2020. The year 2021 saw 19 themes, followed by 15 in 2022 and 11 in 2023. This period shows an increase and variability in the frequencies of themes compared to earlier years. For a detailed depiction of the decline and rise of the code "Empowerment & Sexual Agency", refer to Figure 10.

Figure 10

Yearly Distribution of Frequencies for the Theme "Empowerment & Sexual Agency"



The most frequent sub-themes within “Empowerment and Sexual Agency” were “Confident Sexuality” and “Women Empowerment” (see Table D6). “Confident Sexuality” appeared 69 times, accounting for 60% of the sub-themes, with an average frequency of 3.5 instances per year. “Women Empowerment” appeared 38 times, representing 33% of the sub-themes, with an average frequency of 1.9 instances per year.

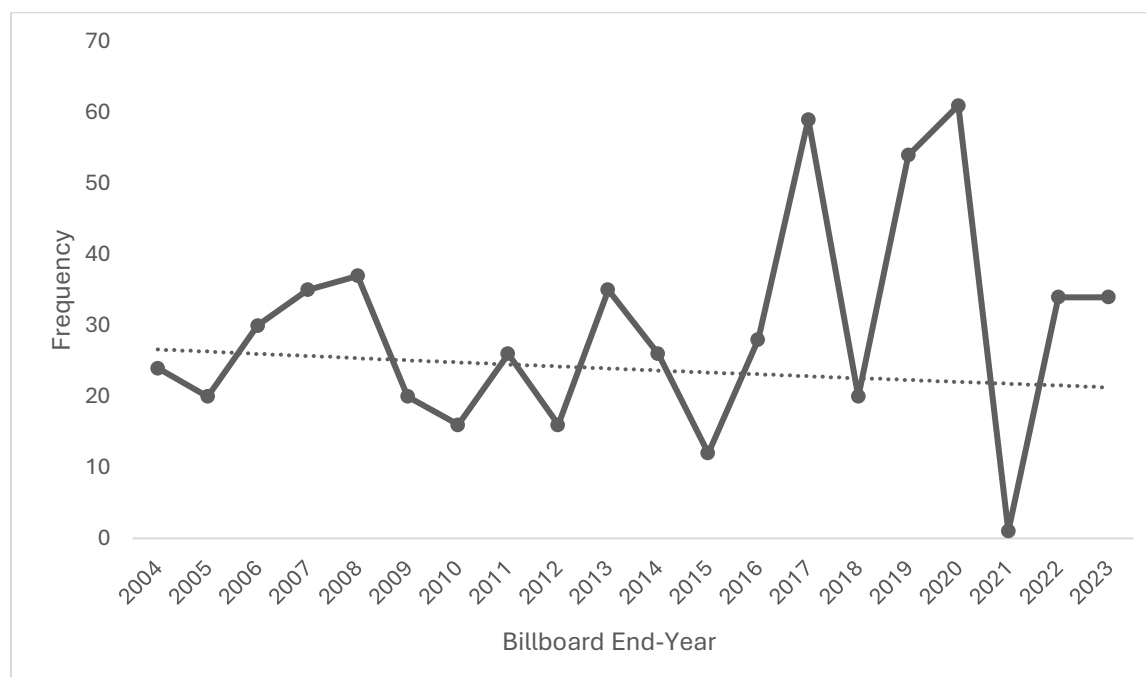
4.10 Flexing

The theme “Flexing” appeared a total of 588 times across the two decades, with an average frequency of 29.4 instances per year. Flexing represents 10.9% of all themes and codes found in the analysis (see Table 2). The highest occurrences were in 2020 with 61 instances, representing 10.4% and in 2017 with 51 occurrences, representing 10% of the total. The lowest frequency was in 2021 with only one instance, accounting for 0.2% (see Table C9).

From 2004 to 2010, the frequency of “Flexing” themes varied. The year 2004 recorded 24 occurrences, followed by 20 themes in 2005 and 30 themes in 2006. The frequency was 35 in 2007 and 37 in 2008. In 2009, the count was 20, followed by 16 in 2010. This period shows fluctuations in the occurrences of the theme. Between 2011 and 2015, the distribution continued to vary. The year 2011 recorded 26 occurrences, and there were 16 themes in 2012. In 2013, the frequency was 35, followed by 26 in 2014 and 12 in 2015. This period indicates variations in the yearly totals of the theme. From 2016 onwards, the frequency of the “Flexing” theme continued to vary. The year 2016 recorded 28 themes, followed by 59 in 2017. The theme had 20 occurrences in 2018, 54 in 2019, and 61 in 2020. The year 2021 saw 1 theme, followed by 34 in both 2022 and 2023. This period shows an increase and variability in the frequencies of themes compared to earlier years. Figure 11 presents the variability in the frequency “Flexing” across the years.

Figure 11

Yearly Distribution of Frequencies for the Theme "Flexing"



The most frequent sub-themes within “Flexing” are “Flexing with Material Goods” and “Flexing with Physical Appearance” (see Table D7). “Flexing with Material Goods” appeared 366 times, making up 62.2% of the sub-themes, with an average frequency of 18.3 instances per year. “Flexing with Physical Appearance” appeared 140 times, representing 23.8% of the sub-themes, with an average frequency of 7 instances per year.

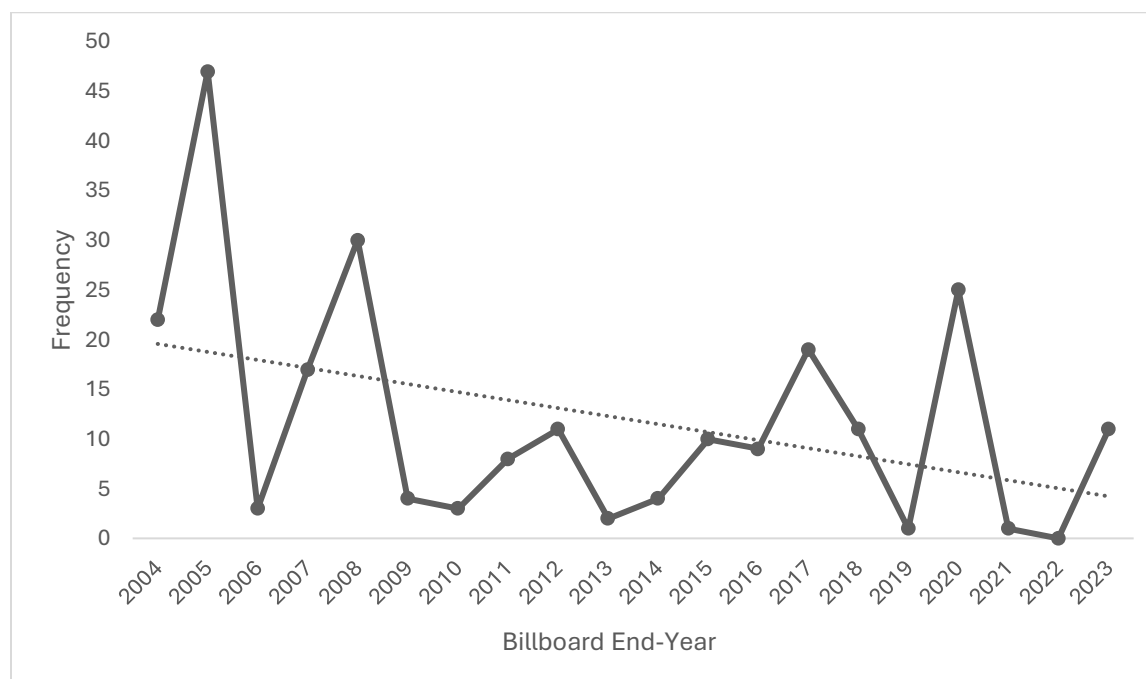
4.11 Misogyny

Overall, misogyny occurred 238 times during the analysis, with an average of 11.9 instances per year (see Table C10). Misogyny makes up 4.4% of all themes and codes found in the analysis (see Table 2). The highest frequency of misogyny was in 2005, with 47 instances, equaling 19.7% of all occurrences within this theme. The lowest occurrences were in 2022, with zero instances, and in 2019 and 2021, with only one occurrence each.

From 2004 to 2010, the frequency of “Misogyny” themes varied. The year 2004 recorded 22 occurrences, followed by 47 themes in 2005 and 3 themes in 2006. The frequency was 17 in 2007 and 30 in 2008. In 2009, the count was 4, followed by 3 in 2010. This period shows fluctuations in the occurrences of the theme. Between 2011 and 2015, the distribution continued to vary. The year 2011 recorded 8 occurrences, and there were 11 themes in 2012. In 2013, the frequency was 2, followed by 4 in 2014 and 10 in 2015. This period indicates variations in the yearly totals of the theme. From 2016 onwards, the frequency of the “Misogyny” theme continued to vary. The year 2016 recorded 9 themes, followed by 19 in 2017. The theme had 11 occurrences in 2018, 1 in 2019, and 25 in 2020. The year 2021 saw 1 theme, followed by 0 in 2022 and 11 in 2023. This period shows an increase and variability in the frequencies of themes compared to earlier years (see Figure 12).

Figure 12

Yearly Distribution of Frequencies for the Theme "Misogyny"



The most frequent sub-themes for misogyny are “Sex Objectification”, “Sexual Acts”, and “Materialistic Stereotyping” (see Table D8). “Sex Objectification” occurred 103 times, with an average of 5.2 times per year, covering 43.3% of all misogynistic sub-themes. “Sexual Acts” occurred 98 times, making up 41.2% of the sub-themes, with an average of 4.9 occurrences per year. “Materialistic Stereotyping” occurred 36 times, equaling 15.1% of the sub-themes, with an average of 1.8 occurrences per year.

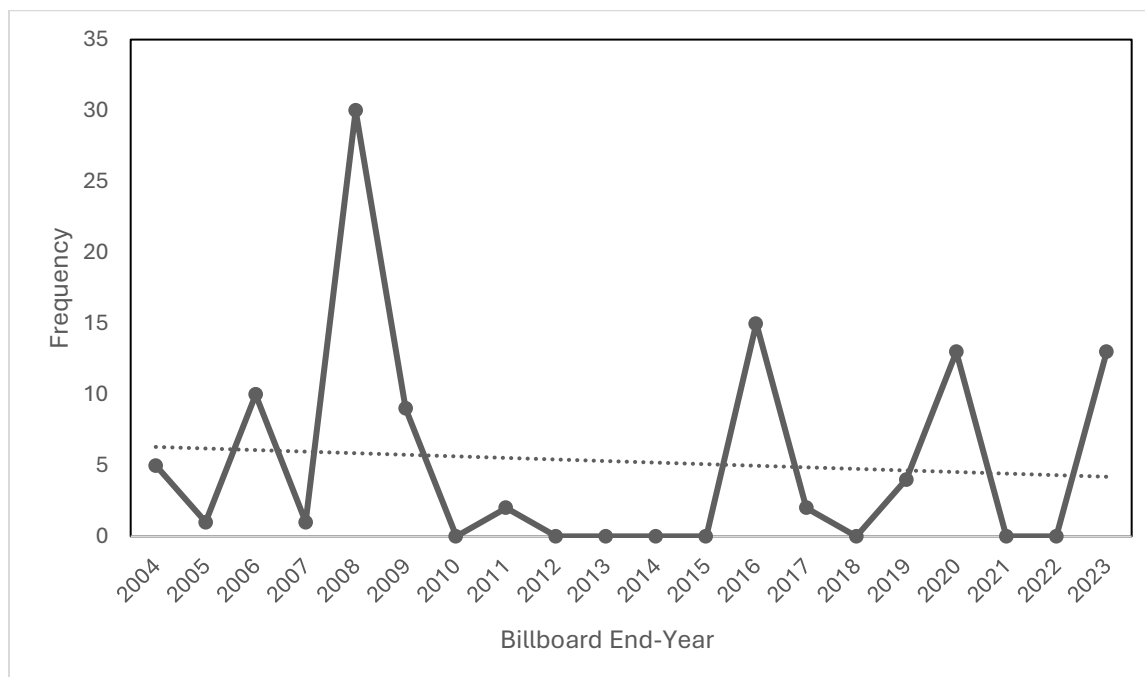
4.12 Sociopolitical Commentary

The theme “Sociopolitical Commentary” appeared 105 times over the two decades, with an average frequency of 5.3 occurrences per year. Sociopolitical Commentary comprises 2.0% of all themes and codes found in the analysis (see Table 2). The highest frequency was observed in 2008, with 30 instances, while the lowest frequencies were in 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2018, 2021, and 2022, with zero occurrences (see Table C11).

From 2004 to 2010, the frequency of “Sociopolitical Commentary” themes varied. The year 2004 recorded 5 occurrences, followed by 1 theme in 2005 and 10 themes in 2006. The frequency was 1 in 2007 and increased to 30 in 2008. In 2009, the count was 9, followed by 0 in 2010. This period shows fluctuations in the occurrences of the theme. Between 2011 and 2015, the distribution continued to vary. The year 2011 recorded 2 occurrences, and there were 0 themes in both 2012 and 2013. In 2014 and 2015, the frequency was 0. This period indicates low and varying yearly totals of the theme. From 2016 onwards, the frequency of the “Sociopolitical Commentary” theme continued to vary. The year 2016 recorded 15 themes, followed by 2 in 2017. The theme had 0 occurrences in 2018, 4 in 2019, and 13 in 2020. The year 2021 saw 0 themes, followed by 0 in 2022 and 13 in 2023. This period shows variability in the frequencies of themes compared to earlier years, as shown in Figure 13.

Figure 13

Yearly Distribution of Frequencies for the Theme "Sociopolitical Commentary"



The most frequent sub-themes within sociopolitical commentary are “Urban Issues”, “Class Division”, and “Social Critique.” “Urban Issues” appeared 18 times, making up 17.1% of all sub-themes within sociopolitical commentary and averaging 0.9 occurrences per year. “Class Division” appeared 17 times, equating to 16.2% and an average of 0.9 per year. Similarly, “Social Critique” occurred 17 times, comprising 16.2% of the sub-themes, with an average frequency of 0.9 per year (see Table D9).

5. Discussion

The research aimed to answer the question: “What themes are represented in the most popular rap lyrics in the End-Year Hot 100 Billboard charts over the last two decades, and how have these themes developed over time?” A mixed-method research design was applied to extract meaningful insights, adding value to existing research and expanding knowledge on the various thematic concepts in rap lyrics. The findings of this research strengthen the existing literature on thematic analysis in music and offer practical applications for understanding cultural and social trends in rap. Consequently, the following section will first reflect on the main findings, then discuss theoretical and practical implications, and lastly, address the limitations of the study and provide recommendations for future research.

5.1 Main Findings

The primary aim of this study was to explore and analyze the thematic elements in popular rap lyrics from 2004 to 2023. The analysis encompassed a broad range of themes, providing a comprehensive overview of the evolving landscape of rap music over two decades.

The findings indicate that "Emotions and Feelings" are the most dominant themes in rap lyrics, underscoring the genre's deep connection to personal and intimate expressions. This prominence reflects the genre's role in articulating a wide spectrum of emotions, highlighting the personal struggles, triumphs, and daily experiences of the artists. The substantial presence of "Brand & Name Dropping" themes underscores the significant role of material wealth and status

symbols in the rap community, reflecting broader societal trends towards consumerism and brand consciousness. Conversely, the relatively lower occurrence of "Sociopolitical Commentary" suggests that while rap music continues to address social and political issues, these themes are less central compared to personal and materialistic themes. This could reflect a shift in focus within the genre or changes in the broader cultural context in which rap is produced and consumed.

The dominance of "Emotions and Feelings" highlights the essential role of rap music as a medium for expressing a wide array of human emotions. This theme's prevalence suggests that rap remains a vital outlet for artists to convey their personal experiences and emotional journeys. The varied distribution of this theme over the years reflects the changing dynamics of personal and societal issues faced by artists, with peaks and troughs likely corresponding to broader cultural and personal events.

The significant presence of "Brand & Name Dropping" indicates the importance of material wealth and status in the rap community. This theme's fluctuation over the years suggests varying degrees of emphasis on materialism and consumer culture within the genre. The prominence of this theme during certain periods may reflect broader economic conditions, cultural trends, or shifts in the marketing and branding strategies within the music industry.

"Flexing" themes, which include boasting about material possessions, physical appearance, and fame, highlight the culture of self-promotion and success in rap music. The consistent presence of this theme underscores the importance of outward displays of success and confidence, which are central to the genre's identity. The peaks in this theme suggest periods where self-assertion and the demonstration of success were particularly valued.

The "Cultural & Local Referencing" theme emphasizes the deep ties rappers have with their local communities and cultures. This theme's presence demonstrates how artists incorporate their backgrounds and local identities into their music, preserving and promoting cultural heritage. The fluctuations in this theme may reflect changing community dynamics or shifts in the artists' focus on local versus global narratives.

The theme of "Brutality & Violence" highlights the stark realities of urban life and the ongoing issues of crime and violence that are prevalent in many communities represented in rap music. This theme's peaks during certain periods may correlate with socio-political events or heightened public awareness of issues related to violence and crime. The ongoing presence of this theme underscores rap's role in bringing attention to these critical societal issues.

"Authenticity & Storytelling" remains a core element of rap music, reflecting the genre's roots in genuine self-expression and personal narratives. The neutral depiction of street culture in this study, as opposed to its usual association with urban issues, indicates a shift towards a broader portrayal of life experiences. This evolution suggests that rappers are diversifying their narratives, offering more nuanced and multifaceted stories that go beyond traditional themes of struggle and hardship.

The presence of "Contemplation & Introspection" themes indicates a growing trend towards self-reflection and philosophical questioning in rap lyrics. This theme's rise in recent years highlights an increasing inclination among artists to explore deeper personal and existential issues, reflecting broader cultural trends towards mindfulness and self-awareness.

While "Sociopolitical Commentary" is less prevalent, its continued presence highlights rap's enduring role in addressing social and political issues. The fluctuations in this theme

suggest varying levels of engagement with socio-political topics, possibly influenced by the broader political climate and social movements. The theme's persistence underscores the genre's potential as a platform for activism and social change, even if it is not the central focus.

The theme of "Misogyny" reflects ongoing issues related to gender and the portrayal of women in rap music. The declining frequency of this theme may suggest a gradual shift towards more respectful and equitable representations of women, although its persistence indicates that misogynistic attitudes remain a challenge within the genre.

The increasing frequency of "Empowerment & Sexual Agency" themes suggests a positive trend towards celebrating autonomy, gender equality, and positive sexual expression in rap music. This theme's rise indicates a growing recognition and representation of women's voices and experiences in the genre, reflecting broader societal movements towards gender equality and empowerment.

"Dissing" remains a distinctive feature of rap music, reflecting the genre's competitive nature and the importance of verbal sparring. The peaks and troughs in this theme suggest varying degrees of rivalry and conflict within the rap community over time, highlighting the dynamic and contentious aspects of the genre.

These findings collectively highlight the evolving nature of rap music, with themes like emotions and feelings, material wealth, and authenticity playing significant roles. The varying distribution of these themes over the study period reflects broader cultural and social trends, underscoring the genre's responsiveness to changing societal contexts.

5.2 Theoretical Implications

This study provides significant theoretical insights into the thematic elements of rap music from 2004 to 2023. The analysis demonstrates how rap lyrics reflect and address various social, cultural, and personal issues, expanding our understanding of the genre's role in contemporary society.

Authenticity and storytelling are pivotal components of rap music, reflecting the significance of genuine self-presentation and personal narratives. This study corroborates the findings of Alim (2009), Lal (2023), and Wright (2010), demonstrating that themes like "Keepin' it Real" and "Personal Narratives" are prevalent, highlighting how rappers use their personal experiences and street culture to establish credibility and authenticity. These findings align with Pennycook (2007) and Reza (2018), who emphasize the role of personal narratives in maintaining authenticity in rap music. However, unlike Wright (2010), who primarily focuses on storytelling as a means of self-presentation, this study also identifies a broader range of authenticity elements, including resilience and community representation. Furthermore, in contrast to the literature that often connects street culture to urban issues (Lewis, 2023; Wilson, 2011; Pennycook, 2007; Reza, 2018), this study reveals a more neutral depiction of street culture, illustrating its multifaceted nature beyond just urban problems.

Brand and name dropping play a significant role in rap lyrics, with this study highlighting the prominence of "Brand Mentions" and "Proper Names." This aligns with the work of Androutsopoulos & Scholz (2002) and Herd (2009), who discuss the use of commercial products and luxury brands to assert cultural relevance and status. Power & Hauge (2008) also highlight

the cultural significance of brand mentions, further supported by the frequent occurrences of these themes in the analysis. This study extends their findings by illustrating the dynamic fluctuation of these themes over the two decades, noting a significant increase in the mid-2010s.

Brutality and violence are common themes in rap music, with this study showing high frequencies of themes related to "Drugs" and "Violence and Crime." These findings align with Androutsopoulos & Scholz (2002) and Mitchell (2001), who discuss the representation of violence and crime in rap music. Herd (2009) and Morgan & Bennett (2011) further support the portrayal of drug abuse and its societal impact in rap lyrics. However, this study differs from Berker (2022), who emphasizes a more consistent presence of urban violence across all years, while this study shows peaks and declines in specific periods.

Contemplation and introspection are reflected in rap lyrics, with this study showing significant presence of themes like "Personal Reflections" and "Changes in Perspective." This aligns with Androutsopoulos & Scholz (2002) and Reza (2018), who explore how rappers reflect on broader issues and personal growth. Unlike Reza (2018), who focuses on individual introspection, this study also highlights collective contemplative themes, indicating a broader range of reflective content.

Cultural and local referencing is crucial in rap music, with this study identifying frequent themes like "Local Landmarks" and "Community Representation." This supports Alim (2009) and Dyson (2004), who discuss the importance of cultural and local references in rap music. Androutsopoulos (2009) and Pennycook (2007) explore cultural synchronization, further evidenced by the frequent occurrence of this theme in the analyzed lyrics. This study extends

their findings by showing how these references fluctuate over time, with significant peaks in certain years.

Dissing, as highlighted by Androutsopoulos & Scholz (2002) and Racine (2018), serves as a competitive and confrontational tool in rap music. This study confirms their findings by showing how dissing is used to challenge others' credibility and dominance. Tang (2020) further supports this by analyzing the strategic use of dissing in establishing dominance. However, this study reveals that the frequency of dissing fluctuates more than previously noted, with clear periods of higher and lower occurrences.

Emotions and feelings are prominently expressed in rap lyrics, with this study showing a high frequency of themes related to "Love and Sex" and "Celebration and Fun." These findings align with Androutsopoulos & Scholz (2002) and Berker (2022), who discuss the wide spectrum of emotions expressed in rap lyrics. Lal (2023) and Wilson (2018) support the importance of these themes, further confirmed by their frequent occurrences in the analyzed lyrics. Unlike Berker (2022), who notes a more consistent expression of emotions, this study shows significant fluctuations over the years.

Empowerment and sexual agency are significant themes in rap music, with this study highlighting the substantial presence of "Confident Sexuality" and "Women Empowerment." This supports Morgan & Bennett (2011) and Travis (2012), who discuss the themes of autonomy, equality, and positive sexual expression in rap music. Wilson (2018) also emphasizes these themes, further evidenced by their frequent occurrences in the analyzed lyrics. However, this study diverges by showing the rise of these themes particularly in the latter half of the study period, indicating a growing trend.

Flexing is a common theme in rap music, with this study showing a high frequency of themes related to "Flexing with Material Goods" and "Flexing with Physical Appearance." This aligns with Harris (2024) and Power & Hauge (2008), who discuss the culture of braggadocio and flexing in rap music. Lal (2023) and Reza (2018) emphasize the significance of flexing in establishing status and credibility, further supported by the frequent occurrences of these themes. This study extends their findings by showing how the prominence of flexing themes fluctuates, particularly noting high volatility in certain periods.

Misogyny is prevalent in rap music, with this study showing frequent themes like "Sex Objectification" and "Materialistic Stereotyping." These findings support Androutsopoulos & Scholz (2002) and Adams & Fuller (2006), who discuss the portrayal of women in rap music. Dyson (2004) and Weitzer & Kubrin (2012) further analyze the societal impact of misogyny in rap, evidenced by the high occurrence of these themes in the analyzed lyrics. This study differs by highlighting the decline of misogynistic themes in recent years, suggesting a potential shift in the genre.

Sociopolitical commentary plays a significant role in rap music, with this study identifying frequent themes like "Activism and Resistance" and "Class Divisions." This supports Androutsopoulos & Scholz (2002) and Dyson (2004), who discuss the representation of political and social issues in rap music. Eyerman & Jamison (1998) and Morgan & Bennett (2011) highlight the critical portrayal of law enforcement and economic hardship, further supported by the frequent occurrences of these themes. This study extends their findings by showing how sociopolitical commentary themes fluctuate over time, with peaks in periods of significant social unrest.

By aligning the findings of this study with existing literature, it becomes evident that rap music serves as a powerful medium for expressing a wide range of social, cultural, and personal themes. This study extends the theoretical understanding of rap lyrics by providing a comprehensive analysis of these themes, highlighting their significance and impact on contemporary culture. Furthermore, this analysis reveals both consistencies and divergences from existing studies, offering a nuanced perspective on the evolution and thematic diversity of rap music over the past two decades.

5.3 Practical Implications

The findings of this study have significant implications for various public and private stakeholders, including the music industry, cultural analysts, educators, marketing professionals, policymakers, and community organizations.

For the music industry, record labels, producers, and artists can utilize the insights on prevalent themes to inform content creation and marketing strategies. By identifying trends in themes such as “Emotions & Feelings,” “Brand & Name Dropping,” and “Flexing,” industry professionals can tailor their production to align with audience interests and cultural trends. The consistent presence of “Love and Sex” and “Celebration and Fun” can guide the thematic focus of new music releases, ensuring they resonate with listeners’ current preferences.

Cultural analysts and social scientists can use these findings to study the cultural and societal impacts of rap music. The evolution of themes like “Emotions & Feelings” and “Brutality & Violence” provides insights into how societal issues and personal experiences are

reflected in music. This understanding helps in comprehending broader cultural shifts and the role of rap music in shaping and reflecting social norms and values. The prevalence of themes such as “Misogyny” and “Empowerment & Sexual Agency” offers a nuanced view of gender dynamics within the genre, informing discussions on gender representation and equality.

Educators can leverage these results to develop curriculum content that explores the intersection of music, culture, and society. Incorporating the analysis of rap lyrics into educational programs engages students in discussions about contemporary issues, emotional expression, and cultural identity. This approach makes learning more relevant and relatable, particularly for students who identify with or are interested in hip-hop culture.

Marketing professionals and advertisers can utilize the insights from the theme analysis to create more effective and culturally resonant campaigns. The frequent mentions of brands and personal names in rap lyrics highlight the genre’s influence on consumer behavior and brand perception. Understanding which brands and themes are most commonly referenced enables marketers to better position their products and develop strategies that resonate with the target audience, particularly the youth and urban markets.

For policymakers, particularly those involved in cultural and youth policies, the study offers valuable insights into the issues and themes that resonate with the younger population. Recognizing the importance of themes like “Cultural & Local Referencing” and “Sociopolitical Commentary” in rap lyrics can help in formulating policies that support artistic expression and address the concerns highlighted in the music. Understanding the prominence of themes such as “Brutality & Violence” can inform initiatives aimed at addressing the root causes of these issues in communities. Additionally, the prominence of “Cultural & Local Referencing” suggests that

hip-hop and rap artists, along with the youth, strongly associate with their surroundings and local landmarks. Policymakers could invest in building parks or enhancing local landmarks where young people can congregate, thereby making communities more positive and supportive environments. This investment can foster a sense of pride and belonging among the youth, who are often depicted as spending significant time on the streets, engaging with their local culture.

Community organizations and non-profits can use the findings to develop programs that engage with youth through rap music. Understanding the themes important to young people enables these organizations to create initiatives that promote positive messages and provide platforms for youth to express themselves creatively. This can be particularly impactful in areas where themes like “Contemplation & Introspection” and “Empowerment & Sexual Agency” resonate, fostering personal growth and community empowerment.

In summary, the results of this study offer valuable insights for a wide range of stakeholders. By understanding the thematic content of rap lyrics and its evolution over the past two decades, stakeholders can better engage with and respond to the cultural, social, and emotional landscapes reflected in this popular music genre. Whether influencing content creation, guiding marketing strategies, informing educational curricula, shaping policy, or supporting community initiatives, the implications of this research are broad and impactful.

5.4 Limitations

The limitations of this study should be acknowledged to provide a balanced understanding of the findings. Despite the comprehensive analysis and the valuable insights

gained, there are several constraints that need to be considered. These limitations pertain to the scope of data sources, the potential biases in data interpretation, and the inherent challenges in categorizing musical genres. Additionally, the exclusion of certain multimodal elements and the variability in user-contributed annotations further highlight the areas where the study's findings might be impacted.

While Billboard is a robust source for this type of data, the charts only reflect the U.S. market and are influenced by commercial success, which might not fully represent all cultural or underground musical movements. This could potentially overlook significant but less commercially successful rap music that contributes to the genre's evolution. Conducting a similar analysis on the charts of a different country could, for example, result in different findings.

Focusing solely on top-charting songs may result in the exclusion of influential rap music that did not achieve commercial success but was culturally or artistically significant. This selection bias might lead to an incomplete picture of the genre's full scope and impact, as it prioritizes commercial success over artistic influence.

As the sole coder in the qualitative analysis, there is a potential for personal biases to influence the interpretation of lyrical content, despite efforts to mitigate this through systematic coding processes. Personal experiences and associations with the music could subjectively influence the interpretation of the collected data, highlighting the importance of transparency and critical reflection on these biases.

While the community-driven model of Genius enriches the data with diverse insights, it also introduces variability in the accuracy and depth of information, as contributions are not

consistently subjected to expert review. This could influence the reliability of the lyrical analysis, as the platform does not guarantee the scholarly accuracy of the contributions.

This study primarily focused on the textual content of rap lyrics, excluding the multimodal aspects of music consumption such as visual and kinesthetic elements (e.g., music videos, live performances). These elements can significantly influence the perception and interpretation of the texts, and their exclusion might result in missing nuances and contexts essential for a comprehensive understanding of the lyrics.

During the research, it became apparent that clearly differentiating rap and hip hop songs from other genres was not always straightforward. Some songs, especially from the R&B and dancehall genres, share many elements with rap and hip hop, making it challenging to categorize them definitively. This overlap may have influenced the selection and analysis of songs, potentially affecting the study's findings.

The interpretation and impact of rap lyrics can be significantly influenced by the listener's background knowledge, social associations, and personal beliefs. This variability means that the same set of lyrics might convey different messages to different listeners, leading to varying interpretations of the underlying themes. Gaining background knowledge from websites like Genius, where annotations and comments provide better context, is crucial for accurately interpreting the lyrics. However, listeners who do not use such resources or lack familiarity with certain slang terms and cultural references might misinterpret or entirely miss the intended themes. This can significantly alter the perceived message of the lyrics and subsequently affect the analysis of themes. Thus, personal biases and the potential for misinterpretation present a limitation to this study, as they can change the results by affecting the

consistency and accuracy of theme identification. This highlights the subjective nature of lyrical interpretation and the importance of considering multiple perspectives to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the content.

5.5 Recommendations for Future Research

Future research should incorporate the multimodality of music in their analyses. This includes considering visual, kinesthetic, and contextual elements such as music videos, live performances, and audience interaction (Schutz, 2014). All these influences change how music, and thereby rap lyrics, are perceived. Music is more than just the lyrics; it encompasses all the elements listed above, and the interplay of these influences creates the overall musical experience. Understanding how these elements influence the perception of rap lyrics can provide deeper insights into the thematic and emotional impacts of the music.

Analyzing linguistic elements such as slang, wordplay, metaphors, and sampling in rap lyrics can offer a richer understanding of how themes are represented. This can reveal the creative and rhetorical strategies artists use to convey messages and engage with their audience.

Exploring how listeners interpret and are influenced by rap lyrics can provide valuable insights into the socio-cultural impact of the genre. This includes studying different demographics and contexts to understand how various groups perceive and react to the themes in rap music.

Expanding the scope of data sources beyond the Billboard Hot 100 charts to include other music charts, streaming data, and social media trends can provide a more comprehensive view of

the genre's impact. This approach can help capture influential but less commercially successful rap music.

Addressing and mitigating personal biases in qualitative analysis remains crucial. Employing multiple coders and ensuring rigorous training and calibration can enhance the reliability and objectivity of the findings. Analyzing larger data sets could also be valuable for future research.

Considering rap music's influence and development in different cultural and global contexts can provide a more holistic understanding of the genre. This includes analyzing non-English rap and its thematic trends, which can highlight the genre's universal and diverse appeal.

By addressing these recommendations and leveraging the strengths of the current study, future research can build upon these findings to further explore the rich and complex landscape of rap music and its impact on society.

Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of thematic elements in popular rap lyrics from 2004 to 2023, revealing significant insights into the evolving nature of the genre. The findings highlight the predominance of "Emotions and Feelings," underscoring rap's role in expressing a wide spectrum of personal and intimate emotions. "Brand & Name Dropping" and "Flexing" themes reflect the importance of material wealth and status within the rap community, while "Cultural & Local Referencing" emphasizes the genre's deep ties to local identities and cultural heritage. Despite a lower overall presence, "Sociopolitical Commentary" remains an

important aspect, addressing critical social and political issues. The themes of "Brutality & Violence" and "Misogyny" point to ongoing societal challenges, though the latter shows signs of a gradual decline. The rise in "Empowerment & Sexual Agency" themes suggests a positive trend towards celebrating autonomy and gender equality. "Authenticity & Storytelling" and "Contemplation & Introspection" continue to underscore the genre's roots in genuine self-expression and personal reflection. Collectively, these findings reflect the dynamic and multifaceted nature of rap music, highlighting its responsiveness to changing cultural and social contexts. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of rap's thematic landscape, offering valuable insights for both theoretical exploration and practical applications within the music industry.

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Appendencies

Appendix A – Top 10 Billboard Year-End Hot 100 Singles with Rap Lyrics by Year

Table A1

Top 10 Billboard Year-End Hot 100 of 2004 Singles with Rap Lyrics

Number	Chart Position	Title	Artist(s)
1	1	Yeah!	Usher featuring Lil Jon and Ludacris
2	5	The Way You Move	OutKast featuring Sleepy Brown
3	7	I Don't Wanna Know	Mario Winans featuring Enya and P. Diddy
4	8	Hey Ya!	OutKast
5	9	Goodies	Ciara featuring Petey Pablo
6	10	Lean Back	Terror Squad featuring Fat Joe and Remy Ma
7	11	Tipsy	J-Kwon
8	13	Slow Motion	Juvenile featuring Soulja Slim
9	14	Freek-a-Leek	Petey Pablo
10	20	Sunshine	Lil' Flip featuring Lea

Table A2*Top 10 Billboard Year-End Hot 100 of 2005 Singles with Rap Lyrics*

Number	Chart Position	Title	Artist(s)
1	2	Hollaback Girl	Gwen Stefani
2	5	1, 2 Step	Ciara featuring Missy Elliott
3	6	Gold Digger	Kanye West featuring Jamie Foxx
4	8	Candy Shop	50 Cent featuring Olivia
5	9	Don't Cha	The Pussycat Dolls featuring Busta Rhymes
6	11	Disco Inferno	50 Cent
7	13	Don't Phunk with My Heart	The Black Eyed Peas
8	14	Lose Control	Missy Elliott featuring Ciara and Fatman Scoop
9	17	Just a Lil Bit	50 Cent
10	19	How We Do	The Game featuring 50 Cent

Table A3*Top 10 Billboard Year-End Hot 100 of 2006 Singles with Rap Lyrics*

Number	Chart Position	Title	Artist(s)
1	3	Promiscuous	Nelly Furtado featuring Timbaland
2	5	Hips Don't Lie	Shakira featuring Wyclef Jean
3	8	Ridin'	Chamillionaire featuring Krayzie Bone
4	10	Check on It	Beyoncé featuring Slim Thug
5	12	Grillz	Nelly, Paul Wall and Ali & Gipp
6	15	Buttons	Pussycat Dolls featuring Snoop Dogg
7	16	Run It!	Chris Brown featuring Juelz Santana
8	18	It's Goin' Down	Yung Joc featuring Nitti
9	22	London Bridge	Fergie
10	24	Snap Yo Fingers	Lil Jon featuring E-40 and Sean Paul

Table A4*Top 10 Billboard Year-End Hot 100 of 2007 Singles with Rap Lyrics*

Number	Chart Position	Title	Artist(s)
1	2	Umbrella	Rihanna featuring Jay-Z
2	5	Buy U a Drank (ShawtySnappin')	T-Pain featuring Yung Joc
3	8	Wanna Love You	Akon featuring Snoop Dogg
4	10	Glamorous	Fergie featuring Ludacris
5	14	Party Like a Rockstar	Shop Boyz
6	15	Smack That	Akon featuring Eminem
7	16	This Is Why I'm Hot	Mims
8	18	The Way I Are	Timbaland featuring Keri Hilson
9	19	Fergalicious	Fergie featuring will.i.am
10	20	Crank That (Soulja Boy)	Soulja Boy Tell 'Em

Table A5*Top 10 Billboard Year-End Hot 100 of 2008 Singles with Rap Lyrics*

Number	Chart Position	Title	Artist(s)
1	1	Low	Flo Rida featuring T-Pain
2	4	Lollipop	Lil Wayne featuring Static Major
3	8	Love in This Club	Usher featuring Young Jeezy
4	11	Sexy Can I	Ray J featuring Yung Berg
5	15	Whatever You Like	T.I.
6	19	Kiss Kiss	Chris Brown featuring T-Pain
7	29	Dangerous	Kardinal Offishall featuring Akon
8	34	Take You There	Sean Kingston
9	35	Paper Planes	M.I.A.
10	37	Live Your Life	T.I. featuring Rihanna

Table A6*Top 10 Billboard Year-End Hot 100 of 2009 Singles with Rap Lyrics*

Number	Chart Position	Title	Artist(s)
1	1	Boom Boom Pow	The Black Eyed Peas
2	4	I Gotta Feeling	The Black Eyed Peas
3	6	Right Round	Flo Rida
4	9	Heartless	Kanye West
5	12	Dead and Gone	T.I. featuring Justin Timberlake
6	17	I Know You Want Me (Calle Ocho)	Pitbull
7	19	Kiss Me thru the Phone	Soulja Boy Tell 'Em featuring Sammie
8	20	Down	Jay Sean featuring Lil Wayne
9	22	Best I Ever Had	Drake
10	28	Day 'n' Nite	Kid Cudi

Table A7*Top 10 Billboard Year-End Hot 100 of 2010 Singles with Rap Lyrics*

Number	Chart Position	Title	Artist(s)
1	4	California Gurls	Katy Perry featuring Snoop Dogg
2	5	OMG	Usher featuring will.i.am
3	6	Airplanes	B.o.B featuring Hayley Williams
4	7	Love the Way You Lie	Eminem featuring Rihanna
5	10	Break Your Heart	Taio Cruz featuring Ludacris
6	11	Nothin' on You	B.o.B featuring Bruno Mars
7	12	I Like It	Enrique Iglesias featuring Pitbull
8	13	BedRock	Young Money featuring Lloyd
9	19	Cooler Than Me	Mike Posner
10	20	Imma Be	The Black Eyed Peas

Table A8*Top 10 Billboard Year-End Hot 100 of 2011 Singles with Rap Lyrics*

Number	Chart Position	Title	Artist(s)
1	2	Party Rock Anthem	LMFAO featuring Lauren Bennett and Gourock
2	4	E.T.	Katy Perry featuring Kanye West
3	5	Give Me Everything	Pitbull featuring Ne-Yo, Afrojack and Nayer
4	8	Super Bass	Nicki Minaj
5	10	Just Can't Get Enough	The Black Eyed Peas
6	11	On the Floor	Jennifer Lopez featuring Pitbull
7	16	Tonight (I'm Lovin' You)	Enrique Iglesias featuring Ludacris and DJ Frank E
8	20	What's My Name?	Rihanna featuring Drake
9	21	Look at Me Now	Chris Brown featuring Lil Wayne and Busta Rhymes
10	22	Down on Me	Jeremih featuring 50 Cent

Table A9*Top 10 Billboard Year-End Hot 100 of 2012 Singles with Rap Lyrics*

Number	Chart Position	Title	Artist(s)
1	4	Payphone	Maroon 5 featuring Wiz Khalifa
2	9	Starships	Nicki Minaj
3	11	Wild Ones	Flo Rida featuring Sia
4	13	Sexy and I Know It	LMFAO
5	16	Good Feeling	Flo Rida
6	17	Whistle	Flo Rida
7	20	The Motto	Drake featuring Lil Wayne
8	23	Take Care	Drake featuring Rihanna
9	27	Mercy	Kanye West, Big Sean, Pusha T and 2 Chainz
10	32	Young, Wild & Free	Snoop Dogg and Wiz Khalifa featuring Bruno Mars

Table A10*Top 10 Billboard Year-End Hot 100 of 2013 Singles with Rap Lyrics*

Number	Chart Position	Title	Artist(s)
1	1	Thrift Shop	Macklemore & Ryan Lewis featuring Wanz
2	2	Blurred Lines	Robin Thicke featuring T.I. and Pharrell Williams
3	5	Can't Hold Us	Macklemore & Ryan Lewis featuring Ray Dalton
4	9	Cruise	Florida Georgia Line featuring Nelly
5	20	Suit & Tie	Justin Timberlake featuring Jay-Z
6	22	Holy Grail	Jay-Z featuring Justin Timberlake
7	23	Scream & Shout	will.i.am featuring Britney Spears
8	31	The Way	Ariana Grande featuring Mac Miller
9	32	Started from the Bottom	Drake
10	36	Feel This Moment	Pitbull featuring Christina Aguilera

Table A11*Top 10 Billboard Year-End Hot 100 of 2014 Singles with Rap Lyrics*

Number	Chart Position	Title	Artist(s)
1	2	Dark Horse	Katy Perry featuring Juicy J
2	4	Fancy	Iggy Azalea featuring Charli XCX
3	6	Talk Dirty	Jason Derulo featuring 2 Chainz
4	9	Problem	Ariana Grande featuring Iggy Azalea
5	11	Timber	Pitbull featuring Kesha
6	16	The Monster	Eminem featuring Rihanna
7	26	Black Widow	Iggy Azalea featuring Rita Ora
8	27	Bang Bang	Jessie J, Ariana Grande and Nicki Minaj
9	30	Loyal	Chris Brown featuring Lil Wayne, French Montana, Too Short and Tyga
10	35	Drunk in Love	Beyoncé featuring Jay-Z

Table A12*Top 10 Billboard Year-End Hot 100 of 2015 Singles with Rap Lyrics*

Number	Chart Position	Title	Artist(s)
1	3	See You Again	Wiz Khalifa featuring Charlie Puth
2	4	Trap Queen	Fetty Wap
3	8	Watch Me	Silentó
4	15	Bad Blood	Taylor Swift featuring Kendrick Lamar
5	21	679	Fetty Wap featuring Remy Boyz
6	23	Worth It	Fifth Harmony featuring Kid Ink
7	27	Good for You	Selena Gomez, A\$AP Rocky
8	31	Hey Mama	David Guetta featuring Nicki Minaj, Bebe Rexha and Afrojack
9	32	G.D.F.R.	Flo Rida featuring Sage the Gemini and Lookas
10	39	Time of Our Lives	Pitbull and Ne-Yo

Table A13*Top 10 Billboard Year-End Hot 100 of 2016 Singles with Rap Lyrics*

Number	Chart Position	Title	Artist(s)
1	5	Stressed Out	Twenty One Pilots
2	6	Panda	Desiigner
3	14	My House	Flo Rida
4	16	Work from Home	Fifth Harmony featuring Ty Dolla Sign
5	19	Me, Myself & I	G-Eazy and Bebe Rexha
6	20	Ride	Twenty One Pilots
7	21	Heathens	Twenty One Pilots
8	30	Low Life	Future featuring The Weeknd
9	34	Broccoli	DRAM featuring Lil Yachty
10	37	Jumpman	Drake and Future

Table A14*Top 10 Billboard Year-End Hot 100 of 2017 Singles with Rap Lyrics*

Number	Chart Position	Title	Artist(s)
1	4	Humble	Kendrick Lamar
2	6	Bad and Boujee	Migos featuring Lil Uzi Vert
3	10	Congratulations	Post Malone featuring Quavo
4	12	I'm the One	DJ Khaled featuring Justin Bieber, Quavo, Chance the Rapper and Lil Wayne
5	13	XO Tour Llif3	Lil Uzi Vert
6	14	Mask Off	Future
7	15	Unforgettable	French Montana featuring Swae Lee
8	19	Black Beatles	Rae Sremmurd featuring Gucci Mane
9	24	Bodak Yellow	Cardi B
10	28	iSpy	Kyle featuring Lil Yachty

Table A15*Top 10 Billboard Year-End Hot 100 of 2018 Singles with Rap Lyrics*

Number	Chart Position	Title	Artist(s)
1	1	God's Plan	Drake
2	4	Havana	Camila Cabello featuring Young Thug
3	5	Rockstar	Post Malone featuring 21 Savage
4	6	Psycho	Post Malone featuring Ty Dolla Sign
5	7	I Like It	Cardi B, Bad Bunny and J Balvin
6	9	In My Feelings	Drake
7	10	Girls Like You	Maroon 5 featuring Cardi B
8	11	Nice for What	Drake
9	12	Lucid Dreams	Juice Wrld
10	13	Better Now	Post Malone

Table A16*Top 10 Billboard Year-End Hot 100 of 2019 Singles with Rap Lyrics*

Number	Chart Position	Title	Artist(s)
1	1	Old Town Road	Lil Nas X featuring Billy Ray Cyrus
2	2	Sunflower	Post Malone and Swae Lee
3	4	Bad Guy	Billie Eilish
4	5	Wow	Post Malone
5	9	Sicko Mode	Travis Scott featuring Drake
6	13	Truth Hurts	Lizzo
7	18	Going Bad	Meek Mill featuring Drake
8	24	Suge	DaBaby
9	25	Middle Child	J. Cole
10	26	Drip Too Hard	Lil Baby and Gunna

Table A17*Top 10 Billboard Year-End Hot 100 of 2020 Singles with Rap Lyrics*

Number	Chart Position	Title	Artist(s)
1	3	The Box	Roddy Ricch
2	5	Rockstar	DaBaby featuring Roddy Ricch
3	7	Life Is Good	Future featuring Drake
4	11	Say So	Doja Cat
5	13	Whats Poppin	Jack Harlow featuring DaBaby, Tory Lanez and Lil Wayne
6	15	Savage	Megan Thee Stallion featuring Beyoncé
7	16	Roxanne	Arizona Zervas
8	17	Intentions	Justin Bieber featuring Quavo
9	24	WAP	Cardi B featuring Megan Thee Stallion
10	25	Ballin'	Mustard and Roddy Ricch

Table A18*Top 10 Billboard Year-End Hot 100 of 2021 Singles with Rap Lyrics*

Number	Chart Position	Title	Artist(s)
1	4	Mood	24kGoldn featuring Iann Dior
2	6	Kiss Me More	Doja Cat featuring SZA
3	9	Montero (Call Me by Your Name)	Lil Nas X
4	12	Stay	The Kid Laroi and Justin Bieber
5	17	Without You	The Kid Laroi
6	19	Go Crazy	Chris Brown and Young Thug
7	20	Astronaut in the Ocean	Masked Wolf
8	21	34+35	Ariana Grande featuring Doja Cat and Megan Thee Stallion
9	22	What You Know Bout Love	Pop Smoke
10	23	My Ex's Best Friend	Machine Gun Kelly featuring Blackbear

Table A19*Top 10 Billboard Year-End Hot 100 of 2022 Singles with Rap Lyrics*

Number	Chart Position	Title	Artist(s)
1	6	First Class	Jack Harlow
2	7	Big Energy	Latto
3	9	Super Gremlin	Kodak Black
4	11	Wait for U	Future featuring Drake and Tems
5	15	Enemy	Imagine Dragons and JID
6	18	Need to Know	Doja Cat
7	19	Wasted on You	Morgan Wallen
8	26	I Like You (A Happier Song)	Post Malone featuring Doja Cat
9	33	Jimmy Cooks	Drake featuring 21 Savage
10	43	In a Minute	Lil Baby

Table A20*Top 10 Billboard Year-End Hot 100 of 2023 Singles with Rap Lyrics*

Number	Chart Position	Title	Artist(s)
1	5	Creepin'	Metro Boomin, the Weeknd and 21 Savage
2	14	Rich Flex	Drake and 21 Savage
3	20	Boy's a Liar Pt. 2	PinkPantheress and Ice Spice
4	25	All My Life	Lil Durk featuring J. Cole
5	27	Karma	Taylor Swift featuring Ice Spice
6	28	Just Wanna Rock	Lil Uzi Vert
7	31	FukUMean	Gunna
8	33	Players	Coi Leray
9	38	Superhero (Heroes & Villains)	Metro Boomin, Future and Chris Brown
10	43	Spin Bout U	Drake and 21 Savage

Appendix B – Codebook

Table B1

Codebook

Code	Subcode	Definition	Example Quotes
1. Authenticity & Storytelling	1.1 Keepin it Real/Authencity	1.1 Lyrics that highlight the artist's credibility and especially pointing out his realness.	"I'm from the streets, where we hustle and strive / Keepin' it real, in my lyrics, we survive."
	1.2 Personal Narratives/Self-Presentation	1.2 Refers to lyrics that involve the artist's personal life stories and experiences, and how they present themselves to the audience. This includes storytelling about their life, their struggles, and successes.	"But I'm a champion, so I turned tragedy to triumph / Make music that's fire, spit my soul through the wire." "Jay-Z referring to himself as "Jigga," or Eminem referring to himself as "Slim Shady"
	1.3 Street Culture	1.3 Narratives emphasizing personal experiences and the authenticity of life on the streets, including street smarts and the urban lifestyle.	"Give the crack to the kids, who the hell cares? / One less hungry mouth on the welfare.", "The streets, yo where it happen at, The streets, is where they clapping at, The streets, is where the action at", "On the corners where the dice roll"

Code	Subcode	Definition	Example Quotes
	1.4 Dealing with Haters	1.4 Narratives focusing on the artist's response to criticism, hate and envy from others, emphasizing their resilience, success, and authenticity.	"Can't stand no haters, and honest, the truth is", "All my life (all my life), They been tryin' to keep me down"
	1.5 Dialogue and Skits	1.5 Lyrics that depict conversational scenarios, skits, or storytelling elements that create a vivid scene or narrative within the song. This includes dialogues, role-playing, and pretend scenarios that add depth to the storytelling.	"Hello, I'm on the radio with T-Pain, How's it goin'? It ain't goin' good, My girl ain't doin' her things she used to do at all"

Code	Subcode	Definition	Example Quotes
	1.6 Standards and Expectations	1.6 Lyrics where the artist, regardless of gender, describes their standards, desires, and criteria for their ideal partner or other objects of desire. This includes expressions of autonomy, self-worth, and the qualities they seek or require in others. It encompasses both positive and empowering statements, as well as critical or evaluative ones.	"Baby, this is what I'm looking for, Sexy, independent, down to spend it type that's gettin' his dough", "But I'm lookin' for the one, have you seen her? My psychic told me she'll have ass like Serena"
2. Brand & Name Dropping	2.1 Brand Mentions	2.1 References to luxury goods, fashion brands, commercial products, companies, or organizations. This includes broader brand names and commercial entities mentioned within the lyrics.	Gucci, Prada etc, "Chevy Impala" (referring to the brand of the car)

Code	Subcode	Definition	Example Quotes
	2.2 Proper Names	2.2 Mentions of famous names like musicians, actors, fictional characters, media products, or specific model names of products. This includes any detailed, precise names used to identify particular entities or items.	“6-3” (referring to the specific model of a Chevy Impala). Mentions of other Rappers or Artist, "Montana"
	2.3 Self Referential Names	2.3 Mentions where the artist uses self-referential names, nicknames, or alter egos. This includes any references to their own identity, past or present stage names, and any personas they adopt in their lyrics.	When an artist like Eminem refers to himself as “Slim Shady” or “Marshall Mathers” in his lyrics. “D-O double G” as Snoop Dogg
3. Brutality & Violence	3.1 Discrimination	3.1 References to discriminatory attitudes.	"If you ain't sexy, independent, I ain't wit' it"
	3.2 Drugs	3.2 Narratives about substance/drug abuse/usage, especially alcohol and cannabis consumption and its societal impact. Also Drug dealing is incorporated in this theme.	"Sippin Lean", "Smoke a little weed, drink a little bit", "sniffing coke"

Code	Subcode	Definition	Example Quotes
	3.3 Sexual Violence	3.3 Narratives intersecting sex with violence and brutality.	"Hit her from the back, pullin' on her tracks And now she screamin' out, "No más!"
	3.4 Urban Violence	3.4 Depictions of violence and brutality within urban environments, focusing on street crime, gang conflicts, and other forms of violence prevalent in urban settings.	"Ever had one of them days wish would've stayed home, Run into a group of niggas who gettin' they hate on You, walk by, They get wrong, You reply then shit get blown"
	3.5 Violence and Crime	3.5 Descriptions of violence and criminal activities. Any kind of weapon mention is incorporated in this theme.	"Rob the jewelry store", "Shawty want a thug", "I got a Glock in my Rari"

Code	Subcode	Definition	Example Quotes
4. Contemplation & Introspection		4. Lyrics that involve thoughtful consideration of broader issues, personal matters, or philosophical questions, often in a meditative or reflective manner. This includes looking inward, examining one's own thoughts, feelings, actions, motivations, and memories, with reflections on the past and expressions of longing for earlier times. Additionally, it encompasses indications of changes in perspective or growth over time, capturing the artist's evolving understanding and personal narratives.	"I've been losin' my mind tryna figure it out / But I'm stuck in a drought, I guess I'll start again"
5. Cultural & Local Referencing	5.1 Community Representation	5.1 Descriptions of one's neighborhood or community.	"From the Brooklyn Bridge to the streets of L.A. / My city's in my lyrics, it's where I play."
	5.2 Cultural Synchronization	5.2 Lyrics that blend global and local cultural elements.	"Back in '92, the riots set the streets ablaze / Remembering the days, the fire in the haze."

Code	Subcode	Definition	Example Quotes
	5.3 Local Landmarks	5.3 Mention of specific places, institutions, and landmarks.	“Reppin’ my block, where we hustle and grind / It’s more than a place, it’s a state of mind.”
	5.4 Rap Scene Discourse	5.4 References to the local or national Hip-Hop scene, including praise or critique of the music industry.	"The reason I ain't fuckin' with these rap-ass niggas" 'Cause they cap-ass niggas (Cap), and they raps ain't real (Cap)
	5.5 Temporal References	5.5 References to specific times or historical contexts.	"Back in 2019, I was outside freely"
	5.6 Intertextual References	5.6 Quotations, allusions, samples or references to the work of others, not limited to music but including any form of work, art, literature, or notable texts.	“Care for me, care for me, you said you'd care for me, There for me, there for me, said you'd be there for me, Cry for me, cry for me, you said you'd die for me, Give to me, give to me, why won't you live for me?”, a sample of the bridge from Lauryn Hill’s 1998 song “Ex-Factor”, originally from Gladys Knight & The Pips “The Way We Were” used by Drake in “Nice for What”

Code	Subcode	Definition	Example Quotes
6. Dissing		6. Refers to direct or indirect insults aimed at others, including accusations, criticisms, and competitive verbal sparring in lyrics. This encompasses various forms of dissing, from personal attacks to challenges of others' credibility or dominance. It is important to note that sometimes rappers are not targeting specific individuals but rather people in general, specific communities, or groups.	"So here I go, oh, Can't make a wife out of a hoe"
7. Emotions & Feelings	7.1 Anger	7.1 Expressions of rage or frustration.	"I can't believe that you would up and leave me"
	7.2 Celebration and Fun	7.2 Descriptions of enjoying life, partying, dancing, and having a good time, including activities and interactions in a club or party environment.	"Let's party, everybody stand up", "You catch me at yo' local party", "If you go hard you gotta get on the floor If you're a party freak then step on the floor"
	7.3 Disappointment	7.3 Narratives of letdown and despair.	"how could you be so heartless?", "Fuck all of your reasons"

Code	Subcode	Definition	Example Quotes
	7.4 Fear	7.4 Lyrics that reference the emotion of fear, including expressions of fear, experiences of being afraid, and instances of overcoming fear or moving beyond it.	"So get the fuck off me I'm anxious"
	7.5 Hope	7.5 Lyrics that convey optimism, aspirations, or positive expectations for the future.	"I could really use a wish right now", "Okay, I'm hoping that somebody pray for me"
	7.6 Joy	7.6 Lyrics that express feelings of happiness and enjoyment.	"sometimes I get a good feeling", "Yeah baby, I like it like that"
	7.7 Love and Sex	7.7 Descriptions of romantic or sexual interactions and encounters, physical attraction, flirting, relationships, the initial stages of romantic or sexual interest, and themes of heartbreak or ending relationships.	"She had me feelin' like she's ready to blow / Watch out / She was sayin', "Come get me.", "From the game, she was spittin' in my ear / You would think that she know me."
	7.8 Rebellion	7.8 Themes of defiance and resistance.	"This is the moment, Tonight is the night, we'll fight 'til it's over"

Code	Subcode	Definition	Example Quotes
	7.9 Motivation and Encouragement	7.9 Lyrics that inspire, motivate, or encourage listeners to take action, feel empowered, or overcome challenges. This includes messages of resilience, self-improvement, and empowerment directed towards individuals or groups.	"If you feelin' like a pimp, go and brush your shoulders off "
	7.10 Thankful	7.10 Lyrics that express gratitude and appreciation, whether towards specific individuals, experiences, or broader circumstances. This includes giving thanks for personal success, support from loved ones, or overcoming hardships.	"Without 40, Oli', there'd be no me"
	7.11 Sadness	7.11 Lyrics that convey feelings of sorrow, frustration, grief, or melancholy. This includes expressions of personal loss, emotional pain like a broken heart, or general despondency.	"How could you be so, cold as the winter wind when it breeze", "Just gonna stand there and hear me cry?"

Code	Subcode	Definition	Example Quotes
	7.12 Lost and Empty	7.12 Lyrics that express a sense of confusion, disorientation, or emotional emptiness. This can include themes of feeling directionless, isolated, or disconnected from oneself or others.	"Ooh (hey) I've been travelin' on this road too long (too long), Just trying to find my way back home (back home), The old me is dead and gone, dead and gone
	7.13 Stressed	7.13 Lyrics that convey a state of extreme stress and anxiety, often describing the feeling of being overwhelmed and exhausted due to life's pressures and challenges.	"Now we're stressed out"
	7.14 Insecure	7.14 Lyrics that express feelings of self-doubt, uncertainty, or lack of confidence, often related to one's abilities, appearance, or worth.	But now I'm insecure, and I care what people think.

Code	Subcode	Definition	Example Quotes
8. Empowerment & Sexual Agency	8.1 Confident Sexuality	8.1 Lyrics where female rappers describe sexual acts in a positive, empowering manner, emphasizing autonomy and agency. This includes promoting a positive attitude towards sex and describing sexual activities as empowering and enjoyable experiences for women.	"I like it when you take control", "Can you kiss me more?", "I love the taste, All on my tongue, I want it"

Code	Subcode	Definition	Example Quotes
	8.2 Homosexual Empowerment	8.2 Lyrics where artists, wether male or female, empower man or the male gender by referencing, highlighting, mentioning homosexuality in any context wether positive or neutral, but not negative. Simply mentioning an homosexual act is also incorporated.	"If Eve ain't in your garden, you know that you can"

Code	Subcode	Definition	Example Quotes
	8.3 Woman Empowerment	8.3 Lyrics where artists, whether male or female, empower women or the female gender by challenging traditional misogynistic images, promoting equality, and celebrating women's strength, autonomy, and capabilities. This includes lyrics that advocate for women's rights, break down gender stereotypes, present women in a positive, empowered light, and reappropriate traditionally derogatory terms like "bitch" or "bad bitch" in a positive, empowering manner.	"Ladies is pimps too, go and brush your shoulders off", "Bad Bitch". "Hands down, there will never be another one (Nope), I been around and I never seen another one (Nah), Because your style, they ain't really got nothin' on (Nothin')"

Code	Subcode	Definition	Example Quotes
9. Flexing	9.1 Flexing with Material Goods	9.1 Lyrics where the artist boasts about material possessions such as money, cars, jewelry, and fashion items.	"put my money where my mouth is and bought a grill 20 carats, 30 stacks, let 'em know, I'm so fo' real (yeah)", "G5 dippin, Lui Vuitton luggage", "Marc Jacob on the thigh"
	9.2 Flexing with Physical Appearance	9.2 Lyrics where the artist boasts about their physical attributes, beauty, and style. This includes mentions of their body, hair, and overall look.	"You look so fine", "Okay, lil' mama had a swag like mine (yeah), "She even wear her hair down her back like mine"
	9.3 Flexing with Rap/Music Skills	9.3 Lyrics that highlight and boast about the artist's lyrical abilities, flow, wordplay, overall prowess in rap, and their versatility in mastering various rap styles. This includes showcasing technical skill, creativity, superiority over other rappers, and claiming to have the best hits and songs.	"I still be the greatest", "I got that rock 'n' roll, that future flow, That digital spit, next level visual shit", "That flow, that spark, that crown, You looking at the king of the jungle now", "That my flow retarded, each beat dear, departed"

Code	Subcode	Definition	Example Quotes
	9.4 Flexing with Fame	9.4 Refers to lyrics where the artist boasts about their fame, status, and popularity. This includes mentions of their widespread recognition, influence, celebrity lifestyle, and the perks that come with being famous.	"It changes though now that I'm famous", "Rockin' like this my job, ni****, We can't help that we popular"
10. Misogyny	10.1 Sex Objectification	10.1 Women portrayed as mere objects of desire by male or female rappers.	"24, 34, 46, good and thick, And once you get it she'll work wit it, Put a face and some cute lips, Earring in her tongue and she'll know what to do wit it"
	10.2 Sexual Acts (Misogynistic)	10.2 Narratives explicitly describing sexual activities in a manner that objectifies, demeans, or degrades individuals, often reflecting a misogynistic perspective.	"I'll let you lick the lollipop", "Give it to me baby, nice and slow, Climb on top, ride like you in the rodeo"
	10.3 Violence Against Women	10.3 Mentions of male violence towards women.	"You must have heard about them hoes, that I beat up in my home"

Code	Subcode	Definition	Example Quotes
	10.4 Materialistic Stereotyping (Misogyny)	10.4 Lyrics that portray women as valuing men primarily for their financial resources, material possessions, or the ability to provide luxury goods. This stereotype reinforces negative gender norms and objectifies women by suggesting they are primarily interested in material gain.	"Now, I ain't sayin' she a gold digger / But she ain't messin' with no broke."
11. Sociopolitical Commentary	11.1 Activism and Resistance	11.1 Songs that promote social and political activism.	"All my life (all my life), They been tryin' to keep me down (they been tryin' to keep me down), All this time (all this time), Never thought I would make it out (never thought I'd make it out)"
	11.2 Class Divisions	11.2 Discussion of socioeconomic class distinctions (within racial groups).	"I'm the opposite of moderate, immaculately polished with the spirit of a hustla and the swagger of a college kid, Allergic to the counterfeit, impartial to the politics, Articulate, but still'll grab a nigga by the collar quick"

Code	Subcode	Definition	Example Quotes
	11.3 Discussion of Minorities	11.3 Depictions and references to ethnic, racial, and sexual minorities, including but not limited to support, advocacy, and solidarity, as well as challenges, issues, and experiences faced by these groups.	“I’m tryna climb the ladder, but the system keep me down, While they sippin’ champagne, I’m hustling to survive in this town.”
	11.4 Economic Hardship	11.4 Mentions of poverty, unemployment, and financial struggles.	"You can't blame my past no more, I come from the trenches", I ain't got no money, I ain't got no car to take you on a date, I can't even buy you flowers”
	11.5 Against Police	11.5 Criticism of law enforcement violence and misconduct, as well as broader opposition to police actions, policies, and presence. This includes narratives of conflict with the police, references to evading law enforcement, and general expressions of distrust or hostility towards the police force.	“Get a lot of love from 12, but I don't reciprocate”, “They see me rollin', They hatin', Patrollin' and tryna catch me ridin' dirty”

Code	Subcode	Definition	Example Quotes
	11.6 Social Critique	11.6 Examination of societal issues and injustices.	“Wish we could turn back time, To the good old days, When our mama sang us to sleep, But now we're stressed out (oh)”
	11.7 Urban Issues	11.7 Themes that critique or highlight the broader social issues related to street life, including systemic inequality, poverty, crime, urban decay, and their impact on urban communities.	“Little kid with guns only fifteen, Roam in the streets up to no good, When gun shots just watch us, run quickly”, "On the corners where the dice roll"
	11.8 Youth Protest	11.8 Expressions of rebellion or dissatisfaction by young people. Narratives against the law, police, the system and more.	"Told 'em fuck 12, fuck SWAT", "I'm The Voice, but the system ain't give me a choice"

Code	Subcode	Definition	Example Quotes
12. Unclassifies Content	12.1 Not English	<p>12.1 This subcode is utilized to identify and exclude lyrics performed in languages other than English from analysis. It includes songs or sections of songs where the primary language is not English, reflecting the artist's linguistic and cultural background. This subcode ensures that only English lyrics are considered in the analysis, facilitating a focused and coherent examination of the themes in rap music.</p>	<p>“Uno, dos, tres, cuatro, Rumba (sí), Ella quiere su rumba (cómo?)”</p>

12.2 Not Rap

12.2 Refers to sections of a song or text that do not contain rap elements. This code is used to categorize parts of the song that fall outside the scope of rap lyrics, such as verses or choruses performed in a pop, rock, R&B, or any other non-rap style. The focus is on distinguishing these parts from the rap sections to ensure accurate analysis of rap-specific themes.

12.3 No Theme

12.3 Refers to parts of a "la la la", "Uh"
song or text that lack a
discernible theme or
meaningful content. This
code is used for sections
where the lyrics do not
convey any specific
message, idea, or topic,
often consisting of filler
words, repetitive
phrases, or nonsensical
content.

Code	Subcode	Definition	Example Quotes
	12.4 Other Themes	12.4 Refers to sections of a song or text that contain meaningful content or themes that do not fit into any of the predefined categories in the codebook. This code is used to capture and categorize new, unique, or unexpected themes that emerge during the analysis but are not currently represented in the existing codebook.	“Music make you lose control”

Appendix C – Main Theme Frequencys

Table C1

Authenticity & Storytelling

Year	Frequency	Percentage
2004	20	4.5
2005	21	4.7
2006	30	6.7
2007	11	2.5
2008	28	6.2
2009	13	2.9
2010	10	2.2
2011	8	1.8
2012	25	5.6
2013	19	4.2
2014	10	2.2
2015	18	4.0
2016	36	8.0
2017	50	11.1
2018	31	6.9
2019	35	7.8
2020	34	7.6
2021	9	2.0
2022	20	4.5
2023	21	4.7
Total	449	100.0
Average	22.5	5.0

Note. The percentages in this table represent the proportion of occurrences for each year relative to the total number of occurrences for the theme "Authenticity & Storytelling" over the entire period from 2004 to 2023. The average score represents the frequency of each theme divided by the total number of years (20), providing the average number of occurrences of each theme per year.

Table C2*Brand & Name Dropping*

Year	Frequency	Percentage
2004	108	9.5
2005	63	5.5
2006	58	5.1
2007	45	4.0
2008	35	3.1
2009	20	1.8
2010	40	3.5
2011	29	2.5
2012	72	6.3
2013	30	2.6
2014	36	3.2
2015	23	2.0
2016	142	12.5
2017	78	6.9
2018	53	4.7
2019	69	6.1
2020	100	8.8
2021	9	0.8
2022	70	6.2
2023	58	5.1
Total	1138	100.0
Average	56.9	5.0

Note. The percentages in this table represent the distribution of occurrences relative to the overall theme "Brand & Name Dropping" over the entire period from 2004 to 2023. The average score represents the frequency of each theme divided by the total number of years (20), providing the average number of occurrences of each theme per year.

Table C3*Brutality & Violence*

Year	Frequency	Percentage
2004	20	3.9
2005	17	3.3
2006	33	6.5
2007	8	1.6
2008	58	11.4
2009	17	3.3
2010	3	0.6
2011	20	3.9
2012	25	4.9
2013	10	2.0
2014	16	3.1
2015	22	4.3
2016	56	11.0
2017	58	11.4
2018	25	4.9
2019	26	5.1
2020	37	7.3
2021	7	1.4
2022	26	5.1
2023	26	5.1
Total	510	100.0
Average	25.5	5.0

Note. The percentages in this table represent the distribution of occurrences relative to the overall theme "Brutality & Violence" for each year. The average score represents the frequency of each theme divided by the total number of years (20), providing the average number of occurrences of each theme per year.

Table C4*Contemplation & Introspection*

Year	Frequency	Percentage
2004	4	2.1
2005	0	0
2006	0	0
2007	0	0
2008	7	3.7
2009	15	8.0
2010	12	6.4
2011	0	0
2012	2	1.1
2013	11	5.9
2014	11	5.9
2015	13	6.9
2016	36	19.2
2017	10	5.3
2018	18	9.6
2019	8	4.3
2020	4	2.1
2021	15	8.0
2022	18	9.6
2023	4	2.1
Total	188	100.0
Average	9.4	5.0

Note. The percentages in this table represent the distribution of occurrences relative to the overall theme "Contemplation & Introspection" over the entire period from 2004 to 2023. The average score represents the frequency of each theme divided by the total number of years (20), providing the average number of occurrences of each theme per year.

Table C5*Cultural & Local Referencing*

Year	Frequency	Percentage
2004	28	5.4
2005	25	4.8
2006	34	6.5
2007	21	4.0
2008	50	9.6
2009	11	2.1
2010	24	4.6
2011	15	2.9
2012	27	5.2
2013	24	4.6
2014	19	3.6
2015	16	3.1
2016	29	5.5
2017	26	5.0
2018	34	6.5
2019	35	6.7
2020	45	8.6
2021	3	0.6
2022	44	8.4
2023	13	2.5
Total	523	100.0
Average	26.2	5.0

Note. The percentages in this table represent the distribution of occurrences relative to the overall theme "Cultural & Local Referencing" over the entire period from 2004 to 2023. The average score represents the frequency of each theme divided by the total number of years (20), providing the average number of occurrences of each theme per year.

Table C6*Dissing*

Year	Frequency	Percentage
2004	2	6.5
2005	6	19.4
2006	0	0
2007	1	3.2
2008	1	3.2
2009	0	0
2010	0	0
2011	0	0
2012	0	0
2013	1	3.2
2014	1	3.2
2015	0	0
2016	2	6.5
2017	2	6.5
2018	1	3.2
2019	2	6.5
2020	0	0
2021	2	6.5
2022	6	19.4
2023	4	12.9
Total	31	100.0
Average	1.6	5.0

Note. The percentages in this table represent the distribution of occurrences relative to the overall theme "Dissing" over the entire period from 2004 to 2023. The average score represents the frequency of each theme divided by the total number of years (20), providing the average number of occurrences of each theme per year.

Table C7*Emotions & Feelings*

Year	Frequency	Percentage
2004	83	6.2
2005	77	5.8
2006	63	4.7
2007	54	4.1
2008	73	5.5
2009	99	7.4
2010	71	5.3
2011	56	4.2
2012	73	5.5
2013	39	2.9
2014	41	3.1
2015	82	6.2
2016	65	4.9
2017	68	5.1
2018	63	4.7
2019	36	2.7
2020	52	3.9
2021	102	7.7
2022	75	5.6
2023	60	4.5
Total	1332	100.0
Average	66.6	5.0

Note. The percentages in this table represent the distribution of occurrences relative to the overall theme "Emotions & Feelings" over the entire period from 2004 to 2023. The average score represents the frequency of each theme divided by the total number of years (20), providing the average number of occurrences of each theme per year.

Table C8*Empowerment & Sexual Agency*

Year	Frequency	Percentage
2004	2	1.7
2005	0	0
2006	3	2.6
2007	6	5.2
2008	8	7.0
2009	0	0
2010	3	2.6
2011	1	0.9
2012	0	0
2013	0	0
2014	2	1.7
2015	2	1.7
2016	1	0.9
2017	8	7.0
2018	5	4.4
2019	7	6.1
2020	22	19.1
2021	19	16.5
2022	15	13.0
2023	11	9.6
Total	115	100.0
Average	5.8	5.0

Note. The percentages in this table represent the distribution of occurrences relative to the overall theme "Empowerment & Sexual Agency" for each year. The average score represents the frequency of each theme divided by the total number of years (20), providing the average number of occurrences of each theme per year.

Table C9*Flexing*

Year	Frequency	Percentage
2004	24	4.1
2005	20	3.4
2006	30	5.1
2007	35	6.0
2008	37	6.3
2009	20	3.4
2010	16	2.7
2011	26	4.4
2012	16	2.7
2013	35	6
2014	26	4.4
2015	12	2.0
2016	28	4.8
2017	59	10.0
2018	20	3.4
2019	54	9.2
2020	61	10.4
2021	1	0.2
2022	34	5.8
2023	34	5.8
Total	588	100.0
Average	29.4	5.0

Note. The percentages in this table represent the distribution of occurrences of the overall theme "Flexing" over the entire period from 2004 to 2023. The average score represents the frequency of each theme divided by the total number of years (20), providing the average number of occurrences of each theme per year.

Table C10*Misogyny*

Year	Frequency	Percentage
2004	22	9.2
2005	47	19.7
2006	3	1.3
2007	17	7.1
2008	30	12.6
2009	4	1.7
2010	3	1.3
2011	8	3.4
2012	11	4.6
2013	2	0.8
2014	4	1.7
2015	10	4.2
2016	9	3.8
2017	19	8.0
2018	11	4.6
2019	1	0.4
2020	25	10.5
2021	1	0.4
2022	0	0
2023	11	4.6
Total	238	100.0
Average	11.9	5.0

Note. The percentages in this table represent the distribution of occurrences relative to the overall theme "Misogyny" over the entire period from 2004 to 2023. The average score represents the frequency of each theme divided by the total number of years (20), providing the average number of occurrences of each theme per year.

Table C11*Sociopolitical Commentary*

Year	Frequency	Percentage
2004	5	4.8
2005	1	1.0
2006	10	9.5
2007	1	1.0
2008	30	28.6
2009	9	8.6
2010	0	0
2011	2	1.9
2012	0	0
2013	0	0
2014	0	0
2015	0	0
2016	15	14.3
2017	2	1.9
2018	0	0
2019	4	3.8
2020	13	12.4
2021	0	0
2022	0	0
2023	13	12.4
Total	105	100.0
Average	5.3	5.0

Note. The percentages in this table represent the distribution of the theme "Sociopolitical Commentary" over the entire period from 2004 to 2023. The average score represents the frequency of each theme divided by the total number of years (20), providing the average number of occurrences of each theme per year.

Appendix D – Most frequent Subtheme Frequencies

Table D1

Authenticity & Storytelling: Most frequent Subthemes

Year	Dealing with Haters		Personal Narratives/Self-Presentation		Street Culture	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
2004	0	0	5	1.1	0	0
2005	6	1.3	5	1.1	2	0.4
2006	4	0.9	3	0.7	11	2.5
2007	3	0.7	3	0.7	0	0
2008	12	2.7	9	2.0	3	0.7
2009	0	0	10	2.2	3	0.7
2010	0	0	4	0.9	2	0.4
2011	2	0.4	5	1.1	1	0.2
2012	3	0.7	16	3.6	1	0.2
2013	3	0.7	12	2.7	2	0.4
2014	1	0.2	8	1.8	0	0
2015	3	0.7	12	2.7	2	0.4
2016	1	0.2	30	6.7	5	1.1
2017	12	2.7	22	4.9	11	2.5
2018	4	0.9	10	2.2	7	1.6
2019	3	0.7	20	4.5	5	1.1
2020	1	0.2	16	3.6	8	1.8
2021	0	0	9	2.0	0	0
2022	0	0	11	2.5	4	0.9
2023	4	0.9	7	1.6	8	1.8
Total	62	13.8	217	48.3	75	16.7
Average	3.1	0.7	10.9	2.4	3.8	0.8

Note. The percentages in this table represent the distribution of the most occurring sub-themes relative to the overall theme "Authenticity & Storytelling" over the entire period from 2004 to 2023.

Table D2*Brand & Name Dropping: Most frequent Subthemes*

Year	Brand Mentions		Proper Names	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
2004	13	1.1	88	7.7
2005	30	2.6	29	2.6
2006	9	0.8	33	2.9
2007	17	1.5	21	1.8
2008	18	1.6	13	1.1
2009	6	0.5	8	0.7
2010	11	1.0	24	2.1
2011	13	1.1	14	1.2
2012	36	3.2	35	3.1
2013	7	0.6	23	2.0
2014	12	1.1	20	1.8
2015	15	1.3	6	0.5
2016	97	8.5	43	3.8
2017	37	3.3	38	3.3
2018	28	2.5	21	1.8
2019	34	3.0	34	3.0
2020	58	5.1	38	3.3
2021	8	0.7	1	0.1
2022	35	3.1	17	1.5
2023	18	1.6	20	1.8
Total	502	44.1	526	46.2
Average	25.1	2.1	26.3	2.31

Note. The percentages in this table represent the distribution of the most occurring sub-themes relative to the overall theme "Brand & Name Dropping" over the entire period from 2004 to 2023.

Table D3*Brutality & Violence: Most frequent Subthemes*

Year	Drugs		Violence and Crime	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
2004	12	2.4	7	1.4
2005	11	2.2	6	1.2
2006	16	3.1	12	2.4
2007	7	1.4	1	0.2
2008	24	4.7	24	4.7
2009	13	2.6	3	0.6
2010	1	0.2	2	0.4
2011	18	3.5	2	0.4
2012	22	4.3	3	0.6
2013	4	0.8	6	1.2
2014	13	2.6	3	0.6
2015	18	3.5	3	0.6
2016	30	5.9	20	3.9
2017	40	7.8	16	3.1
2018	14	2.7	7	1.4
2019	12	2.4	14	2.7
2020	15	2.9	21	4.1
2021	7	1.4	0	0
2022	10	2.0	15	2.9
2023	13	2.6	13	2.6
Total	300	58.8	178	34.9
Average	15	2.9	8.9	1.8

Note. The percentages in this table represent the distribution of the most occurring sub-themes relative to the overall theme "Brutality and Violence" over the entire period from 2004 to 2023.

Table D4*Cultural & Local Referencing: Most frequent Subthemes*

Year	Local Landmarks		Intertextual References		Community Representation	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
2004	9	1.7	8	1.5	8	1.5
2005	5	1.0	18	3.4	2	0.4
2006	22	4.2	8	1.5	4	0.8
2007	18	3.4	2	0.4	0	0
2008	24	4.6	11	2.1	7	1.3
2009	5	1.0	3	0.6	1	0.2
2010	18	3.4	2	0.4	2	0.4
2011	8	1.5	7	1.3	0	0
2012	11	2.1	15	2.9	1	0.2
2013	11	2.1	11	2.1	0	0
2014	9	1.7	9	1.7	0	0
2015	10	1.9	4	0.8	2	0.4
2016	19	3.6	9	1.7	0	0
2017	6	1.1	8	1.5	7	1.3
2018	17	3.3	12	2.3	3	0.6
2019	12	2.3	15	2.9	1	0.2
2020	32	6.1	6	1.1	5	1.0
2021	1	0.2	2	0.4	0	0
2022	19	3.6	20	3.8	1	0.2
2023	4	0.8	5	1.0	2	0.4
Total	260	49.7	175	33.5	46	8.8
Average	13.0	2.5	8.8	1.7	2.3	0.4

Note. The percentages in these tables represent the distribution of the most occurring sub-themes relative to the overall theme "Cultural & Local Referencing" over the entire period from 2004 to 2023.

Table D5*Emotions & Feelings: Most frequent Subthemes*

Year	Love & Sex		Celebration & Fun	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
2004	61	4.6	10	0.8
2005	37	2.8	20	1.5
2006	29	2.2	16	1.2
2007	37	2.8	11	0.8
2008	55	4.1	12	0.9
2009	49	3.7	9	0.7
2010	45	3.4	4	0.3
2011	39	2.9	11	0.8
2012	37	2.8	19	1.4
2013	20	1.5	6	0.5
2014	30	2.3	8	0.6
2015	37	2.8	24	1.8
2016	28	2.1	16	1.2
2017	45	3.4	6	0.5
2018	37	2.8	2	0.2
2019	25	1.9	2	0.2
2020	42	3.2	4	0.3
2021	60	4.5	0	0
2022	42	3.2	3	0.2
2023	37	2.8	2	0.2
Total	792	59.5	185	13.9
Average	39.6	3.0	9.3	0.7

Note. The percentages in these tables represent the distribution of the most occurring sub-themes relative to the overall theme "Emotions & Feelings" over the entire period from 2004 to 2023.

Table D6*Empowerment & Sexual Agency: Most frequent Subthemes*

Year	Confident Sexuality		Women Empowerment	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
2004	0	0	2	1.7
2005	0	0	0	0
2006	3	2.6	0	0
2007	6	5.2	0	0
2008	0	0	8	7.0
2009	0	0	0	0
2010	1	0.9	2	1.7
2011	1	0.9	0	0
2012	0	0	0	0
2013	0	0	0	0
2014	1	0.9	1	0.9
2015	2	1.7	0	0
2016	0	0	1	0.9
2017	2	1.7	6	5.2
2018	1	0.9	4	3.5
2019	5	4.4	2	1.7
2020	20	17.4	2	1.7
2021	10	8.7	1	0.9
2022	11	9.6	4	3.5
2023	6	5.2	5	4.4
Total	69	60.0	38	33.0
Average	3.5	3.0	1.9	1.7

Note. The percentages in these tables represent the distribution of the most occurring sub-themes relative to the overall theme "Empowerment & Sexual Agency" over the entire period from 2004 to 2023.

Table D7*Flexing: Most frequent Subthemes*

Year	Flexing with Material Goods		Flexing with Physical Appearance	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
2004	13	2.2	8	1.4
2005	8	1.4	6	1.0
2006	20	3.4	5	0.9
2007	12	2.0	22	3.7
2008	17	2.9	16	2.7
2009	7	1.2	6	1.0
2010	6	1.0	8	1.4
2011	11	1.9	12	2.0
2012	10	1.7	4	0.7
2013	22	3.7	9	1.5
2014	19	3.2	5	0.9
2015	11	1.9	1	0.2
2016	27	4.6	0	0
2017	42	7.1	8	1.4
2018	18	3.1	1	0.2
2019	31	5.3	10	1.7
2020	50	8.5	5	0.9
2021	1	0.2	0	0
2022	22	3.7	5	0.9
2023	19	3.2	9	1.5
Total	366	62.2	140	23.8
Average	18.3	3.1	7.0	1.2

Note. The percentages in these tables represent the distribution of the most occurring sub-themes relative to the overall theme "Flexing" over the entire period from 2004 to 2023.

Table D8*Misogyny: Most frequent Subthemes*

Year	Sex Objectification		Sexual Acts		Materialistic Stereotyping	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
2004	11	4.6	9	3.8	1	0.4
2005	19	8.0	18	7.6	10	4.2
2006	2	0.8	1	0.4	0	0
2007	9	3.8	8	3.4	0	0
2008	9	3.8	18	7.6	3	1.3
2009	3	1.3	0	0	1	0.4
2010	1	0.4	1	0.4	1	0.4
2011	6	2.5	2	0.8	0	0
2012	0	0	9	3.8	2	0.8
2013	1	0.4	1	0.4	0	0
2014	1	0.4	2	0.8	1	0.4
2015	5	2.1	5	2.1	0	0
2016	9	3.8	0	0	0	0
2017	9	3.8	9	3.8	1	0.4
2018	6	2.5	3	1.3	2	0.8
2019	1	0.4	0	0	0	0
2020	8	3.4	8	3.4	9	3.8
2021	0	0	0	0	1	0.4
2022	0	0	0	0	0	0
2023	3	1.3	4	1.7	4	1.7
Total	103	43.3	98	41.2	36	15.1
Average	5.2	2.2	4.9	2.1	1.8	0.8

Note. The percentages in these tables represent the distribution of the most occurring sub-themes relative to the overall theme "Misogyny" over the entire period from 2004 to 2023.

Table D9*Sociopolitical Commentary: Most frequent Subthemes*

Year	Urban Issues		Class Divisions		Social Critique	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
2004	0	0	1	1.0	1	1.0
2005	0	0	1	1.0	0	0
2006	0	0	0	0	1	1.0
2007	0	0	0	0	0	0
2008	3	2.9	10	9.5	6	5.7
2009	4	3.8	1	1.0	2	1.9
2010	0	0	0	0	0	0
2011	1	1.0	1	1.0	0	0
2012	0	0	0	0	0	0
2013	0	0	0	0	0	0
2014	0	0	0	0	0	0
2015	0	0	0	0	0	0
2016	5	4.8	2	1.9	4	3.8
2017	1	1.0	0	0	0	0
2018	0	0	0	0	0	0
2019	0	0	1	1.0	1	1.0
2020	0	0	0	0	1	1.0
2021	0	0	0	0	0	0
2022	0	0	0	0	0	0
2023	4	3.8	0	0	1	1.0
Total	18	17.1	17	16.2	17	16.2
Average	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.9	0.8

Note. The percentages in these tables represent the distribution of the most occurring sub-themes relative to the overall theme "Sociopolitical Commentary" over the entire period from 2004 to 2023.

Appendix E

Usage of AI Tools in Analysis

During the preparation of this work, the author used ChatGPT, an AI language model, to adapt sentences grammatically, academically, and literarily. Furthermore, Quillbot was used to paraphrase some sentences. After using these tools, the author reviewed and edited the content as needed and takes full responsibility for the content of the work.

Appendix F

Search Log

Date	Database	Search String	Number of Hits	Relevant Hits
04 th Feb 2024	Google Scholar	“rap lyrics” AND (“thematic analysis” OR “content analysis” OR “trends”)	4.100	15
16 th Feb 2024	Google Scholar	“hip hop music” AND (“social commentary” OR “messages”	11.300	18
29 th Feb 2024	Google Scholar	“hip hop music” AND (“social commentary” OR “messages”) “hip hop” AND (“personal narratives” OR “crime”)	2.940	8

25 th Mar 2024	Google Scholar	“hip hop” AND (“violence” OR “brutality” OR “crime”)	105.000	6
25 th Mar 2024	Google Scholar	“hip hop” AND (“flexing” OR ”braggadocio” OR “boasting”)	8.580	6
